

Regna and Gentes

The Relationship between Late Antique and
Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in
the Transformation of the Roman World

Edited by

H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut and W. Pohl

with the collaboration of Sören Kaschke



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REGNA AND GENTES

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ROMAN WORLD

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EDITED BY

HANS-WERNER GOETZ, JÖRG JARNUT

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SÖREN KASCHKE



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ABBREVIATIONS

CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA	Auctores antiquissimi
Capit.	Capitularia regum Francorum
Conc.	Concilia
EE	Epistolae
LL	Leges
SS	Scriptores
SSrG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum
SSrL	Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum
SSrM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, ed. J.P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris 1844–1855)

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INTRODUCTION

Hans-Werner Goetz

Late Antiquity, no doubt, was a “time of transition or rather transitions”.¹ In spite of extensive research on the “Germanic” (or, from the Roman point of view, “barbarian”) invasions and the successor states of the Roman Empire, comparatively little attention has been paid to the “transition of peoples”, or their “developing” into kingdoms. As far as we can see, research on the Later Roman Empire and the late antique and early medieval kingdoms has focused on four aspects: first, the “Great Migration”,² second, the decline of the Empire (including the role of migration and of the barbarian hordes in this process),³ third, the ethnogenesis of the “Germanic” peoples,⁴ and fourth, the rise of (single) kingdoms.⁵ Meanwhile, we know a lot

¹ Thus, for example, I.N. Wood, *The Merovingian kingdoms, 450–751* (London-New York 1994) p. 1.

² Cf., for example, E. Demougeot, *La formation de l'Europe et les invasions barbares*, vol. 1: *Des origines germaniques à l'avènement de Dioclétien* (Paris 1969); vol. 2: *De l'avènement de Dioclétien (284) à l'occupation germanique de l'Empire romain d'Occident (début du VI^e siècle)*, Collection historique (Paris 1979); W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans A.D. 418–584. The Techniques of Accomodation* (Princeton NJ 1980); J.D. Randers-Pehrson, *Barbarians and Romans. The Birth Struggle of Europe, A.D. 400–700* (London-Canberra 1983); *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E. Chrysos and A. Schwarcz (Vienna 1989).

³ Cf. A. Demandt, *Die Spätantike. Die Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian, 284–565 n. Chr.*, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft III,6 (München 1989); id., *Der Fall Roms. Die Auflösung des Römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt* (München 1984); A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A social, economic and administrative survey*, 3 vols. (Oxford 1964); *Der Untergang des Römischen Reiches*, ed. K. Christ, Wege der Forschung 269 (Darmstadt 1970).

⁴ Cf. n. 7, and, summarizing, W. Pohl, *Die Germanen*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 57 (München 2000).

⁵ Cf. D. Claude, *Geschichte der Westgoten* (Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln-Mainz 1970); H. Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten. Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts. Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie* (München 1979; 3rd edn. 1990); T.S. Burns, *A History of the Ostrogoths* (Bloomington 1984); P.J. Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford 1991); id., *The Goths* (Oxford 1996); P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–534*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge 1997); J. Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, Urban 339 (Stuttgart 1982); D. Geuenich, *Geschichte der Alemannen*, Urban 575 (Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln 1997); R. Kaiser, *Die Franken: Roms Erben und Wegbereiter Europas?*, Historisches Seminar N.F. 10 (Idstein 1997).

about the political development of this period, and we may also have sufficient knowledge concerning the political, social and cultural (including religious) structures of this epoch. And, of course, there are splendid surveys of the period, for example, by Herwig Wolfram,⁶ Herbert Schutz,⁷ John Moorhead,⁸ Patrick Geary⁹ and, most recently, by Walter Pohl.¹⁰ What we lack, however, is a comparative view of these kingdoms as well as an attempt to combine these four elements within a common perspective. One of the first attempts in this direction was the Marxist volume “Germans are conquering Rome” (*Germanen erobern Rom*) by Rigobert Günther and Alexander Korsunskij,¹¹ limited, however, to a short presentation of each kingdom. Another, more recent attempt by P.S. Barnwell was restricted to four kingdoms (Franks, Visigoths, Langobards, and Anglo-Saxons), each dealt with under three aspects: kings and queens, royal household, and provincial administration.¹² In his conclusion, Barnwell demands a revision of our image of “Germanic” government (which was less decadent than generally assumed).¹³ He rightly points out our complete dependence on evidence which is, actually, totally different for each kingdom. He lays further emphasis on the importance of “rank” for the Visigoths and Anglo-Saxons, and he discovers a continuation of Roman traditions throughout in legislation, administration (which was dependent on the extension of the kingdom), minting, royal ceremonies, and Christianity. No doubt these are important observations, which have been confirmed and refined by numerous works on individual kingdoms. Nevertheless, we still

⁶ H. Wolfram, *Das Reich und die Germanen. Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, Das Reich und die Deutschen (Berlin 1990) [English transl. *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples* (Berkeley 1997)].

⁷ H. Schutz, *The Germanic Realms in Pre-Carolingian Central Europe, 400–750* (New York 2000).

⁸ J. Moorhead, *The Roman Empire Divided, 400–700* (Harlow-London 2001).

⁹ P.J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations. The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton 2001).

¹⁰ W. Pohl, *Die Völkerwanderung. Eroberung und Integration* (Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln 2002).

¹¹ R. Günther and A.R. Korsunskij, *Germanen erobern Rom. Der Untergang des Weströmischen Reiches und die Entstehung germanischer Königreiche bis zur Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts*, Veröffentlichungen des Zentralinstituts für Alte Geschichte und Archäologie der Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR 15 (Berlin/Ost 1986; 2nd edn. 1988).

¹² P.S. Barnwell, *Kings, Courtiers and Imperium. The Barbarian West, 565–725* (London 1997). A first volume, *Emperors, Prefects and Kings. The Roman West, 395–565* (London 1992), covered other peoples within a more strictly Roman context.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 172 ff.

lack an overall comparison of these kingdoms, and the central question, namely of the relation between *gentes* and *regna*, has so far only been slightly touched upon and has never been explicitly and thoroughly discussed in a comparison of the single realms. As Karl Ferdinand Werner observed, *rex*, *gens* and *regnum* formed a “triad”: There were *gentes* which formed a vast kingdom, and there were others which were absorbed by or integrated into these realms.¹⁴ However, it is by no means clear whether existing *gentes* established kingdoms, which would mean that the “foundation” of the “Germanic” kingdoms marks a development from *gens* to *regnum*, or whether *gentes* resulted from the establishment of realms, or—the most probable assumption—whether there was mutual influence, which in turn affected both *gens* and *regnum*: how this all worked is equally unclear. An important contribution to this problem has recently been made by Hans Hubert Anton who, by considering the geographical terminology, asked how the “gentile” communities/federations (or peoples) developed into political and territorial ones. He showed that extensive geographical terms (such as *Hispania*, *Gallia*, *Germania*, and *Italia*) partly lost their political connotation in the new realms and were overtaken by those of new segmentations (such as *Aquitania*, *Burgundia*, and *Francia*), but survived (or were revived) as expressions for the kingdoms in the case of Italy and Spain, and were also used by “foreign” writers outside the respective kingdom.¹⁵ Thus, geographical terms lost and regained their political impact and (again) superseded ethnic ones. This, however, is of course only one aspect of a most complicated process.

Ethnicity and ethnogenesis meanwhile have come to be seen as extremely difficult and complex phenomena. Since Reinhard Wenskus published his great book on “The Growth of the early medieval *gentes*” in 1961,¹⁶ it has become more and more clear and may now be considered a nearly undisputed conviction that the *gentes* of the

¹⁴ K.F. Werner, “Völker und Regna”, *Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Reichs- und Nationsbildung in Deutschland und Frankreich*, ed. C. Brühl and B. Schneidmüller, *Historische Zeitschrift Beiheft N.F. 24* (München 1997) pp. 15–44, particularly pp. 15–6.

¹⁵ H.H. Anton, “Antike Großländer, politisch-kirchliche Traditionen und mittelalterliche Reichsbildung”, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung* 86 (2000) pp. 33–85.

¹⁶ R. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln-Graz 1961).

Migration period and the Early Middle Ages were not stable “ethnic” units (in the “biological” sense of an *Abstammungsgemeinschaft*), but “historical”, that is, unstable communities that were prone to change.¹⁷ If former research identified “peoples” as communities of human beings who spoke the same language, as members of a cultural group represented in archaeological findings, as groups presented under a single name in written sources, as ethnic groups of the same descent, or as political groups under the leadership of a king or prince, we have, in the meantime and to an equal degree, not only become aware that these five elements do not correspond with each other, but also that each of these elements is contestable.¹⁸ The key factors, however, according to Wenskus and his followers, were politics and tradition. “The ethnogenesis of early medieval peoples, therefore, was not a matter of blood, but of shared traditions and institutions; belief in common origins could give cohesion to rather heterogeneous communities. The early medieval kingdoms were, for

¹⁷ Cf. Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*; id., “Ethnogenesisen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum (6. bis 10. Jahrhundert)”, *Frühmittelalterliche Ethnogenese im Alpenraum*, ed. H. Beumann and W. Schröder, *Nationes* 5 (Sigmaringen 1985) pp. 97–151; *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 1, ed. W. Pohl and H. Wolfram, *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 201. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 12 (Wien 1990); *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung. Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. K. Brunner and B. Merta, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 31 (Wien-München 1994). An instructive overview and estimation of this research is given by W. Pohl, “Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung: eine Zwischenbilanz”, *ibid.*, pp. 9–26; cf. id., “Gentilismus”, *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 11 (2nd edn., 1998) pp. 91–101; and, recently, id., “Zur Bedeutung ethnischer Unterscheidungen in der frühen Karolingerzeit”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12, ed. H.-J. Häbler (Oldenburg 1999) pp. 193–298. Cf. also *After Empire. Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda, *Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology* (Woodbridge 1995); S. Gasparri, *Prima delle nazioni. Popoli, etnie e regni fra Antichità e Medioevo* (Rom 1997). For later periods: *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. S. Forde, L. Johnson and A.V. Murray, *Leeds Texts and Monographs. New Series* 14 (Leeds 1995); *Peuples du Moyen Âge. Problèmes d'identification. Séminaires Sociétés, Idéologies et Croyances au Moyen Âge*, ed. C. Carozzi and H. Taviani-Carozzi, *Publications de l'Université de Provence* (Aix-en-Provence 1996); *Medieval Europeans. Studies in ethnic identity and national perspectives in medieval Europe*, ed. A.P. Smyth (Basingstoke 1998). For a general archaeological approach to the question, see S. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity* (London 1997).

¹⁸ Cf. W. Pohl, “Franken und Sachsen: die Bedeutung ethnischer Prozesse im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert”, *799—Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn. Beiträge zum Katalog der Ausstellung Paderborn 1999*, ed. C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff (Mainz 1999) pp. 233–6; id., *Die Germanen*, pp. 7–10.

a time, a successful form of making such ethnic communities the focus of states on the territory of the empire.”¹⁹ Seen from this angle, modern ethnogenetical research has to investigate the subject in a different way:

1. If *gentes* were not static units but prone to change, we are obliged to investigate these changes in the course of the Early Middle Ages rather than ask for the origins of peoples.
2. If *gentes* were political rather than “ethnic” units,²⁰ and, consequently, in many cases tended to establish kingdoms (within the area of, but also outside the institution of the Roman Empire), the relation between *gens* and *regnum* which is the theme of this volume becomes not only a central, but also a crucial issue.²¹
3. If *gentes* were groups formed by tradition (*Traditionsgemeinschaften*) rather than by descent, we have to inquire into their self-perception as a *gens*.

These are central questions concerning the transformation of the Roman world and the establishment of the late antique and early medieval “Germanic” kingdoms. Without doubt, the Roman Empire was not assassinated by the “Germans”, as André Piganiol, still influenced by the burden of the Second World War, believed.²² But we are now much less certain about the role of the “Germanic”

¹⁹ Thus W. Pohl, “The Barbarian Successor States”, *The Transformation of the Roman World A.D. 400–900*, ed. L. Webster and M. Brown (London 1997) pp. 33–47, here p. 46.

²⁰ Recently, with reference to Bede, H. Kleinschmidt, “The Geuissae and Bede: On the Innovations of Bede’s Concept of the *Gens*”, *The Community, the Family and the Saint. Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe. Selected Proceedings of the International Medieval Congress. University of Leeds, 4–7 July 1994, 10–13 July 1995*, ed. J. Hill and M. Swan, *International Medieval Research 4* (Turnhout 1998) pp. 77–102, again, claimed a conceptual change of the *gens* in so far as the political concept of a *gens* as a group of settlers under the control of one ruler was a secondary, post-migrational one.

²¹ Cf. C. Brühl, *Deutschland—Frankreich. Die Geburt zweier Völker* (Köln-Wien 1990; repr. 1995); M. Becher, *Rex, Dux und Gens. Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des sächsischen Herzogtums im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert*, *Historische Studien 444* (Husum 1996); K.F. Werner, “Volk, Nation, Nationalismus, Masse, III–V”, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland 7* (1992) pp. 171–281.

²² A. Piganiol, “Les causes de la ruine de l’empire romain”, id., *L’Empire chrétien* (Paris 1947) pp. 411–22 [repr. id., “Die Ursachen des Untergangs des Römischen Reiches”, *Der Untergang des Römischen Reiches*, ed. K. Christ, *Wege der Forschung 269* (Darmstadt 1970) pp. 270–85].

peoples in this process. Orosius's report that the Visigothic king Athaulf planned to destroy the Roman Empire, in order to establish a Gothic one,²³ seems completely anachronistic for his time. In the end, however, historical development seemed to have reached a state which came very close to Athaulf's plans, achieved by the very "Germanic" kingdoms which (without knowing or planning it) had become the "heirs" of a Roman Empire which in its turn had developed into an alienated figure far away in the East. Therefore, we are forced to investigate very closely what had happened in the meantime.

Examining the relation between *regnum* and *gens* is an approach which, in this context, may reveal the (different) phases of political changes and, even more important, the causes and consequences of the "establishment" of new kingdoms. Moreover, it helps us to recognize differences and similarities between individual peoples and realms. There are, however, (at least) six crucial problems inherent in this question.

- The first problem is already inherent in the terms "peoples" and "kingdom", terms that can no longer be defined per se (despite their necessary interrelation when "peoples", too, are seen as having a political connotation). Not only is "peoples" an ambivalent term (and, what is more, the German *Volk* has become fraught with ideologically incriminating connotations), but also a "kingdom" does not simply emerge where there is a king, but can or should be understood as a political order, or a "state" with a sufficient measure of organization. Since the interest of this volume lies in the relationship between "peoples" and "kingdoms", our concern is focussed on those *gentes* which developed into, and gave their name to (larger) *regna*, particularly with regard to the successor states of the Roman Empire. In practice, however, it is not at all easy to draw a clear line between "Germanic" communities and "Germanic" kingdoms as successor states of the Empire.
- A second, and particularly prevalent problem is the term "Germanic" itself. After centuries of a seemingly clear distinction, fol-

²³ Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* 7,43,3 ff., ed. K. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna 1882; repr. Hildesheim 1967) pp. 559–60.

lowed by doubts and restrictions, we have now reached the point where we are not even sure any more what “Germanic” really means. The *Germani* of the Roman sources seem to be a Roman construction (and, moreover, the term was not used very frequently), and there are no signs of a “Germanic” self-conception among the “barbarian” peoples which the Romans considered (or we think) to have been “Germanic”. In other words, the “Germanic” peoples did not conceive themselves as being “Germanic”, or at least did not attach any importance to this feature. The term can be defined, of course, in terms of language, but with regard to the early period we have little knowledge of the language spoken by those peoples which, according to Reinhard Wenskus, were conglomerations of different communities anyway. Moreover, previous (German) research overemphasized many phenomena (such as *Herrschaft*, *Eigenkirche*, *Sippe*, or *Gefolgschaft*) that seem specific to the Early Middle Ages rather than being typically “Germanic”. It is important, therefore, to compare so-called “Germanic” peoples and kingdoms with presumably non-Germanic ones. As a consequence of these problems, it was suggested that the term “Germanic” be dropped completely in this volume, but to substitute it with “barbarian” would only mean adopting another (Roman) ideology which, in the final analysis, is as inadequate as “Germanic”. The only neutral alternative, therefore, would be to simply speak of late antique and early medieval peoples and kingdoms, but, of course, this would merely be evading the problem. Probably it is more important to remain constantly aware of the problematic questions that are inherent in our topic. Moreover, it would also be necessary to have some critical reflection on the term “Roman”.

- The third problem concerns the difference in development and structure of “Germanic” kingdom-building. Sometimes the formation of a realm focuses more or less on a single act (such as Theodoric’s Ostrogothic kingdom), sometimes it resembles a gradual movement (as under both Visigothic kingdoms, the “Tolosan” as well as the “Toledan” one), sometimes it consists of an accumulation of territories and realms (as with Clovis’s “foundation” of the Merovingian kingdom of the Franks). Moreover, we should not forget that we are comparing developments that extended over a considerable period, from the early fifth to the late eighth centuries.

- The fourth problem is obviously the state of research on the ethnogenesis of the early medieval peoples. After four decades of intensive work on this topic using a “modern” approach we now have far more knowledge of what a “Germanic” *gens* was not, than what it was: that is, we are aware of so many problems that it seems nearly impossible to provide any straightforward answers. We do know, however, as already mentioned in the beginning of this introduction, that the *gentes* were not stable groups with clear ethnic origins, but (constantly) changing (an extremely important point), and that the political factor was at least as decisive for these developments as the (usually fictional) consciousness of common origins. Ethnogenetical processes, therefore, can no longer be considered without taking into account the political development, that is, without considering the establishment of kingdoms. However, the problem which remains is how to define ethnicity. By which criteria, or by which historical evidence can ethnicity be comprehended? We have to bear in mind that there are different approaches to, and definitions of ethnicity, and in consequence we have to make explicit what we, that is, each contributor respectively, mean by using terms, or rather theoretical constructions, such as *gens* or *regnum*.
- The fifth problem, accordingly, lies in the (newly emerging) kingdoms and their character. It is not so much a matter of the long (but probably typically German) discussion whether (or when) these kingdoms may be called “states” (which is a modern expression anyway)—“state” in this sense may be used as a term for the system of political order which has to be described under contemporary conditions, however it is labelled. Far more important, and indeed extremely relevant, is the question of which bonds and institutions (if there were “institutions”) the power of the “Germanic” kings rested in. Were these “Germanic” or Roman elements? or both? or neither? And was there a “state” (or a kingdom) that was not exclusively dependent on the ruling of a (certain) king or dynasty? What were, for example, the differences between the “realms” of Marbod in the first, Attila in the fifth and Theodoric in the sixth century?
- A sixth problem is the question of our sources and how to deal with them. The discrepancy between the evidence we have for each individual kingdom makes it inevitable that we should consider the quality and range of sources for each contribution respectively, when we aim at comparing the different kingdoms. The

real problem, however, goes deeper. It includes not only the well-known and lamentable fact that at least the early stages of the “Germanic” peoples and kingdoms are almost exclusively recorded by Roman sources and seen from a Roman perspective, but, even more important, the more general question of whether there were decisive differences between the actual historical process and the way it was perceived by the contemporary authors of those times, not to mention the authors’ bias, intentions, narrative structures, or choice of events. This is not only a question of criticism of our sources. As they did not (and could not) have our concept of, and, moreover, our interest in ethnogenesis, that neither means that they were wrong, nor does it mean that our theories are inadequate. Although we have to go farther in our explanations than contemporary writers did, at the same time we have to be aware of the characteristic features of their perceptions because it was *their* view (not ours) that was underlying the thoughts as well as the deeds of the people of those times. Thus we are obliged to take into account what they meant when they spoke of a *gens* or a *regnum* and how (and if) they saw any changes.

Looking at these problems, the relations between *gentes* and *regna* (or between a certain *gens* and a corresponding *regnum*) are neither clear, nor is it at all self-evident that there was an (explorable) development from *gens* to *regnum* or how a people changed after the establishment of a kingdom. Neither is it self-evident that these changes were perceived by our sources or what our sources made of them. Certainly, however, there were alterations that we are able to observe and compare, and it is the aim of the present volume to consider these relations and developments as well as the political and “ethnic” structures in different peoples and regions.

This volume may be regarded as the result of a long process of discussion that the majority of the contributors were allowed to enjoy for five years supported by the European Science Foundation and its project “The Transformation of the Roman World” (TRW). The Working Group 1 (“Imperium and gentes”) of this project, chaired by Walter Pohl, after discussions on the early kingdoms, gentile structures and other topics,²⁴ aimed at clarifying the crucial question of

²⁴ Cf. *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. W. Pohl, The Transformation of the Roman World 1 (Leiden-New York-Köln 1997); *Strategies*

the relation between *gens* and *regnum* to some extent in a comparative approach. A first step was taken during the meeting at Barcelona (October 30–November 1, 1997) where some members considered one *gens* (or *regnum*) each under common leading questions. This discussion was continued in the working group's last meeting in Manerba del Garda (October 22–25, 1998) where the group decided to elaborate its results, to complement them by further articles, which were to include non-Germanic developments, and to publish them in a volume of the TRW series. Pre-final drafts of all papers were distributed among the participants and some invited experts and were discussed at a meeting in Bellagio, sponsored by the Rockefeller Center, which most of the colleagues involved were able to attend (December 11–15, 2000). The contributors were given leading questions, previously agreed upon, which were meant to assist and warrant a comparative approach, although these questions naturally had to be adapted to the special cases respectively. These questions were:

- (main and central question): Was there a development from a “Germanic” *gens* of the Migration Period to a “Germanic” kingdom? Or did a *gens* (or this *gens*) not exist until after the establishment of a kingdom?
- What sorts of changes and conditions led to, or represented the development towards, respectively, the establishment of a “Germanic” kingdom?
- What was the role of a gentile identity (*Stammesbewußtsein*) for the establishment of a *regnum*?
- What sorts of changes in the “constitution” (*Verfassung*) of a people and a kingdom (such as central organs of power, local power structures, or links between the two) were linked to the establishment of a kingdom? How did socio-economic developments contribute to this process?
- What was the role of kings in this development?
- What part did the Roman Empire play in this process?
- In all these points, special attention should be paid to change and development.

of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998).

In pursuing this enterprise, this volume is deliberately not just confined to the “Germanic” peoples (Anglo-Saxons, Bavarians, Burgundians, Franks, Langobards, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Visigoths), but compares these with the West and East Roman tradition (Byzantium and Late Antique Spain) and also with non-Germanic peoples (such as Celts, Huns and Avars), and even with the Islamic kingdoms in early medieval Spain. It also seemed advisable to include a comparative survey of the different Germanic laws. The editors are particularly grateful to those colleagues who willingly agreed to join the “group” at a later phase. They wish to thank the participants for helpful comments on the introduction and conclusion, and particularly Ian Wood for a last revision of those texts that were translated into English. They would also like to thank Julian Deahl and Marcella Mulder of Brill Academic Publishers for guiding their work and preparing the volume for publication. Last but not least, they are grateful to Sören Kaschke (Hamburg) who has transformed articles that varied in form and footnotes into a standardized and legible volume.

By following the leading questions mentioned above and concentrating on the topic of the relationship between *gentes* and *regna*, we hope to contribute to an essential problem and help to fill a crucial gap, both by presenting concise articles on the single kingdoms dealt with here and by suggesting a basis for a comparative approach to this subject which is not only central for the period of the transformation of the Roman world but, in a time of changing national identities, also bears significant signs of actuality for the present day.

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THE EMPIRE, THE *GENTES* AND THE *REGNA*

Evangelos Chrysos

In this volume the route taken by the individual *gentes* in the process of establishing themselves as *regna* in or at the periphery of the Roman Empire is studied comparatively. In this short contribution I will try to articulate some common characteristics of the influence the Roman Empire may have exercised on this process.

In a seminal paper on the Gothic kingship Herwig Wolfram has made the observation that the transformation of the *gentes* into *regna*, as we can grasp it through the evidence in Greek and Roman sources, could take place only in some sort of connection with the Empire.¹ It was mainly the need to accommodate themselves politically and economically in their new environment and in relationship with the Empire that the migrating peoples shaped the structure of their polities as *regna*. Is this hypothesis correct and how are we to understand it?

If we base our analysis on the well established and accepted assumption about the *gentes* being not solidly formed and statically established racial entities but groups of people open to constant ethnogenetic change and adaptation to new realities, then it is reasonable to expect that their relationship with the Empire had a tremendous impact on their formation. We can grasp this impact in the following three phases of their development. It is unnecessary to underline the point that these phases as presented here are merely indicative of processes that follow different paths with different speed.

First phase

The individual or corporate recruitment of barbarians during the migration period in the Roman army² offered them experience of

¹ H. Wolfram, "Gotisches Königtum und römisches Kaisertum von Theodosius dem Großen bis Justinian I.", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 13 (1979) pp. 1-28, here pp. 1-2.

² T.S. Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome* (Bloomington 1994); M. Cesa, *Tardoantico e barbari* (Como 1994).

how the imperial army was organized, how the government arranged the military and functional logistics of their involvement as soldiers or officers and how it administered their practical life, how the professional expertise and the social values of the individual soldier were cultivated in the camp and on the battlefield, how the ideas about the state and its objectives were to be implemented by men in uniform, how the Empire was composed and how it functioned at an administrative level. This knowledge of and experience with the Romans opened to individual members of the *gentes* a path which, once taken, would lead them to more or less substantial affiliation or even solidarity with the Roman world. To take an example from the economic sphere: The service in the Roman army introduced the individual or corporate members into the monetary system of the Empire since quite a substantial part of their salary was paid to them in cash. With money in their hands the “guests” were by necessity exposed to the possibility of taking part in the economic system, of becoming accustomed to the rules of the wide market, of absorbing the messages of or reacting to the imperial propaganda passed to the citizens through the legends on the coins. In addition the goods offered in the markets influenced and transformed the newcomers’ food and aesthetic tastes and their cultural horizon. Furthermore Roman *civilitas* was an attractive goal for every individual wishing to succeed in his social advancement. Persons like Flavius Fravitta, “by birth a barbarian but otherwise a Greek not only in habits but also in character and religion”³ set a remarkable paradigm to be followed by others.

Second phase

Similar but more substantial and in depth is the path migrating *gentes* took when they entered the wide orbit of the Roman world either in accordance with a peace treaty as *foederati* or subjected to Roman domination as *dediticii*.⁴ Their communication with the Empire on a local level, with provincial governors, or generals and ultimately with

³ Zosimus, *Histoire Nouvelle* 5,20, ed. and transl. F. Paschoud, 4 vols. (Paris 1971–89).

⁴ See the papers of G. Wirth, P. Heather, W. Liebeschuetz and E. Chrysos in *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. W. Pohl, The Transformation of the Roman World 1 (Leiden-New York-Köln 1997).

the imperial government had by necessity to be in a Roman (Latin or Greek) language and within the current legal and social concepts and terminology which Rome had developed for her dealings with her neighbours. The political terms concerning the regulations for settlement on public, confiscated or derelict private land, the conditions of autonomous (legal) conduct within the Roman system of control and coercion, the framework for trade and the transfer of foods for the people and—at a later stage—the work of the missionaries, who by preaching the Christian gospel opened to the converted newcomers a gate to the Graeco-Roman culture of the Mediterranean; all these and many other, more or less obvious channels of communication and means of affiliation served as the instruments for shaping the *regna* within or at the edge of the Roman Empire. Furthermore an extensive nexus of kinships at all social levels, including the leading figures in the *gentes* among themselves and with members of the Roman aristocracy and even the imperial families,⁵ created a new intermixed society despite the practically disregarded prohibition of intermarriage between Romans and barbarians.⁶ However, the way the Romans expected the gentile leadership to behave within what was understood as the “international community”, created the demand for access to standardised forms of political discourse. This is obvious in the adaptation of imperial methods of diplomatic discourse by the *regna*.

⁵ A. Demandt, “The Osmosis of Late Roman and Germanic Aristocracies”, *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E. Chrysos and A. Schwarcz (Vienna 1989) pp. 75–86 with the attached table, and S. Krautschick, “Die Familie der Könige in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter”, *ibid.*, pp. 109–42. This “family of kings” was a real one and had little in common with the fictitious system anticipated by F. Dölger in his famous theory of “Die ‘Familie der Könige’”, in his *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt* (Darmstadt 1964) pp. 34–69. For a critical detailed analysis see J. Moysidou, *To Byzantio kai oi boreioi geitones tou ton 10o aiona* (Athens 1995). Cf. E. Chrysos, “Legal Concepts and patterns for the Barbarians’ Settlement on Roman Soil”, *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, pp. 13–23, here pp. 13–4; *id.*, “Perceptions of the International Community of States during the Middle Ages”, *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung. Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. K. Brunner and B. Merta, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 31 (Wien-München 1994) pp. 293–307, here pp. 293–4.

⁶ H. Sivan, “The appropriation of Roman law in barbarian hands: ‘Roman-barbarian’ marriage in Visigothic Gaul and Spain”, *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998) pp. 189–203. On the Hispano-Romans see D. Claude, “Remarks about relations between Visigoths and Hispano-Romans in the seventh century”, *ibid.*, pp. 117–30.

Following this demand several forms of *imitatio imperii* were placed on the agenda. The court, the language, public ceremonies involving the king, court rituals, his titles and dress, forms of distinct munificence to the people and many other expressions of power were imitating Roman forms that were thought to safeguard and support the position of the *rex* as *dominus* over his *gens* and the Roman population in his *regnum*.⁷

Third phase

The legal arrangement with the Empire in one way or the other remained for quite some time the legal frame for the physical existence and the institutional consolidation of the new polities as *regna*. As we know from the case of the Vandals, part of the agreement with the Empire in A.D. 474 which created the basis for the institutionalization of the *gens* into a *regnum* in Africa was the agreed "order of succession" (*Nachfolgeordnung*)⁸ and it was the breach of this order by Gelimer that allowed Justinian to send Belisarius and the fleet against him. Similarly the breakdown of Theoderic's arrangement with Anastasius after the death of his son-in-law Eutharic in A.D. 518 opened the gate to a gradual destabilization of Amal rule in Italy and hence the murder of Amalasuintha, who personified the legitimacy of the regime, by her cousin Theodahad made the military intervention of Justinian inevitable.⁹ For the organization of the personal relations between individuals, members of the ruling *gens*

⁷ See M. McCormick, "Clovis at Tours, Byzantine Public Ritual and the Origins of Medieval Ruler Symbolism", *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, pp. 155–80.

⁸ D. Claude, "Probleme der vandalischen Herrschaftsnachfolge", *Deutsches Archiv* 30 (1974) pp. 329–55, here pp. 329–30.

⁹ Ch. Schäfer, *Der weströmische Senat als Träger antiker Kontinuität unter den Ostgotenkönigen (490–540 n.Chr.)* (St. Katharinen 1991) pp. 240–1; J. Moorhead, "Libertas and Nomen Romanum in Ostrogothic Italy", *Latomus* 46 (1988) pp. 161–8. For a long period of Amal rule over the *pars occidentis* people such as Cassiodorus and Ennodius would propagate Theoderic's image as the *custos libertatis et propugnator Romani nominis* (CIL X 6850) in order to legitimise him in the eyes of the Roman population, while in the years of decline (after 518 and more clearly after 526) Roman aristocrats dare to voice their hope for restoration of the *libertas Romana* anticipating the ideological preparation of Justinian's war of reconquista. Cf. J. Moorhead, "Italian loyalties during Justinian's Gothic War", *Byzantion* 53 (1983) pp. 575–96.

and the Roman local population, the two legal systems, i.e. the written Roman Law and the orally transmitted barbarian code of norms, had to be harmonized.

At the end of this development we find the creation of regnal legislation, the so-called *leges barbarorum*.¹⁰ It was this *lex*, the “national” code that gave the *gens* the necessary impetus for a maturing state. In this sense what Orosius cites as Athaulf’s dilemma concerning his attitude towards the Empire—regardless of its historical reliability¹¹—becomes a classic (at least a classicized) paradigm. Athaulf is said to have refrained from establishing a Gothic empire in the place of the Roman one, because his people would have difficulties in abiding by the laws (= *leges, sine quibus respublica non est respublica*).¹² Apparently it was known to everybody that in order to consolidate their territory and organize their people into kingdoms the kings needed the existence of a functioning legal system.

When this stage of development was reached the successor states experimented with what we can call the *aemulatio imperii*, an attitude operating as an advanced form of *imitatio*. To emulate the Empire meant for the successor states simply to present the merits of “national” achievement and compare their own activities, building programmes, political and military achievements and institutions, personal and collective piety, social care etc. with analogue Roman realities and consequently to claim equality and hence to be proud of their record. On the other hand, political and/or denominational eulogists were asked to articulate an ideological concept critical of Roman institutions, behaviour and practices that were to be condemned and opposed. Isidore of Seville, despite being consciously Hispano-Roman, launched a negative image of the Roman Empire and its past achievements in contrast to that of the juvenile and pious peoples of his time. In this sense he would recall intentionally that *multae gentes a Romano imperio recesserunt*.¹³

¹⁰ P. Wormald, “*Lex Scripta and Verbum Regis: Legislation and Germanic Kingship, from Euric to Cnut*”, *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds 1977) pp. 105–38 and the paper by the same author in this volume.

¹¹ W. Suerbaum, *Vom antiken zum frühmittelalterlichen Staatsbegriff* (3rd edn., Münster 1977) pp. 222–3.

¹² Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* 7,43, ed. K. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna 1882; repr. Hildesheim 1967).

¹³ Isidore of Seville, *Chronica maiora* 238, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 11 (Berlin 1894) p. 454. Cf. H. Löwe, “Von Theoderich dem Grossen zu Karl dem Grossen.

More influential in the Middle Ages—and current even today!—is Paul the Deacon’s perception of the Empire’s disturbing role in the formative development of the *regna*. In his much-quoted *Historia Romana* he replaces the regnal years of the emperors with incarnation chronology after Theoderic’s takeover in Italy in A.D. 492¹⁴ (the *Imperium Romanum* is replaced by the *Imperium Christianum*!). Hence he regards Justinian’s reconquista as a subjugation (*servitium*) of the “Romans” by the “Greeks” and consequently labels Justinian’s successors as “Greek” emperors, and thus no longer “Romans”.¹⁵ Over the next centuries questioning the *Romanitas* of the Empire of New Rome will remain a frequently applied method for pushing Constantinople to the periphery as an exotic and anachronistic survival from the past.

The next two alternative stages would take us beyond the period under investigation:

- The Franks, to be followed by others, set as their final goal, the *translatio imperii*. On the basis of the ideas introduced with the *Constitutum Constantini*, a text fabricated in the eighth century to serve papal aspirations of political hegemony in Italy, but which at the same time helped to re-arrange the world-system in favour of the Frankish interests, the Franks claimed the *imperium*, at least a Frankish *imperium*, and the *nomen imperatoris*, for their king. Many centuries later, in A.D. 1202, this attitude was to be followed by Pope Innocent III with his claim of the *translatio imperii ad Germanos*.¹⁶ (Two years later, the fourth crusade brought the sack of Constantinople and the establishment of a Latin Empire on the shores of Bosphorus!).

Das Werden des Abendlands im Geschichtsbild des frühen Mittelalters”, *Deutsches Archiv* 9 (1952) pp. 353–401, here pp. 363–4; G.B. Ladner, “On Roman Attitudes toward Barbarians in Late Antiquity”, *Viator* 7 (1976) pp. 1–26.

¹⁴ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Romana*, ed. A. Crivellucci, *Fonti per la storia d’Italia* 51 (Rome 1914): *cessante iam Romanae urbis imperio utiliusque aptiusque mihi videtur ab annis dominicae incarnationis supputationis lineam deducere*.

¹⁵ On this see now H. Hofmann, “Roma caput mundi? Rom und Imperium Romanum in der literarischen Diskussion zwischen Spätantike und dem 9. Jahrhundert”, *Roma fra oriente e occidente*, *Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo* 49 (Spoleto 2002) pp. 493–556, here pp. 534–5.

¹⁶ H. Beumann, “Unitas Ecclesiae—Unitas Imperii—Unitas Regni. Von der imperialen Reichseinheitsidee zur Einheit der Regna”, *Nascita dell’Europa ed Europa Carolingia: Un’equazione da verificare*, *Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo* 27 (Spoleto 1981) pp. 531–71.

- Those kings of the early medieval states who could not claim or dream of a *translatio imperii* for themselves would be consoled with the principle of—to use a medieval expression—*rex superiorem non recognoscens, imperator est in regno suo*.

The picture of the emergence and the shaping of the *regna* in constant and close connection with the Empire as suggested in this paper could create the wrong impression that the Empire remained throughout the critical period a static structure with no changes in form and life. On the contrary, it is true that the Empire was itself subjected to these developments. The idea and the functioning of the emperors, the social structure of the Roman population, the role of the army, the principles and the trends of the policy towards the neighbours, the cultural values and tastes, the impact of religion on everyday life and many other practical and theoretical aspects of public interaction underwent substantial changes. Some of these aspects in the Empire were directly or indirectly affected by the existence of the *regna* on formal Roman soil or at the edge of the imperial territory. The political developments caused by the occupation and conquest of Roman soil and parallel to that the consolidation of the successor states brought an equilibrium of growth and capabilities. The road to the strengthening and the stabilization of the *regna* caused what we can call the “regnalisation” of the Empire. The expression *regnum Romanum*, already in use in the fourth century, acquired real political meaning. The general use of the word *Romania* in the seventh and later centuries by the Byzantines for their Empire expressed the same attitude. In this sense the dispute with Constantinople over the imperial title of Charlemagne after his coronation in A.D. 800 was merely a quarrel about the *nomen imperatoris*.

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THE *LEGES BARBARORUM*:
LAW AND ETHNICITY IN THE POST-ROMAN WEST

Patrick Wormald

I

One experience shared by almost every “barbarian” *gens* that survived as a post-Roman polity into the seventh century was the eventual adoption of a written *lex*.¹ From this alone, it is clear that possession of a *lex* came to be a highly significant element in the making of any acknowledged political unit in the West. Further, the *leges* have enough in common to suggest that the processes which brought them forth were broadly similar. They entirely justify a “cross-*regnum*” approach, such as has often been essayed, and not only by legal historians.²

The salient difficulty here has been the historian’s usual bugbear of hindsighted teleology. It has been normal to read back into these texts the legislative assumptions espoused by legally literate western cultures since the twelfth century: principally that a mutually identifiable “law” is a fundamental ingredient in the personality of any people—

¹ Exceptions: most obviously the Avars (though perhaps not the Bulgars: R. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria: a comparative study across the early medieval frontier* [London 1975] pp. 124–5); also the Anglian and most Saxon peoples in Britain. For present purposes, it makes no difference that some had to await the eighth or early-ninth century (or in Scandinavia much later) for this.

² Thus, H. Brunner, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, 2 vols. (Leipzig 1906, 2nd edn. 1928); R. Buchner, *Die Rechtsquellen*, Wattenbach-Levison, Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter, Vorzeit und Karolinger, Beiheft (Weimar 1953); most recently, M. Lupoi, *Alle radici del mondo giuridico europeo* (Rome 1994), Engl. transl. *The Origins of the European Legal Order* (Cambridge 2000). See also J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford 1971) pp. 32–9; and my own approach—not, as has been observed, that of a legal historian—P. Wormald, “*Lex Scripta and Verbum Regis*: Legislation and Germanic kingship, from Euric to Cnut”, *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds 1977) pp. 105–38, reprinted and corrected in my *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West. Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London 1999) pp. 1–43; together with that volume’s Preface, pp. xi–xv; and my *The Making of English Law. King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*, vol. 1: *Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford 1999), chapter 2. In compiling this *retractatio*, I owe much to this volume’s editors and my fellow-contributors, notably Professor Wood and Dr Christys.

quis populus, eius lex, as it were.³ A law somehow emerges from the society to which it applies, helping not just to resolve its tensions but also to demarcate it as a community. Because the units that developed out of the western Empire were recognizably the germ of today's European states, as this volume is concerned to analyse, the *lex* that they came to profess must (it is thought) have been one of their defining features: scarcely less so than is the law enforced by the courts of modern governments.

On this supposition, the legislation of Germanic kings merely marks their assuming responsibility to regulate the problems of the kingdoms created by their armies. The persistence of Roman law within their *regna* would then amount to a concession on their part. Nor were Romans the only ones covered by this allegedly prevalent principle of "the personality of law". Any people incorporated into a realm must axiomatically have had an inherent *lex* of its own. That people, therefore, could only feasibly be ruled by recognizing their "law". Hence, codes were issued for peoples other than the ascendant "*Volk*", which these peoples were then allowed to apply in cases involving their members.⁴ This may indeed have become the position by the time of the Carolingian hegemony. But it is very far from clear that it was true anywhere before the seventh century, while in certain parts of the West it was never the case. Nor is it obvious how Roman law can have been something conceded, as if to a minority group, when the aristocracies that adhered to it were anything but marginal; or why the charters and *formulae* that governed property relations should have remained deeply influenced by Roman concepts, when so few of the *leges* seemingly were. And how did it come about that the Edict of King Rothari of the Lombards (643) gives every sign of being an unambiguously "Germanic" document with little to say of Romans, when the legislation of his successors not only reflected the presence of Romans but was evidently influenced by their legal ideas?

³ Note the discussion (following Regino of Prüm) of legal pluralism as a criterion of ethnicity, and of its erosion from the twelfth century onwards, by R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (London 1994) pp. 197–220.

⁴ This article of faith, widespread in the "*Rechtsschule*" (Buchner, *Rechtsquellen*, p. 5)—though controversial as regards Visigothic legislation—is epitomized in S.L. Guterman, *From Personal to Territorial Law. Aspects of the History and Structure of the Western Legal-Constitutional Tradition* (New York 1972).

A central thesis of this volume is that the foundation of a *regnum* was not simply a matter of displacing the structures of imperial government. To support that thesis, we need a view of early medieval law-making which explains how extant texts developed out of established Roman practice. In the argument that follows, two principles will be primary. First, chronology will be closely observed. The course of legislative development will be plotted from the fifth century, when it can be taken for granted that Roman procedures remained dominant (except where, as in Britain, all aspects of *Romanitas* were evidently at risk) through to the ninth, when something of a new legislative equilibrium seems to have emerged. Second, the maximum possible attention will be given to geographical variation. Just as some post-Roman regimes were clearly a lot more Roman in style and machinery than others, so their legal pronouncements were exposed to variable levels and types of Roman influence. At the same time, it is regarded as *not* likely that the legal memorials of post-Roman society were merely varieties of a Roman legacy. Much in “Germanic” law can be adequately explained as sub-Roman provincial routine. But a great deal of the extant material can only be understood in terms of the customs imported by the West’s new masters.

II

The legislation of the later Roman emperors was pre-eminently the province of their “Quaestors of the Sacred Palace”.⁵ The Praetorian Prefects of the Severan dynasty were among the great lawyers of all time, with correspondingly enriching results on imperial rescripts. Quaestors from Constantine to Justinian were not always legally untrained but they were above all rhetoricians, with literary tastes to match. The quintessential case is Ausonius, drafted from the lecture-room of Bordeaux University to address and administer his ex-pupil’s realm. Their legislative output was thus characterized by a

⁵ For what follows, see above all A.M. Honoré, “The Making of the Theodosian Code”, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanistische Abteilung* 103 (1986) pp. 133–222; followed up by his *Law in the Crisis of Empire, 379–455 A.D. The Theodosian Dynasty and its Quaestors* (Oxford 1998); with, as background, his *Emperors and Lawyers* (London 1981).

new expansiveness and sonority, which has done much to persuade historians of the depth of the empire's problems—especially given that the compilers of the Theodosian (435–8) and Justinianic (529–34) Codes generally obeyed their instructions to preserve only what was of general import, deleting all traces of any pronouncement's specific context. Two implications of this position are crucial for the understanding of sub-Roman law-making. First, appearances in the Codes to the contrary, later imperial law continued to be made, as ever since the first Caesars, in response to petitions and pressures from citizens.⁶ That law not be generated by the solicitations of special interests was one of the more spectacularly disregarded late Roman prohibitions. Second, imperial decrees were “vulgarized”, like Roman law throughout the post-Constantinian empire (except perhaps along the Beirut-Constantinople axis). They were products of the educational system that qualified literary specialists to rule the state, a system in which law of course had its place, yet subsidiary to the imperatives of a properly Demosthenic or Ciceronian training.⁷

The Ausonian model of governance survived to steer post-imperial regimes in the same direction. The *Variae* of Cassiodorus were composed—and preserved—as literary showpieces by a highly trained Italian rhetorician, but this does not mean that they were any the less official pronouncements by Italy's Ostrogothic kings.

The lamentable grievance of Constantius and Venerius has moved my [King Athalaric's] serenity: they complain that they have been deprived by Tanca of their legal property [. . .] They add that, lest they should try an action to reclaim their own, he is imposing on them the status of meanest slavery. Therefore your mightiness, in obedience to this decree [*decretum*], is to command the aforementioned person to attend your court. There the whole truth of the case is to be examined, and you are to dispense a justice that accords with law.

Tanca's name implies a Gothic identity, as does that of the letter's addressee, Cunigast *vir illustris*, whose own depredations Boethius claimed to have obstructed.⁸ A Roman official was making a Gothic

⁶ The classic account is now F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World, 31 B.C.–A.D. 337* (London 1977).

⁷ On all this, the fundamental account remains that of F. Wieacker, *Allgemeine Zustände und Rechtszustände gegen Ende des weströmischen Reichs*, *Ius Romanum Medii Aevi* 1,2a (Milano 1963); but note the reservations of Honoré, *Law in the Crisis of Empire*, pp. 19–23.

⁸ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 8,28, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 12 (Berlin 1894) [hence-

king see that justice was done to Romans by Goths. The *Variae* also included a “General Edict” in Athalaric’s name (533–4), decrying sundry current breaches of *civilitas*: *pervasio* and other judicial malpractice, adultery, concubinage and bigamy, extorted gifts, sorcery and homicide, and abuse of appeals procedure.⁹ The same topics and many others no less typical of later imperial law-giving feature in the well-known “Edict” of Theodoric himself (493–526), a short code explicitly directed at “barbarians” and Romans.¹⁰ Now, Cassiodorus announced in Theodoric’s name that cases among the Goths were to be settled by his “edicts”, those of Romans were to go before “Roman examiners”, and those between Goth and Roman should be “decided by fair reason in association with a Roman jurisconsult”; “so each may keep his own laws, and with various judges one Justice may embrace the whole realm”. The implication here is that Theodoric laid down written law for Goths. That would square with the remark of the “Valesian Anonymous” that “by the Goths, because of his edict in which he established justice, he was judged to be in all respects their best king”.¹¹ Theodoric *may* have done something of the sort. His Ravenna scribes produced the most spectacular monument of early barbarian culture in the *Codex Argenteus* of the Gothic Bible; not to mention charters signed manually in Gothic script and language. Jordanes, probably following Cassiodorus’ lost Gothic History, knew of written *belagines* traceable to the dawn

forth: *Variae*], translations: Cassiodorus, *Variae*, ed. and transl. S.J.B. Barnish, Translated Texts for Historians 12 (Liverpool 1992) p. 106 [henceforth: transl. Barnish]; Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* 1,4, ed. and transl. S.J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library [*The theological tractates*] (2nd edn., London 1973) pp. 148–9.

⁹ *Variae* 9,18; 9,19–20 (transl. Barnish, pp. 116–21).

¹⁰ Most conveniently edited by J. Baviera in *Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani* 2, ed. S. Riccobono et al. (2nd edn., Florence 1968–69) pp. 683–710: for its remit, see Prol.; for injustice: 9; 55; 73–74; 91; 103; 129; on *potentiores* etc.: 43–47; 145; marriage: 36–39; 54; 59–67; 93; slaves: 48–49; 56; 68–71; 78–87; 94–96; 117–118; 120–121; 128; 148; inheritance etc.: 23–33; 90; rape: 17–22; 92; homicide: 15–16; 99. Though it has been strongly argued that the Edict is that of one of the Visigothic Theodorics in fifth-century Gaul, Dr Barnish has pointed out to me that clauses 10 and 111 seem to reflect Italian conditions, and that *Variae* 4,10 probably refers to clauses 123–124; since there is no reason to suppose that Cassiodorus issued all Theodoric’s decrees, the “Edict’s” lack of Cassiodoran rhetorical ornament is no objection to its Ostrogothic provenance.

¹¹ *Variae* 7,3 (transl. T. Hodgkin, *The Letters of Cassiodorus* [Oxford 1886] p. 321); Anonymus Valesianus, *Fragmenta* 2,12, ed. and transl. J.C. Rolfe, *Ammianus Marcellinus* 12 (Cambridge Mass. 1939) pp. 544–5.

of Gothic history.¹² Yet all we can know for sure is that Ostrogothic kings made law for Goth and Roman alike. Roman officialdom gave barbarian kings the role of making law for Italy, as they were also entrusted with its defence.

Italy was always a special case. But it is not unreasonable to extrapolate from Italian paradigms when sifting evidence of poorer quality from other Latin-speaking provinces. Sidonius Apollinaris was no Cassiodorus, yet his poems and letters strongly suggest that his friends took on Cassiodoran functions for the Visigothic and Burgundian kings of southern Gaul.¹³ Unfortunately, Gallic legal texts are very erratically preserved. The apparently earliest phase of Visigothic law-making survives only as a fragmentary palimpsest. This may well be equated with the first written record of Gothic law, dated by Isidore of Seville to the reign of Euric (466–84). But if so, Euric seems to refer to laws of Theodoric I (419–51).¹⁴ Likewise, the extant *Lex Burgundionum* was most probably the work of Sigismund in 517. But Gregory of Tours reported that Gundobad (474–516) issued “*leges mitiores* [...] that there be no undue oppression of the Romans”, and the Burgundian code was later called *Lex Gundobada*.¹⁵ The best resolution of these conundra is that Theodoric I and Gundobad had

¹² *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* 20,704, ed. A. Bruckner and R. Marichal (Zurich 1982); *Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700* 2, ed. J.-O. Tjäder (Lund-Stockholm 1955) pp. 95–6. On Jordanes and the *belagines*: Jordanes, *Getica* 11, ed T. Mommsen, MGH AA 5,1 (Berlin 1882) pp. 73–5, see comment by P.J. Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford 1991) p. 36. The fact remains that *belagines* is not in Cassius Dio’s account of the Getic proto-hero, nor does it seem to be a Greek word; whereas the word’s central syllable (cf. OE *lagu!*) makes a strong case for regarding it as Germanic and legal: S. Feist, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der Gotischen Sprache* (Leiden 1939) p. 91.

¹³ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 7,311–13, ed. and transl. W.B. Anderson [*Poems and Letters*], Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Cambridge Mass. 1936/65) vol. 1, p. 144: the future Emperor Avitus as *assertor legum* under Theodoric I; *Carm.* 5,562, vol. 1, p. 108: Magnus of Narbonne *dictat modo iura Getis* when prefect in 458–9; *Ep.* 2,1,3, vol. 1, p. 416: Seronatus *leges Theodosianas calcans, Theudoricianasque proponens*; *Carm.* 23,447–9, vol. 1, p. 312 and *Ep.* 8,3,3, vol. 2, p. 408: Leo of Narbonne eclipsing Appius Claudius, and putting *declamationes* in Euric’s mouth which *frenat arma sub legibus*; *Ep.* 5,5,3, vol. 2, p. 180: Syagrius a *novus Burgundionum Solon in legibus disserendis*.

¹⁴ *Codex Euricianus* 277 (significantly on the *sortes Gothicae et tertias Romanorum*); 305; and cf. 327?, ed. K. Zeumer, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 1 (Hannover 1902) pp. 5; 16; 25 [henceforth: *Cod. Eur.*].

¹⁵ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,33, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SSrM 1,1 (2nd edn., Hannover 1951) p. 81. For this persuasive view of the genesis of *Lex Burgundionum*, see Ian Wood this volume, pp. 253–4.

issued individual laws on particular problems brought to their attention, as emperors and Ostrogothic kings did. Much of the Burgundian *Lex* gives just that impression, and the topics covered by the Italian texts recur there and in the Visigothic material.¹⁶ That these laws and others should have been gathered into “codes” by their successors was simply a further case of barbarian-led regimes following the Roman *exemplum*.

If the Italian analogy holds, there is no reason to think that Euric’s or Sigismund’s codes were targeted only at their own peoples, any more than were the Ostrogothic edicts of Theodoric or Athalaric (i.e. Cassiodorus). The Burgundian *Lex* never said it was. Very much more of it concerns Burgundians and Romans in inter-relationship than Burgundians alone.¹⁷ The Visigothic palimpsest gives no warrant for the widespread view that Euric’s code consisted exclusively of Gothic law for Gothic use. Isidore’s *Historia Gothorum* says merely that “under this king [Euric], the Goths began to have *instituta legum* in writing, for before they were governed by tradition and custom alone”. That was not to say that Euric legislated only for Goths; Isidore need have meant no more than that Goths were for the first time integrated into the *lex scripta* regime of the old Empire.¹⁸ The Roman law of the Visigothic kingdom was recodified in Alaric II’s name in 506, and a shorter equivalent is extant for the Burgundian realm. But neither of these points sustain the proposition that Euric’s

¹⁶ This is especially clear with the *Novellae*, cf. *Liber Constitutionum* 42–55; 62; 64; 74–81, ed. L.R. von Salis, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 2,1 (Hannover 1892) [henceforth: *Lib. Const.*]; *Constitutiones Extravagantes* 20, ed. L.R. von Salis, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 2,1 (Hannover 1892) [henceforth: *Const. Extr.*]. *Lib. Const.* 42; 52; 62; 76; 79 and *Const. Extr.* 20 bear their own dates, *Lib. Const.* 42; 76 and 79 being apparently laws of Gundobad. Among topics covered in n. 10, cf. on injustice: *Lib. Const.* 1 and *Cod. Eur.*, pp. 28; 31–2 for probable fragments of the *Codex Euricianus*, with *Lex Visigothorum*, ed. K. Zeumer, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 1 (Hannover 1902) pp. 46–79 [henceforth: *Lex Vis.*] for a Spanish law of 546 on judicial expenses; on *potiores* etc.: *Cod. Eur.* 276–277; 312; *Lib. Const.* 22; 54–55; 60; 84; *Const. Extr.* 21,12; on marriage: *Cod. Eur.* 319; *Lib. Const.* 12; 34; 36; 44; 52; 61; 66; 68–69; 86; 100–101; on slaves: *Cod. Eur.* 288; 300; *Lib. Const.* 6–7; 20; 39; 77; on inheritance etc.: *Cod. Eur.* 320 ff.; *Lib. Const.* 14; 24; 42; 51; 53; 59; 62; 65; 74–75; 78; 85; 87; on rape, *Lib. Const.* 30; 35; on homicide: *Lib. Const.* 2; 10.

¹⁷ Figures from *Lib. Const.*, p. 11.

¹⁸ Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum, Wandalorum, Sueborum* 35, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 11 (Berlin 1894) p. 281; Isidore’s information perhaps came from the lost prologue of the code of Liuvigild that finally superseded Euric’s (below, notes 50 and 51).

or Sigismund's own codes were solely for barbarians, nor of course do they mean that Alaric's *Breviarium* in any way "replaced" the *Codex Euricianus*.¹⁹ In sum, the barbarian kings of Italy and southern Gaul legislated in the first instance for all their peoples, not to supersede but to supplement the law they had inherited from their imperial predecessors. It had become an important part of their new job.

III

With the rise to dominance in Gaul of Clovis' Franks, the legislative picture changed quite sharply. Their famous (one might almost say infamous) *Lex Salica* is most plausibly credited to Clovis himself, probably before he eliminated the Visigothic kingdom of Toulouse (507).²⁰ But the first thing to be said about it, and one of the most important, is that it is *not* professedly a royal text. In what seems its earliest form, that represented by the four "A" manuscripts (even the earliest of which, however, is as late as the 760s), there is no formal prologue at all. The so-called "Shorter Prologue", clearly primary even though it is accompanied by the "Longer Prologue" on all but one of its appearances, may date to the 590s, but it does not need to be any earlier than the *Liber Historiae Francorum* of 727, which quotes and amplifies it. As the clearest "ethnic" statement to be found in any early Germanic legislation, it deserves quotation:

It has been accepted and agreed among the Franks and their leaders [*proceribus*] that for the sake of keeping peace among themselves, all intensified dispute [*incrementa rixarum*] should be curtailed, so that just as they stand out among their neighbours for the strength of their arm, so they may also excel them in authority of law, and thus put an end to criminal behaviour [*sumerent criminalis actio terminum*] [...]. Hence, there came forward among them, chosen from many [*electi de pluribus*] four men by name Wisogast, Arogast, Salegast and Widogast who, assembling in three courts and carefully debating the sources of litigation [*causarum origines*] gave judgement on each.²¹

¹⁹ Justified rebuttal of the case that the remit of the *Breviarium* was "territorial" (covering all subjects) underlies the view that Euric's code was "personal": cf. H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley 1988) pp. 194–7 and nn.

²⁰ I.N. Wood, *The Merovingian kingdoms, 450–751* (London-New York 1994) pp. 108–13, supersedes all previous discussions of dating, in particular the view (adopted by myself and many others) that the code must post-date 507.

²¹ *Pactus legis Salicae* "C", Prol., ed. K.A. Eckhardt, MGH LL nationum Germa-

The “Longer Prologue” almost certainly dates from the 760s and is the product of King Pippin’s Chancery.²² It celebrates the Frankish *gens* with rhythmic stridency, and it also credits Clovis (and his successors) with the “amending” of “whatever seemed less fitting in the *Pactus*”.²³ But the four mysterious *electi* are still the primary authors, though now *rectores*; either way they are still *not* kings. For its part, the *Liber Historiae Francorum* placed them in *villae* beyond the Rhine. It seems, then, that the *Lex* Prologues reflect a vision of the code as deriving from a remote, “pre-invasion” Frankish past, of the sort that the *Liber* itself liked to dwell on at length.²⁴

Up to a point, the content of the original (i.e. “A”) code supports this vision. It is singularly devoid of Christian traces. It is repeatedly glossed by vernacular and presumably Frankish words, the “Malberg” glosses.²⁵ Roman influence has been detected, even in the most surprising places.²⁶ But it is a good deal less evident than in (for example) the Burgundian laws, or indeed the “edicts” of the Merovingian kings that were to follow (below, pp. 39–40). Yet if the code is (relatively) un-Roman, for all that it was composed in Latin, how specifically *Frankish* is it?

Given the discoveries of the last two generations of historians in the field of Roman “vulgar” (or, for these purposes, “provincial”) law, we can no longer suppose that a community of “free” men,

nicarum 4,1 (Hannover 1962) pp. 2–3 [henceforth: *Pactus*], and for Eckhardt’s view of its date (criticized by Wood, as above), see his *Pactus legis Salicae*, ed. K.A. Eckhardt, *Germanenrechte* 1 (Göttingen 1954) pp. 170–2; and cf. *Liber historiae Francorum* 4, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 2 (Hannover 1888) p. 244. Eckhardt’s skillful construction of a homogenized text tends to conceal variation between versions, and it is often wisest to follow the texts arranged in his columns below. In this instance, it seems that only “C5”, a late eighth-century Luxeuil MS, has the “Shorter Prologue” alone—its text possibly taken from the *Liber Historiae Francorum* itself.

²² *Lex Salica* “D/E”, Prol., ed. K.A. Eckhardt, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 4,2 (Hannover 1969) pp. 2–9; B. Merta, “Politische Theorie in den Königsurkunden Pippins”, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 100 (1992) pp. 117–31.

²³ The “Longer Prologue” here follows the “Epilogue”, cf. *Pactus* “A”, p. 253, a doubtfully official text dating from revisions by Bishop Leodegar of Autun: Wood, *The Merovingian kingdoms*, pp. 113–4.

²⁴ See above, note 21.

²⁵ Cf. Hans-Werner Goetz this volume, pp. 333–4.

²⁶ As with the case that the historically fateful restriction of the heirs of *terra Salica* to males, *Lex Salica* 59,6, pp. 222–3, derives from the Roman army’s needs: T. Anderson Jr., “Roman military colonies in Gaul, Salian ethnogenesis and the forgotten meaning of *Pactus Legis Salicae* 59.5”, *Early Medieval Europe* 4 (1995) pp. 129–44.

pre-occupied with its animals, its boundaries, and its mutual injuries deliberate or accidental, is *ex hypothesi* “Germanic”.²⁷ But there are two good reasons to think that the law brought to light in *Lex Salica* was that of a self-consciously “barbarian” culture. In the first place, its keynote is compensation paid to an injured by the injuring party, including the kin of each. The harmonics underlying that note are those of bloodfeud: if payment was not made by the perpetrator and/or his kin to the victim and/or his, then revenge would be taken on any of the former by any of the latter.²⁸ Social anthropologists have made this process hugely better understood than it was fifty years ago. We now see that it means much more than the “interminable antiphony of violence” feared by the great nineteenth-century English legal historian, F.W. Maitland.²⁹ Yet, whatever its peace-keeping validity, it had not been Roman law’s approach to social discord since the time of the Twelve Tables. Under the empire, initiative in placating or repressing disorder lay with government authority, an agency which in *Lex Salica* is only a last resort.³⁰ Perhaps the presuppositions of feud had infiltrated Roman provincial justice before imperial power collapsed in the West. If so, one must suppose that ultra-frontier influence was already making itself felt.³¹ At the same time, feud is so ubiquitous a feature of literature in the Germanic vernacular, that to ascribe its prominence to anything other than the custom of the invaders flies in the face of common-sense.³²

²⁷ Cf. the comments of R. Collins, *Early Medieval Spain. Unity in Diversity, 400–1000*, New Studies in Medieval History (London 1983) p. 28, about the Byzantine “Farmer’s Law”.

²⁸ This is therefore the point not only of the many clauses defining payment for damage, death or injury, *Pactus* 15–17; 23–34; 41–43 etc. (see Appendix below), but also those regulating the extent and liabilities of kindreds: *ibid.* 58; 60; 62.

²⁹ The key paper (in any language) remains that of J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, “The Bloodfeud of the Franks”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 41 (1958/59) pp. 459–87, repr. in his *Long-Haired Kings*, pp. 121–47; drawing on a famous paper by Max Gluckman, “The Peace in the Feud”, *id.* *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (Oxford 1956) pp. 1–26; for a sophisticated account of feud as reflected in Icelandic saga, see W.I. Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago 1990).

³⁰ E.g. *Pactus* 50; 56.

³¹ As, later, with a Roman law text from seventh-century Italy: C. Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy. Central Power and Local Society 400–1000*, New Studies in Medieval History (London 1981) p. 118. It ought conversely to be remembered, with reference to possibly Roman influence on barbarian codes, that imperial practices were well capable of penetrating beyond the frontier before the late-fourth century, e.g. through returning army veterans.

³² It is *not*, for example, a noticeable element in the “Farmer’s Law” (above, note

The second consideration is less ambivalent. A famous clause of the *Lex* distinguishes between compensations payable for killing various classes of subject:

If anyone kill a free Frank or barbarian who lives by Salic law [*ingenuum Francum aut barbarum, qui lege Salica vivit*] [. . .] let him against whom it is proved be liable for [*iudicetur*] [. . .] 200 *solidi* [. . .] But if anyone kill him who is in the lord's trust [*truste dominica*] [. . .] let him be liable for [. . .] 600 *solidi* [. . .] But if a Roman man, a guest of the king [*Romanus homo, conviva regis*] should have been killed, let him be liable for [. . .] 300 *solidi*. But if a Roman man, a landholder [*Romanus homo, possessor*] should have been killed, let him who is proved to have killed him be liable for [. . .] 100 *solidi*. If anyone kill a Roman tributary [*tributarium*] [. . .] let him be liable for [. . .] sixty-two and a half *solidi*.

Likewise, a Roman robbing a "Salic barbarian" (previously identified as *ingenuum*) is liable for sixty-two and a half *solidi*, must find twenty-five oath-takers to clear himself, or go to the hot-water ordeal; whereas a "Frank" robbing a Roman clears himself with twenty swearers or pays thirty *solidi*.³³ The first thing these clauses make clear is that a Frank, whatever else he or she was, was not a Roman. Second, a Frank was also both a "barbarian" adhering to "Salic" law and an *ingenuus*. The word "barbarian" does not otherwise occur; "Frank" only in additions to the original sixty-five "titles"; and "Salic" five more times with special reference to the *Lex*.³⁴ On the other hand, *ingenuus* is the standard qualifier for *homo* and appears hardly less often. It is no outrageous deduction that its normal meaning is the one it has in the clauses cited; hence, that "barbarism", "Frankishness" or (as it were) "Salicity" are specified in these clauses because a distinction is being drawn with Romans. In a further set of clauses, killing a *hominem ingenuum* with a (war)band costs 600 *solidi*, or if he be *in truste dominica* 1800 *solidi*, whereas slain "Romans or *leti*" are worth half the amount (i.e. 300 *solidi*). This is most significant because *laetus* was the late Roman term for a barbarian settler-soldier. In Æthelberht's Kentish law-code, the *let* is a figure of lower status than

27): W. Ashburner, "The Farmer's Law", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 32 (1912) pp. 68–95, especially pp. 73–5.

³³ *Pactus* 41,1; 41,5; 41,8–10; 14,1–3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 32,3–4 (it is again twice as expensive to tie up a Frank as a Roman); 38,2; 45,1; 47 tit.; 52,3; 57,1; 59,6 on *terra Salica* (above, note 26) is a "C" gloss, while 63,1 is from Herold's ghost "B" text. See also the next note.

the *ceorl*/"free man".³⁵ In other words, the "free" (?Frank) is being marked out from those barbarians previously settled on Roman soil.

The final and crucial conclusion to be drawn from these clauses is that we here encounter the sort of "ethnic engineering" that is also detectable in the legislation of the West Saxon King Ine (688/94).³⁶ The upshot is that anyone not already laying claim to Frankish ethnicity would find that his (or her) legal position became up to twice as secure if they proceeded to do so. It does not in the end seem likely that the brilliant young southerners at the courts of Chlothar II and Dagobert I, like Desiderius of Cahors or Eligius of Limoges, were *convivae regis*, equivalent and so subordinated to Franks of the king's *trust*. But less socially self-confident "Romans" might well choose to assimilate to a ruling-class defined in this way, and likewise their social inferiors, whether *possessor*, *tributarius*, or *letus*. In this sense, *Lex Salica* was not so much a reflection as a distillation of Frankish ethnic identity.³⁷

It looks, therefore, as though *Lex Salica* amounted to what its Shorter Prologue implied. It was an attempt to encapsulate the law whereby the new masters of northern Gaul believed that they and their followers had lived hitherto, and whereby they wished that their new subjects should proceed to live themselves. We should perhaps not forget that if we are to understand the people we call "Franks" as in some sense the residue of the garrisons that had guarded the Rhine frontier, merged with those against whom they had guarded it, then the essence of a Roman army was its "other ranks" and "footsloggers", not its officers. We should thus expect that the pre-occupations of the *Lex* should lie with "rank-and-file" free men rather than with a warrior "élite". Given what else we know about the composition of the last generations of the western army, it is no sur-

³⁵ Ibid. 42,1–2; 42,4; *Laws of Æthelberht* 26, ed. F. Liebermann, *Gesetze der Angelsachsen* 1 (Halle 1903) p. 4. On the standard late Roman *letus*, cf. A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A social, economic and administrative survey*, 3 vols. (Oxford 1964) vol. 2, p. 620; vol. 3, pp. 186–7.

³⁶ *Laws of Ine* 23,3; 24,2; 32–33, ed. F. Liebermann, *Gesetze der Angelsachsen* 1 (Halle 1903) pp. 100–3. Cf. B. Ward-Perkins, "Why did the English not become British?", *English Historical Review* 115 (2000) pp. 513–33, here pp. 523–4.

³⁷ A conclusion that bears out that of M. Springer, "Gab es ein Volk der Salier?", *Nomen et gens. Zur historischen Aussagekraft frühmittelalterlicher Personennamen*, ed. D. Geuenich, W. Haubrichs and J. Jarnut, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 16 (Berlin-New York 1997) pp. 58–83.

prise that these men should envisage themselves as “barbarian”, or should set out to distinguish their law from that of Rome. We may reasonably conclude that what Clovis and the other authors of *Lex Salica* sought to do was to assert the “respectability” of their own traditions as against not only those of the empire but also of their Visigothic and Burgundian rivals for the control of Gaul. This, then, is not exactly a case of “Frankish” authorities carrying on where emperors and Praetorian Prefects had left off. It is an effort to register the presence of “Salic” Franks among the community of “civilized” peoples, whose law was codified. That being so, it is no wonder that the *Lex* remained as good as unchanged by centuries of social development in Frankish Gaul.³⁸ As a vehicle of tradition, adaptability was not its function.

The Frankish example may indirectly have influenced at least two other essays in barbarian codification. The earlier was that of King Æthelberht of Kent (c. 580–616/18), Clovis’ great-grandson-in-law.³⁹ Like *Lex Salica*, his code is in fact anonymous: the first evidence of his authorship is supplied by Bede over a century later.⁴⁰ Bede regarded what Æthelberht did “with the counsel of his wise men” as of benefit to his *gens*, by which he presumably meant the people of Kent. He reports that the laws were “written in English speech”, that they were still “kept and observed”, and that Æthelberht acted “according to the examples of the Romans”. The first of these three assertions is conspicuously true. The code’s language is by far the oldest surviving specimen of the Anglo-Saxon vernacular *in extenso*; and even in its only extant copy, a manuscript of the 1120s, it is studded with every sort of linguistic archaism. How and why it came about that, alone of the West’s new rulers, those of Kent and (at the end of the seventh century) Ine of Wessex legislated in a Germanic

³⁸ Cf. A.C. Murray, *Germanic Kinship Structure. Studies in Law and Society in Antiquity and the early Middle Ages*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts 65 (Toronto 1983) pp. 117–225; and Wormald, *Making of English Law*, pp. 44–5.

³⁹ *Laws of Æthelberht*, pp. 3–8. For a fuller statement, see P. Wormald, “‘*Inter Cetera Bona . . . Genti Suae*’: Law-making and Peace-Keeping in the earliest English Kingdoms”, *La giustizia nell’alto medioevo (secoli V–VIII)*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 42 (Spoleto 1995) pp. 963–96, esp. pp. 969–74 [repr. id., *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West. Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London 1999) pp. 182–6]; and my *Making of English Law*, pp. 93–101.

⁴⁰ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* 2,5, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors [*Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*] (Oxford 1969) pp. 150–1.

language are almost unanswerable questions. What matters here is that this point puts the fundamentally “Germanic” character of such feud-focussed law beyond doubt. We can scarcely suppose that “Vulgar Roman” (or Celtic) law was carefully transposed into an alien tongue so as to suit the sensibility of a restricted “élite”. But what, then, did Bede mean by saying that the code was “according to the examples (*plural*) of the Romans”?⁴¹ A plausible answer is that *Romani* for Bede encompassed the whole range of *sub*-Roman regimes; and hence that what he (or Æthelberht’s Kentish wise men) had in mind were codes known to have been issued by some of the emperors’ successors. If so, the genesis of written English law as a conscious *emulation* of other law-making becomes especially clear—much as southern English noblewomen seem to have adopted Mediterranean fashions in the seventh century.⁴² Æthelberht’s great-grandson thought of his code as the “just customs of the *Cantwara*”.⁴³ Even in Britain’s largely de-Romanized climate, his people had, like the Franks ruled by his in-laws, joined the ranks of the civilized.

About a quarter of a century later, the Lombards of Italy followed suit. King Rothari’s massive 388-clause edict (643) was perhaps itself under Frankish inspiration and has resemblances to *Lex Salica*. Much of its technical vocabulary is Germanic. It makes the feuding *rationale* of its compensation system explicit: “Feud is to be deferred” (*postponatur*; not “limited”, still less “eschewed”).⁴⁴ Rothari left little doubt of his intentions in drafting his code:

We have sought out [...] the ancient laws of our ancestors which were not written and, with the equal counsel [...] of our [...] leading judges, and all our most happy army assisting, we [...] have ordered them to be written onto this parchment, so that we should include in the edict what we could ourselves or through the old men of the people [*gentis*] recover of the ancient law of the Lombards.⁴⁵

This is from Rothari’s epilogue. The sentiments voiced by his self-confidently royalist Prologue—solicitude for his subjects’ “welfare”, hope that his code will permit “each man to live quietly in secure

⁴¹ On this, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*.

⁴² See Barbara Yorke this volume, pp. 307–8, and references.

⁴³ *Laws of Wihfred* Pr., ed. F. Liebermann, *Gesetze der Angelsachsen* 1 (Halle 1903) p. 12.

⁴⁴ *Edictus Rothari* 74–5; 45, ed. F. Bluhme, MGH LL 4 (Hannover 1868).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 386.

law and justice”—are more like what a sub-Roman society expected of its lawmakers.⁴⁶ They thus signal some of the differences between his Edict and *Lex Salica*. It is a point that the Edict is dated. It is authenticated by a “notary” Ansoald, and only copies so authorized are to be used in disputes.⁴⁷ Above all, as its very size implies, it is hugely more comprehensive than the Frankish code. (Re-)marriage is addressed by *Lex Salica* only in one of the mysterious anonymous “capitularies” following the code in one or two manuscripts. In Rothari’s Edict—as, regularly, in the Burgundian Code—it is covered from most conceivable angles.⁴⁸ How are we to explain that so “Germanic” a legal statement, one with even less to say of *Romani* than *Lex Salica*, has such conspicuously “Roman” features? The natural answer is that Rothari and his “judges” could command the services of men trained in the techniques of Roman law and legislation: men like the notary Ansoald himself (for all his Germanic name). In other words, the Edict, like Theodoric’s putative “edicts”, was an attempt to write the Lombards into the still lively legal culture of post-Roman Italy.⁴⁹ Rothari did not say how the result was to relate to the Roman law by which most of his subjects may be assumed to have lived. It would be a reasonable guess that something like Theodoric’s own rule applied (above p. 25).

The law of the Visigothic kingdom was heavily Romanized from the outset (above pp. 27–8). In the sixth and seventh century it followed this trajectory further. The next king after Euric credited by Isidore with legislation was Liuvigild (569–86). This was one aspect of a consciously Romanizing policy, which also ran to his installation on a throne, his issue of his own gold coinage, his enrichment of the fisc through confiscations, his foundation of a city in his son’s name, and (thought his Catholic critics) his religious persecution of religious deviants: i.e. orthodox non-Arians.⁵⁰ Again, a precariously extant text seems to fit what Isidore describes: the 324

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Pr.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁴⁸ *Pactus* 100–101; *Edictus Rothari* 178–204 passim; cf. *Lib. Const.* 24; 34; 44; 52 (a “Novel”, above, note 16); 61; 69; 74 (another).

⁴⁹ For a recent example of many studies addressed to this problem, see N. Everett, “Literacy and the law in Lombard government”, *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000) pp. 93–127.

⁵⁰ Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum* 51, pp. 287–8.

chapters called *Antiqua* in the Visigothic code of c. 650 often appear to build on the contents of the “Eurician” palimpsest. There is no reason to doubt that Liuvigild legislated for all his subjects, like Euric, so long as one allows that Roman law survived for its own purposes. His best-known law lifts the ban on intermarriage between Goth and Roman on the grounds that it was incongruous to keep asunder those of equal dignity of birth. The most striking thing about this law is not that it endorses what may long have been a “fait accompli”, but that it most probably repeals a *Roman* proscription on the marriage of barbarians and provincials, one going back *via* the Breviary to the Theodosian Code.⁵¹ The emperor’s law could now be insouciantly reformed by his barbarian successors.

What all of this comes down to is that law-makers of Germanic origin—and with Germanic names, whatever language they now spoke—were finding a variety of ways of accommodating what they believed to be the customs of the followers who formed their military power-base, within kingdoms whose legal culture was at least residually Roman. It is hardly any easier to detect “Germanic” elements in the Visigothic *Antiqua* than in the fragmentary laws ascribed to Euric. There is a handsome set of compensations for injury in the Visigothic law-book, but these stand in the name of seventh-century kings.⁵² Otherwise, the expedients adopted depended on the level of Roman legal expertise surviving in the society in question. In southern Britain, the one truly Roman aspect of legislation was the fact that it was written. In northern Gaul, a rather crude and far from systematic summary was made of aspects of apparently Frankish custom; and not only was it made in Latin but it also contained an invitation that Romans re-identify themselves as Franks. In Italy, the traditions of the Lombard “army” (a significant term) were gathered into an impressive corpus. None of these exercises specifically excludes a continuing place for Roman law; and except

⁵¹ *Lex Vis.* 3,1,1 (*Antiqua*); cf. *Codex Theodosianus* 3,14,1 (*Breviarium Alarici* with the usual *Interpretatio*), ed. T. Mommsen and P.M. Meyer (3rd edn., Berlin 1962). Arguments that Liuvigild was repealing a *Eurician* prohibition (i.e. originally *Gothic* legislation) tend to be circular: *viz.* that since Liuvigild’s concern was only with Gothic law as decreed by Euric (as per the traditional interpretation of bi-polarized Visigothic legislative history), there *must* have been a *Eurician* prohibition for him to repeal.

⁵² *Lex Vis.* 6,4,1,3 (compare the Appendix below, pp. 47–53).

in Kent, there is no reason to think that they actually did so. Post-Roman legislation was moving towards a position where kings laid down some sort of law for all their subjects. But only in Spain had they got anywhere near making a systematic job of it by the mid-seventh century.

IV

In fact, only the Spanish kingdom would ever truly realize such an objective, in the work of the successive kings Chindaswinth and Reccaswinth (642–72). Their law-book—later given the revealing “sobriquet” *Forum Iudicum* (Court/Meeting-place [?] of Judges)—consisted of a reissue of the *Antiqua*, complemented by 200 new or revised laws of their own and their immediate predecessors, and arranged in chapters, titles and books: twelve books, recalling the Twelve Tables (which Isidore knew about) and Justinian’s code of a century before (which he probably did not). This very Roman-looking enterprise had a very Roman purpose: it was to supplant *all* hitherto current law, Roman as well as Gothic, every copy of which was to be destroyed.⁵³ It is no paradox that to abolish Roman law was a singularly Roman thing to do. Did not Justinian demand erasure of every legal monument prior to his own? Hardly less (neo-)Roman was another policy of later Gothic kings. Within a generation of Reccared’s conversion to Catholic Christianity and the consequent end of the Arian “persecution”, the heat was turned on another class of nonconformists, the Jews.⁵⁴ Byzantine emperors of the time were doing the same. Spanish identity was to be homogeneous in observance as in law. It was a note that would sound all too often in later phases of peninsular history.

⁵³ *Lex Vis.* 2,1,10; cf. 2,1,3,5. Persuasively, P.D. King, “King Chindasvind and the First Territorial Law-code of the Visigothic Kingdom”, *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches*, ed. E. James (Oxford 1980) pp. 131–57. The code was again revised by Erwig (681); an indication of multi-cultural Visigoth realities is that the very last law, *Lex Vis.* 6,1,3 on the cauldron ordeal (Witiza, 698–710), sounds the least ambiguously “Germanic” note in the whole code.

⁵⁴ The first anti-Jewish law was Reccared’s own and much influenced by Roman example, *Lex Vis.* 12,2,12; the next are those of Sisebut (612–21), *Lex Vis.* 12,2,13–14.

Roman inspiration was no longer all that underlay the making of written law in Spain. Hostility to the Jews must in part have been prompted by the determination that Spaniards should replace them as Chosen People of God.⁵⁵ More than any regime before the Carolingians, Visigothic legislators took their lead from the Church, especially from the long series of councils of Spanish bishops held at Toledo. The eighth and twelfth councils saw the publication respectively of Reccaswinth's and Erwig's codes. The former undertook to implement what his bishops thought conducive to justice; the latter submitted his decrees for the assembled fathers' approval.⁵⁶ The *Forum Iudicum* opens not with the usual prologue of legislative aspiration but with a short book on the theory of law-making. The dominant ideas are those of Isidore, whose pupil, Bishop Braulio of Saragossa, has plausibly been thought its author.⁵⁷ Law is "the soul of the whole body politic", guiding all its limbs from the royal head downwards.⁵⁸

In Italy, law-making after Rothari followed a rather different course. His Edict was in no way superseded, simply revised and extended by regular legislative sessions, especially under Liutprand (712–44). Since all of these new laws bore a date, like the Edict itself, it was possible to see at a glance which law was current; this was just as much the Roman practice as division of a code by book, title and subject-matter, which Lombard law-makers eschewed.⁵⁹ As one would therefore expect, Romans and Roman law are much more prominent than in Rothari's laws. Lombards were formally (re-)introduced to will-making to supplement gift by *thinx* or *launegild*, and to manumission not only by *gairethinx* (bestowal of an arrow and whip at a cross-roads) but also by leading a slave around an altar and/or draft-

⁵⁵ On Old Testament inspiration in Visigothic royal liturgy, see M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal rulership in late antiquity, Byzantium, and the early medieval West* (Cambridge 1986) pp. 304–12.

⁵⁶ *Concilium Toletanum* 8 Tom., p. 265; 12 Tom., p. 383, ed. J. Vives, *Concilios Visigóticos e Hispano-romanos*, España cristiana 1 (Madrid-Barcelona 1963). See P.D. King, *Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge 1972) pp. 23–39; but also Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, pp. 115–29, for more crudely political motivations.

⁵⁷ C.H. Lynch, *Saint Braulio, Bishop of Saragossa (631–51). His Life and Writings* (Washington DC 1938) pp. 137–40.

⁵⁸ *Lex Vis.* 1,2,2; 2,1,4; cf. 2,1,2: *Quod tam regia potestas quam populorum universitas legum reverentie sit subiecta.*

⁵⁹ Cf. *Codex Theodosianus* 8,1,1,6 (*Gesta Senatus*).

ing a charter that made freedom conditional on future service.⁶⁰ Nor was Romanization all that was involved. Some clauses in Rothari's Edict already look like *ad hoc* responses to particular pressures; with much of his successors' legislation, this is quite clear. Liutprand found himself resolving what penalty should be paid by a man who had removed a woman's entire clothing while she was bathing in a river; and that someone who had got himself killed by standing under a water-hoist should have looked what he was doing.⁶¹ Lombard kings were now supplying the legal needs of a whole society, whatever its ethnic origins. Their law survived as their memorial long after their kingdom had passed into abstruse history.⁶²

Supplementary legislation took a different form again in the Frankish kingdom. At least five kings in the century after Clovis' death issued decrees on current problems; and these diverged as markedly in character from the primary Frankish code as did their Italian counterparts from Rothari's Edict. As in Spain and Italy, Frankish kings were strengthening their sense of responsibility for law and order. Some clauses in *Lex Salica*, as in Rothari's Edict, already suggest a more interventionist role.⁶³ But Childebert I, Chlothar I, Chilperic, Childebert II and Chlothar II were much more preoccupied with the *latro* than was the *Lex*, and they organized pursuit of thieves by "hundreds" from the *trustis*, of which the *Lex* said nothing.⁶⁴ Following perhaps in Visigothic and Burgundian footsteps and certainly in Roman, Childebert II aggressively forbade the taking of revenge for

⁶⁰ *Leges Liutprandi* 6; 19; 102 (cf. *Edictus Rothari* 172–5); 9–10 (cf. *Edictus Rothari* 224), ed. F. Bluhme, MGH LL 4 (Hannover 1968); *Leges Ahistulfi* 11, ed. F. Bluhme, MGH LL 4 (Hannover 1968).

⁶¹ *Leges Liutprandi* 135–6.

⁶² C. Wickham, "Lawyers' Time: History and Memory in Tenth and Eleventh-Century Italy", *Studies presented to R.H.C. Davis*, ed. H. Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore (London 1985) pp. 53–71.

⁶³ F. Beyerle, "Über Normtypen und Erweiterungen der *Lex Salica*", *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanistische Abteilung* 44 (1924) pp. 394–419; Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 110. Cf. E. Besta, "Le Fonti dell' Editto di Rotari", *Atti del primo Congresso internazionale di Studi Longobardi* (Spoleto 1952) pp. 51–69.

⁶⁴ *Latrones* (cf. *Pactus* 47); *Pactus* (*Pactus pro tenore pacis*) Pr.; 80; 83; 85–86; 89; 92; *Pactus* (*Edictum Chilperici*) 116; *Pactus* (*Decretio Childeberti*) 2,5; 3,1; 3,5; *Centena* and *trustis*: *Pactus* (*Pactus pro tenore pacis*) 84; 99–102; *Pactus* (*Decretio Childeberti*) 3,1; 4–5. Cf. A.C. Murray, "From Roman to Frankish Gaul: 'Centenarii' and 'Centenae' in the Administration of the Merovingian Kingdom", *Traditio* 44 (1988) pp. 59–100.

homicide, and laid down a death penalty both for killing and theft.⁶⁵ More predictable additions were laws on sanctuary, consanguineous marriage and Sunday observance.⁶⁶ Yet the main text of *Lex Salica* was hardly affected by these changes, nor was there any consistent effort to incorporate them in manuscripts of the *Lex* so that they could be seen to override it. More important was to maintain the integrity of the traditions that the *Lex* symbolized.⁶⁷

The other major departure of Merovingian kings, though in this case seemingly in the seventh century, was also one notionally undertaken by Rome: the issue of written laws for subject peoples hitherto denied that blessing. It is fairly clear that this was done for the Alamans by Chlothar II and perhaps for the Bavarians by him or Dagobert. If so, that might explain the otherwise unparalleled structural similarity between these codes, Rothari's Edict and Æthelberht's laws.⁶⁸ In most extant forms, the Alaman and Bavarian codes have "gone native": both were apparently revised and extended by "dukes" of their own people (Lantfrid of the Alamans, Odilo and Tassilo of the Bavarians) in the first half of the eighth century. This is as good an illustration as one could wish of how a written law whose genesis owed little to its own subjects' aspirations could nevertheless come to define them.

More important for the Franks themselves was the composition, again probably under Dagobert, of the "Ripuarian" law. This was allegedly the law of Rhineland Franks (or, viewed from another angle,

⁶⁵ *Pactus* (Decretio Childeberti) 2,3,5; cf. *Lex Vis.* 6,1,8; *Lib. Const.* 2,7.

⁶⁶ Sanctuary: *Pactus* (Pactus pro tenore pacis) 90; *Pactus* (Decretio Childeberti) 2,2; irregular marriage: *ibid.* 1,2; Sunday: *ibid.* 3,7.

⁶⁷ Cf. Wormald, *Making of English Law*, pp. 44–5.

⁶⁸ Originally a theory of H. Brunner, "Über ein verschollenes merowingisches Königsgesetz des 7. Jahrhunderts", *Sitzungsberichte der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 309 (Berlin 1901) pp. 932–55, now developed in my *Making of English Law*, pp. 96–101. The *Lex Baiuvariorum* Prologue (ed. E. von Schwind, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 5,2 [Hannover 1926]) is a mystery in its own right. I argued at Bellagio that *Theuderichus [rex Francorum] cum esset Catalaunis*, at the outset of the text, can hardly be other than the hero of the great 451 battle with Attila, who was a law-giver (above, note 14), and may thus have featured in the prologue of the *Codex Euricianus*; it was certainly from the *Codex Euricianus* that the draftsmen of the *Lex Baiuvariorum* (Dagobert's *Midi glitterati*?) drew much of their material; and the "Eurician" palimpsest is a S. Gallic MS (*Codices Latini Antiquiores*, vol. 5, 624–7, ed. E.A. Lowe [Oxford 1934–71]). But see the more traditional interpretation by Matthias Hardt this volume.

of the Austrasians who were now coming to command the political future of the Franks).⁶⁹ *Lex Ribuaria* is in general so like *Lex Salica* as to tempt one to wonder what mileage there was in drafting it at all. The answer must be that merely to have a written *lex* had come to be a point of critical political, if not indeed “ethnic” significance. The compensation tables of the “Ripuarrians”, as of the Alamans and Bavarians, do in fact differ in detail from those of the “Salic” Franks (see Appendix below). To contemplate the broadly similar yet invariably divergent “tariffs” of the “*Volksrechte*” raises the thought that these tables were in some sense *the* defining factor in any one *lex*, expert knowledge of which thus identified the legal specialist. Certainly suggestive is that the freshest research finds the most archaic linguistic features of King Æthelberht’s code in its injury list.⁷⁰ A tariff recognizable as one’s own was perhaps itself an ethnic marker. At the same time, *Lex Ribuaria* and the others have important further features. One is treason law, found in Visigothic and Lombard pronouncements but not hitherto in Frankish codes. Another is the attention given to written legal instruments.⁷¹ In other words, Frankish legal culture was itself becoming more “Roman” at the time when *Lex Ribuaria* was composed. One most significant aspect of *Lex Ribuaria* is the first explicit statement of what is often assumed to have applied since barbarian *leges* appeared: that it was “according to Roman law that the Church lives.”⁷² The Merovingian kingdom had thus by 650 established what we have no reason to think was a norm beforehand: the principle that a people, sovereign or subject, had its *lex*; while the law of Rome lived on in the Church.

English legislation in the seventh century continued to follow a broadly Frankish pattern. With Ine’s code of c. 690, the West Saxons joined the Kentishmen among peoples of written law. At least as extant, however, this is unlike any other “primary” statement of post-Roman law. Almost from the outset, it seems to address legal cruxes

⁶⁹ The best recent account of this is Springer, “Gab es ein Volk der Salier?”, pp. 71–3; and cf. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 115–7.

⁷⁰ See L. Oliver, “The Language of the Early English Laws”, Harvard Ph. D., 1995, pp. 244–61.

⁷¹ *Lex Ribuaria* 72; 59; 61–62, ed. F. Beyerle and R. Buchner, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 3,2 (Hannover 1954); *Leges Alamannorum* 23–25; 1–2; 16; 18–19, ed. K. Lehmann and K.A. Eckhardt, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 5,1 (rev. 2nd edn., Hannover 1966); *Lex Baiuvariorum* 2,1–3; 1,1; 16,1–2; 16,15–16.

⁷² *Lex Ribuaria* 61,1.

brought to the law-maker's attention. Indeed, what is now known as "Ine's code" may in fact have been six or more separate and successive pronouncements.⁷³ There is no West Saxon injury tariff before Alfred's code of the early 890s, to which Ine's is appended. Ine's concern was with current problems, and thus with the questions of baptism, Lent and church-taxation as well as "ethnic" wergelds and (above all) theft. The same considerations crop up in the exactly contemporary Kentish code of Wihtrred (695), which was probably under Ine's influence. In England as in Francia, written law had generated its own momentum. Yet in each, the momentum then gave out altogether for up to a century and was picked up only in Carolingian conditions. The roots of *lex scripta* in northern Europe were still shallow.

V

Before concluding this survey with a glance at what might be christened the "Carolingian equilibrium", we should take note of a type of legal document that was not legislative at all. Depressingly few legal documents referring to particular transactions (for short, "charters") survive from the West before the mid-seventh century, and then in rather marginal circumstances.⁷⁴ Ravenna's documents, the obvious exceptions, have been sadly victimized by the enthusiasms of eighteenth-century antiquarian collectors.⁷⁵ At the same time, the

⁷³ I have argued this at length (with table) in "*Inter cetera bona...*", pp. 977–83 [repr. pp. 188–92].

⁷⁴ E.g. *Tablettes Albertini, actes privés de l'époque vandale*, ed. C. Courtois, L. Leschi, C. Perrat and C. Saumagne (Paris 1952): deeds on wood, dating 493–4, mostly relating to sale, are all that survive from the Vandal kingdom (Wolf Liebeschütz this volume); and texts on slate mostly from Salamanca (*Diplomatica Hispano-visigoda*, ed. A. Canellas Lopez [Zaragoza 1979]) represent more or less the sum total of Visigothic diplomatic (though cf. R. Collins, "Conclusion", *The Settlement of Disputes in early medieval Europe*, ed. W. Davies and P. Fouracre [Cambridge 1986] p. 210).

⁷⁵ The Ravenna papyri are edited by Tjäder (*Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens*). Texts for sub-Roman Gaul are in the unsorted collection of J.-M. Pardessus (*Diplomata, Chartae, Epistolae aliaque instrumenta ad res Gallo-Francicas spectantia*, 2 vols. [Paris 1843/49]), to which key guides are K.H. Debus, "Studien zu merovingischen Urkunden und Briefen", *Archiv für Diplomatik* 13 (1967) pp. 1–109; 14 (1968) pp. 1–192; and U. Nonn, "Merowingische Testamente: Studien zum Fortleben einer römischen Urkundenform im Frankenreich", *Archiv für Diplomatik* 18 (1972) pp. 1–129.

corpus of *formulae*, mostly from Gaul but with a Visigothic outlier, establishes beyond dispute that traditional procedures for drawing up records of gift, sale, testament and judgement continued to be used.⁷⁶ If we consider deeds of sale, the dominant pre-occupation of the exiguous Vandal documentation, it is obvious that similar legal foundations survived in each one-time western province. In Africa, Italy, Spain and Gaul, there is regular phrasing, to the effect that the buyer should “have, hold, possess, use and enjoy, for himself and his heirs in perpetuity”.⁷⁷ As might be expected, the *formulae* are more regular, more obviously “legalese” in the more clearly Romanized legal cultures of Italy and Spain. There can nonetheless be no doubt that the origins of all are “vulgar” Roman. At the same time, by no means all transactions have ecclesiastical connections. Even if the *formulae* collections themselves must have come to rest in a bishop’s or abbey library, we should look to the umbrose corporations of post-Roman notaries for the drafting of this sort of document, just as the variable levels of these officials’ professional skills may best explain the erratic quality of post-Roman legislation.⁷⁸ To say, then, that Roman law in the post-Roman era was the “law of the Church” is to miss the central point that it was the law of almost any significant property transaction with a prospect of preservation, because Rome’s law naturally dominated all forms of written business.

The seminal Formulary of Marculf and its derivatives make a further no less important point. Included in them are *formulae* for the pacification of feud.⁷⁹ References to “Salic law” in these collections are far from unknown, even if they apparently appeal to the whole body of “Salic” custom, and are rarely if ever to specific points in

⁷⁶ Definitively edited by K. Zeumer: *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini Aevi*, MGH Formulae (Hannover 1886).

⁷⁷ *Tablettes Albertini* no. 3,4b, p. 220 (493); cf. *Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens* 36,2, pp. 116–7 (575/91), and *Codice Diplomatico Longobardo* no. 23, ed. L. Schiaparelli, Fonti per la storia d’Italia (Rome 1929) vol. 1, pp. 89–91 (720); *Diplomata, Chartae, Epistolae* no. 241, vol. 1, p. 227 (627); *Formulae Andecavenses* 8; 25; 27 (?earlier seventh century), MGH Formulae, pp. 7; 12; 13; *Marculfi Formulae* 2,19 (c. 700), *ibid.*, p. 89; *Formulae Visigothicae* 11 (first half of seventh century), *ibid.*, pp. 580–1.

⁷⁸ I have argued this point for *judicia* in *Making of English Law*, pp. 89–92; cf. W. Bergmann, “Untersuchungen zu den Gerichtsurkunden der Merowingerzeit”, *Archiv für Diplomatik* 22 (1976) pp. 1–186.

⁷⁹ *Marculfi Formulae* 2,18, pp. 88–9; *Formulae Turonenses* 38, p. 156.

the *code*.⁸⁰ Marculf even tackles head-on the “impious custom” of exclusively male succession to *alod*, and the *formulae* make repeated attempts to provide for succession in the female line.⁸¹ All this is of more than merely “formulaic” importance. Like the novel elements in *Lex Ribuaria*, it shows that at the landholding level there was something of an attempt to integrate Roman and “barbarian” traditions. This is to say that even in the Francia of emergent “personal” law, there were moves towards territorial homogeneity in documentary practice.

VI

Close notice of the Merovingian, and indeed the Spanish and Italian, roots of the Carolingians’ law-making reveals that, however vastly they increased the quantity of documentary production, they did not really change its character. Charlemagne’s own legislation was duly affected by his experience in St Peter’s at Christmas 800. Within months, he systematically revised Lombard law along self-consciously Lombard lines, paying especial attention to the logic of compensation for injury. By the time two more years had passed, he is recorded by his biographer and by one major series of annals to have set about revising the *leges* of his subject peoples, and to have “given” written codes to those who had had none before.⁸² The results are indeed extant. So far as *Lex Salica* is concerned, there are three times as many copies of Charlemagne’s *Karolina* as survive of all previous versions. The new laws of Frisians, Saxons and Thuringians seem to make an effort to distinguish these peoples’ customs as well as to give them a common format (see Appendix, pp. 47–53). Over the decades that followed, Charlemagne’s successors are regularly found promising to “hand over” or “observe” the *lex* of each class of subject. But all this is to say that, empire or no empire, “ethnic” legal

⁸⁰ My “*Lex Scripta and Verbum Regis*”, pp. 121–3 [repr. pp. 21–2].

⁸¹ *Marculfi Formulae* 2,10–12, pp. 81–3; *Formulae Turonenses* 21–2, pp. 146–7.

⁸² MGH Capit. 1, no. 98, c. 5, ed. A. Boretius (Hannover 1883) p. 205; Einhard, *Vita Karoli* 29, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SSrG 25 (6th edn., Hannover 1911) p. 33; *Annales Laureshamenses* a. 802, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS 1 (Hannover 1826) p. 39. What follows in effect summarizes the argument of my *Making of English Law*, chapter 2.

practice still remained foremost. Society in Francia and its neighbours may have changed almost beyond recognition in the three centuries since Clovis. Yet the alterations made to the Salic and other *leges* by his great successor were exiguous.

Here is the central paradox of Carolingian law-giving. At the same time as Charlemagne and his successors were showing all possible deference to the *leges* recognized by their regimes, kings and their ideologists were seeking to remodel the behavioural profile of their “Christian Empire” through a massive output of “capitularies”; edicts that were by and large a lot more ecclesiastical in tone than their Merovingian counterparts. The capitulary activity consummated in Charlemagne’s solemn *Admonitio Generalis* of 789 actually had an English offshoot, thanks to the visit of Bishop George of Ostia, papal legate and *in situ* bishop of Amiens, to the courts of Kings Ælfwold of Northumbria and Offa of Mercia in 786.⁸³ The 789 *Admonitio* re-issued the decretals of Pope Hadrian’s Dionysio-Hadriana in Charlemagne’s own name. George (anyway in the extant 786 record) had Ælfwold, Offa and their magnates subscribe decrees that he as papal legate had drafted himself (perhaps with the assistance of Alcuin). In each there was, needless to say, a marked scriptural element.⁸⁴ Yet it seems to have struck no legislator as unacceptably anomalous that capitularies were declaring homicide to be an unacceptable blot on a God-fearing and Bible-reading society, while the repeatedly endorsed *leges* continued to provide blithely for the rhythms of personal vengeance.

Of especial interest is that the outcome of Carolingian efforts can to some extent be checked, as in Merovingian times they cannot, against extant manuscripts and recorded court-cases.⁸⁵ The results are much as might have been expected. The “personality of law” regime meant that copies of multiple *leges* are a great deal commoner than those of a single *lex*; while copies of what was still the

⁸³ MGH Capit. 1, no. 22, cc. 1–59, pp. 54–7; Alcuin, *Epistolae* no. 3, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH EE 4 (Berlin 1895) pp. 19–29.

⁸⁴ Cf. P. Wormald, “In Search of King Offa’s ‘Law-code’”, *People and Places in Northern Europe 500–1600. Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer*, ed. I.N. Wood and N. Lund (Woodbridge 1991) pp. 25–45 [repr. id., *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West. Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London 1999) pp. 201–23]; C.E. Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650–c. 850*, Studies in the Early History of Britain (Leicester 1995) pp. 153–90.

⁸⁵ Wormald, *Making of English Law*, pp. 30–70.

standard Roman law text, Alaric's *Breviary*, are as frequently found associated with them as on their own. Capitularies, however, are by no means so regularly associated with *leges*. They tend to circulate as discrete collections, often with more explicitly ecclesiastical legislation. The exception is, again, Italy, where capitularies issued by Carolingian kings are almost always integrated with Lombard and/or Frankish basic law. Further, it is only in Italy, and even more in the Gothic, south-western, part of the Carolingian kingdom that one is at all likely to find these texts cited in court. As in Roman times, and as in the High Middle Ages, Italy, Spain and southern Gaul were areas of legal specialism in ways that northern centres of jurisprudential learning never quite managed.

The Carolingian kingdom was thus characterized by a vigorous legal pluralism that was consistently at odds with the aspirations of its Church towards uniformity. The attention given by Carolingians themselves and by their predecessors in all their dominions to the creation and preservation of a variety of legal traditions ensured this. Most of these laws were at the outset, and considerable effort was put into ensuring that they remained, repositories of ancient traditions, which it is not misleading to call "Germanic". They are in fact among the best evidence we have for the stolidity of a Germanic culture. In this sense, a *lex* became a very distinct, even an indispensable badge of post-Roman Europe's emergent ethnicities. Yet the main determinant of law as actually observed was the resilience or otherwise of Roman practice. Where this made its influence most felt, which is to say within the cultural climate of the Ancient Mediterranean, was also where we may expect to find law affected in practice by law-making. Where Roman example was a vision of a more distant and warmer South, rulers dreamt of a "civilization" of written law, but had no real prospect of bringing one to fruition.

APPENDIX: Tabulated injury tariffs in the “barbarian” *leges*
(*in solidi/scillingas, and fragments thereof*)

	Sal ^a	Rib	Lomb ^c	Al ^e	Bai ^f	Abt	Sax ^g	Thur ^{i/j}	Fris ^k	Af
blow	62 ^{1/2} ¹	1 ¹		1 ¹	1 ¹		30 ¹	10 ¹	24 ¹	
dumbness arising									18 ²	
bloodshed	15 ²	18 ²		1 ^{1/2} ²	1 ^{1/2} ²		120 ³	10 ²	1 ⁴	
hair						2 ^{1/2} ¹	120 ⁶		4 ⁵ ³	
headskin			6 ¹	3 ³						
brain	15 ³			12 ⁶	12 ⁹	10 ⁴⁻⁵			18 ⁷	
– brain exposed									24 ⁸	
medical attention				40 ⁷	6 ⁴					
skull	30 ⁴		12 ²	6 ⁴⁻⁵		3 ²	180 ⁴		2 ⁵	15 ²
– breaks bone		36 ³								30 ¹
– breaking bone so rings on distant shield				6 ⁸	4 ³		240 ⁵	30 ³	12 ⁶	
– 2 bones					6 ⁸				4 ⁵ ²	
– 3 bones									6 ⁵ ⁴	
– lesser bones									7 ⁵ ⁵	
									2 ⁵ ⁶	
head or upper arm swelling					6 ⁵					
					6 ⁷		60 ²		1/2 ³	
blow on face			16 ¹⁰	6 ²⁷						
– accidental				12 ²⁹						2 ⁴
on beard				6 ³⁰						
on nose			16 ¹¹							
on ear			16 ¹²							
wrinkle									2 ¹⁰	
– lower									4 ¹¹	
– third									2 ¹²	
punch	3 ⁶				3 ³					1 ³
bloody punch	15 ⁷									
triple punch	9 ⁸									
side-wound/ shoulder	30 ⁵	36 ⁴		6 ⁵ ⁵				30 ⁴		
neck pierced				6 ²⁸		30 ⁶				
neck tendons										100 ⁶ ³
chest wound			20 ¹⁵							
piercing breast									12 ²⁸	
– diaphragm									18 ²⁹	
– diaphragm pierced									24 ³⁰	
lung exposed									4 ⁺ ⁶⁰	
– breath										
escaping									8 ⁶¹	

(table cont.)

	Sal ^a	Rib	Lomb ^c	Al ^e	Bai ^f	Abt	Sax ^g	Thur ^{i/j}	Fris ^k	Af
eyebrow									2 ¹³	
upper eyelid				6 ¹²	3 ²³				2 ¹⁴	
lower eyelid				12 ¹³	6 ²⁵				2 ¹⁴	
<i>nose cut off</i>	45 ²³	100 ⁷		40 ¹⁸	9 ¹⁸		720 ¹¹	100 ⁷	24 ⁹	60 ⁹
nose pierced						9 ¹³			15 ¹⁵	
unable to sneeze				12 ¹⁷		6 ¹⁷	half ¹⁶			
able to sneeze		50 ⁸		6 ¹⁶			quarter ¹⁷			
whiskers									2 ¹⁶	
cheek						3 ¹⁵			6 ¹⁷	
– 2 cheeks						6 ¹⁶				
throat pierced						6 ¹⁸				12 ¹⁵
<i>tongue cut out</i>	100 ²⁵			40 ²⁵		12 ²⁴		100 ⁹		as ¹⁶
able to speak				20 ²⁶						eye
jaw										15 ¹³
chin						20 ¹⁹				12 ¹⁴
punch on nose						3 ³⁷				
bruise						1 ³⁸				
visible bruise						1½ ³⁹				
bruise beneath clothes						1 ⁴⁰				
wound visible below hair, sleeve or trousers										x2 ⁴⁷
lips			16 ⁵							
upper				6 ¹⁹	3 ²⁴					
lower				12 ²⁰	6 ²³					
<i>tooth</i>										
<i>knocked out</i>	15 ²⁶									
teeth exposed			20 ⁶							
front teeth			16 ⁷			6 ²⁰		2 ¹⁸	8 ¹⁰	
upper front				6 ²¹						
canine?				3 ²²	12 ²⁵	4 ²¹		3 ¹⁹	15 ¹²	
other teeth					6 ²⁶	3 ²²				
jaw teeth			8 ⁸	1 ²³		1 ²³		4 ²⁰	4 ¹¹	
lower front				12 ²⁴						
collar bone						6 ²⁵		4 ²¹	20 ⁵⁸	
– lesser damage									15 ⁵⁹	
piercing arm			16 ¹³			6 ²⁶				
– above elbow				6 ³¹	6 ¹⁶					
– below elbow				3 ³²	3 ¹⁷					
– light bleeding				1½ ³³						
– heavy bleeding				3 ³⁴						

(table cont.)

	Sal ^a	Rib	Lomb ^c	Al ^e	Bai ^f	Abt	Sax ^g	Thur ^{i/j}	Fris ^k	Af
– unbroken skin				3 ³⁵						
– below elbow				3 ³⁶						
– above elbow				6 ³⁷						
– damaged elbow				12 ³⁸						15 ¹⁸
crippled arm				20 ³⁹	6 ⁸	6 ²⁷	240 ⁵	10 ⁵		
arm cut off										80 ⁴³
at elbow				40 ⁴⁰						
above elbow									12 ²³	
below elbow									6 ²⁴	
both bones									12 ²⁵	30 ¹⁹
at shoulder				80 ⁴¹					50 ^{1/3} ⁵⁷	80 ^{46/51}
striking arm			8 ¹⁴							
wrist blood									4 ³⁸	
elbow blood									4 ³⁹	
shoulder blood									4 ⁴⁰	30 ¹⁷
junction of elbow/shoulder									4 ⁴⁴	
arm lamed									1/2cut ⁵⁸	
arm and hand									off as for ⁵⁹ thigh & foot	
loss of hand		100 ¹¹	1/2wer ¹⁸			720 ¹²	100 ¹⁰		45 ⁴⁵	
– both hands						1440 ¹²				
lamed hand	62 ^{1/2} ¹⁰	50 ¹²	1/2wer ¹⁹			half ¹⁶	50 ¹¹			40 ⁵³
– still movable						quarter ¹⁷				
hand wound										20 ⁵²
thumb, big	50 ¹¹	50 ¹³	1/6 wer ²⁰	12 ⁴³	12 ¹²	20 ²⁸		33 ^{1/3} ¹⁴	13 ^{1/3} ²⁸	30 ²⁰
toe cut off		[thumb]								
thumb nail				3 ²⁹		360 ¹⁸			5 ²¹	
thumb lamed	30 ¹²	25 ¹⁴ b		6 ⁴²		180 ¹⁹				
upper thumb joint									2 ⁴¹	
– lower									3 ⁴²	
– junction with arm									4 ⁴³	
2 nd finger	35 ¹³	36 ¹⁵	16 ²¹	10 ⁴⁶	9 ¹³	9 ³⁰	180 ²⁴	33 ^{1/3} ¹⁵	7 ²⁹	15 ²²
– 1 st joint				2 ^{1/2} ⁴⁴			1/3			
– 2 nd joint				5 ⁴⁵			2/3			
– nail										3 ²³
3 other fingers	45 ¹⁴									
2 fingers	35 ¹⁵									
1 finger	30 ¹⁶									
3 rd finger	15 ¹⁷		5 ²²	6 ⁴⁹	5 ¹⁴	4 ³¹	120 ²⁵	33 ^{1/3} ¹⁵	6 ^{1/2} ³⁰	12 ²⁴
– 1 st joint				1 ^{1/2} ⁴⁷			1/3		1 ³⁵	
– 2 nd joint				3 ⁴⁸			2/3		2 ³⁶	

(table cont.)

	Sal ^a	Rib	Lomb ^c	Al ^e	Bai ^f	Abt	Sax ^g	Thur ^{i/j}	Fris ^k	Af
– lowest									3 ³⁷	
– nail									2 ²⁵	
4 th finger	9 ¹⁸		8 ²³	8 ⁵²	5 ¹⁴	6 ³²	120 ²⁵	33 1/3 ¹⁶	8 ³¹	17 ²⁶
– 1 st joint				2 ⁵⁰			–		1 ³⁵	
– 2 nd joint				4 ⁵¹			–		2 ³⁶	
– lowest									3 ³⁷	
– nail										4 ²⁷
little finger	15 ¹⁹		16 ²⁴	as ⁵³	9 ¹³	11 ³³	240 ²⁰	33 1/3 ¹⁶	6 ³²	9 ²⁸
– one joint				thumb			80 ²¹			
– two joints							160 ²²			
– nail										1 ³⁹
all five								41 ³³		
finger nails						1 ³⁴				
3 rd finger				12 ⁵⁴						
disabled										
militarily							add			
							1/3 ¹⁵			
palm								4 ³⁴		
laming of								1/2 for ⁵⁶		
hand, foot,								cutting		
finger								off		
disfigurement						3 ³⁵	240 ⁵	50 ¹⁸		
worse injury						6 ³⁶				
sinew						3 ⁵⁵				12 ⁶⁰
– incurable										30 ⁶¹
small sinew										6 ⁶²
disabled	100 ²⁷			20 ⁶⁰					wer ⁵⁹	
penis		6 ⁴⁵⁻⁶								
one testicle							720 ¹⁴	100 ¹³	1/2 wer ³¹	
– both							1440 ¹⁵	100 ¹²	wer ³⁰	80 ⁴²
– testicle									6+ ³²	
restored										
castration	200 ²⁸		200 ¹⁹	40 ⁵⁹			werx3 ⁴⁵			
any limb			36 ¹⁸							
hernia					3 ⁶⁹ .					
pierced hip				16 ¹⁶	12 ⁶¹					
striking hip				8 ¹⁷						
lamed knee					12 ⁶²					
leg pierced below knee					3 ⁶³					
broken thigh						12 ⁴⁷	240 ⁵	10 ⁵	12 ³³	30 ³³
lamed thigh						friends ⁴⁸				
thigh pierced						6 ⁵⁰				30 ³⁴
extent of stab						1s per				
						inch ⁵¹⁻⁴				
shin pierced										12 ³⁵

(table cont.)

	Sal ^a	Rib	Lomb ^c	Al ^e	Bai ^f	Abt	Sax ^g	Thur ^{i/j}	Fris ^k	Af
– bone below knee									6–12 ³⁴	30 ³⁶
– cut off at knee										80 ⁵⁷
<i>lamed foot</i>	45 ²⁰	50 ¹⁷	1/4wer ²⁶							
<i>foot struck off</i>	62 1/2 ²¹	100 ¹⁶	1/2wer ²⁵	40 ⁶⁶		50 ⁵⁶	720 ¹³	100 ¹⁰	45 ³⁵	
– lamed							half ¹⁶	50 ¹¹		
– still movable							quarter ¹⁷			
– both feet							1440 ¹³			
leg struck off at knee				50 ⁶⁷						
leg struck off at hip				80 ⁶⁸						
big toe		16 ²⁷	6 ⁶⁴		10 ⁵⁷	1/2thumb ²⁷	30 ¹⁷	8 ⁶	20 ³⁷	
other toes					1/2finger ⁵⁸	1/2finger ²⁸				
2 nd toe		6 ²⁸	3 ⁶⁵					7 ⁴⁷	15 ³⁸	
3 rd toe		3 ²⁹	3 ⁶⁵					6 ⁴⁸	9 ³⁹	
4 th toe		3 ³⁰	3 ⁶⁵					5 ⁴⁹	6 ⁴⁰	
5 th toe		2 ³¹	3 ⁶⁵				1/2other	4 ⁵⁰	5 ⁴¹	
big toenail					1 1/2 ⁵⁹	toes ^{29 h}				
other toenails					1/2 ⁵⁹					
rest of foot									15 ⁵¹	
blood spilt									as for ⁵²	
									fingers	

Sources

Pactus legis 17,1–10; 29,1–18, ed. K.A. Eckhardt, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 4,1 (Hannover 1962); *Lex Ribuaria* 1–6, ed. F. Beyerle and R. Buchner, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 3,2 (Hannover 1954); *Edictus Rothari* 45–73, ed. F. Bluhme, MGH LL 4 (Hannover 1868); *Leges Alamannorum* 57,1–68 (see note d) below, ed. K. Lehmann and K.A. Eckhardt, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 5,1 (rev. 2nd edn., Hannover 1966); *Lex Baiuvariorum* 4,1–16, ed. E. von Schwind, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 5,2 (Hannover 1926); *Laws of Æthelberht* 33–72,1, ed. F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* 1 (Halle 1903); *Lex Saxonum* 1–15, ed. K.F. von Richthofen, MGH LL 5 (Hannover 1875–89); *Lex Thuringorum* 1–25, *ibid.*; *Lex Frisionum* 22,1–89 (and NB also *Lex Frisionum* (Additio Sapientum) 2–3 etc.), ed. K.F. von Richthofen, MGH LL 3 (Hannover 1863); *Laws of Ælfred* 44–77, ed. F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* 1 (Halle 1903). The Burgundian code has no table as such (though cf., e.g. *Liber Constitutionum* 5; 11; 26; 48; 93, ed. L.R. von Salis, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 2,1 [Hannover 1892]); while Chindaswinth's impressive laws (*Lex Visigothorum* 6,4,1; 6,4,3, ed. K. Zeumer, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 1 [Hannover 1902]) are so much more elaborate as to frustrate comparison with those tabulated here.

The tables are designed to show that the “barbarian” *leges* are all trying to do the same sort of thing about personal injury, though in almost invariably distinctive ways: that is to say, they vary in the injuries they identify (and their extent); in the order in which they are listed; and in the seriousness—reflected in the compensation specified—with which any one injury is viewed. Inevitably, given the “multi-layered” structure of many of these lists (especially, e.g., *Lex Sal.*), thorough consistency is not to be expected (e.g. see note a) below). I have as a rule omitted bindings, blows struck on others' weapons, or throwing into river (e.g. *Lex Sax.* 6;

8–10), since these do not appear regularly enough to sustain comparison. I have tried (so far as feasible) to follow the head-to-toe order essayed (if scarcely consistently exercised) by all codes; the superscripted numbers following each compensation shows the place it occupies in any one code's sequence (*not* the clause number).^{1/m}

Other notes

a) *Lex Sal.* details are taken very largely from the oldest ("A") group of MSS, though with some details—signalled in Italics—from the "C" (later Merovingian) tradition.

b) At this point, *Lex Rib.* enters the helpful generalization that if a limb 'hangs maimed' composition is half what it would be for excising it altogether; cf. *Lex Fris.* 58.

c) The Lombard compositions listed here are those of *homines liberi* as opposed to *aldii* or *servi*.

d) The Lombard wergeld is not actually made clear until *Leg. Liutpr.* 62 (724), where it seems to be established that a *minima persona* [...] *exercitalis* has 150s (³/₄ the Frankish *ingenuus*, cf. above, pp. 31–2), while the *primus* has 300s (50% more than Frank, or half the Frankish *antrustio*). Perhaps the relevant point is that payment of half a wergeld for loss of eye, nose, hand or foot is exactly the same principle in Frankish as in Lombard custom.

e) There are two sets of Alamannic compensations, those of the *Pactus legis Salicae* being almost certainly the earlier, i.e. early seventh-century. But complexities in the transmission mean that it makes more sense to list/analyse the tariff of the eighth-century revised "ducal" code.

f) Bavarians, like Lombards, distinguish compensations for freemen, freedmen and *servi*; only those of *liberi* are analysed here.

g) Saxon compositions are given only for *nobiles*, apart from single clauses on *liti* and *servi*; the former are what is listed here, which is of course why the figures are so much higher than in other tables.

h) *Lex Sax.* here makes the interesting and otherwise unique stipulation that all these compositions are to be doubled for women if virgins, though paid at the same rate if already married.

i/j) *Lex Thur.* gives figures for both nobles and freemen; the latter, one-third of the former, are those tabulated here.

k) *Lex Fris.*, not content with providing by far the longest and most elaborate tariff, proceeds to expand and modify this with a series of *Additiones Sapientium*; these I have omitted, in order not to complicate and lengthen the table beyond tolerability; indeed, I have omitted some of the original tariff's complexities, to which there is no counterpart in others.

l/m) Oliver, "Language of Early English Laws", pp. 247–9, offers instructive comment on such tabling of injuries compared to other systems.

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GENS INTO REGNUM: THE VANDALS¹

J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz

I. *Problems and sources*

The theme of the ESF project has been the transformation of the *gentes* into *regna*. All the peoples that settled and established kingdoms within the empire were described in Latin as *gentes*. The meaning of *gens* is however ambiguous. That emerges clearly from many of the studies. *Gens* is generally translated as “tribe”, and a tribe is a large association held together by a sense of obligation to a group which is defined by common descent of its members. But this is where complications begin. For the common descent of a tribe may be entirely biological, in that the members of the group are demonstrably derived from common ancestors, but far more often than not it is almost entirely mythical, as for instance the descent of all the biblical Israelites from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.² The implied kinship is in fact simply a metaphor, even a very powerful metaphor, prescribing how members of a group ought to behave towards each other, namely as kinsmen to kinsmen. Between these extremes there is a whole spectrum of conditions depending on the history and customs, and especially the degree of openness of a particular tribal group. It must be remembered that until quite recently common descent was not as strictly defined in terms of genetic transmission as it has been since Darwin and Mendel. The Romans for instance, for all practical purposes considered a son by adoption fully equal to a biological son.

Even in tribal societies, which are ostensibly organised on a basis of kinship groups, there is considerable flexibility with regard to the

¹ I want to thank Mike Clover for helpfully answering questions of mine, and Philipp von Rummel for allowing me to use his valuable Magister Thesis.

² M. Weber, *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik*, Part 3: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (2nd edn., Tübingen 1925) p. 223: “Dieser Sachverhalt: daß das ‘Stammesbewußtsein’ der Regel nach primär durch politisch gemeinsame Schicksale und nicht primär durch ‘Abstammung’ bedingt ist”.

admission of outsiders.³ The famous Berber historian and political theorist Ibn Khaldûn (1332–1406) tells us that among Arabs membership of a tribe was something which one could acquire as well be born into. “It is clear that a person of a certain descent may become attached to a people of another descent, either because he feels to be well disposed towards them, or because there exists an old alliance or client relationship, or yet because he has to flee from his own people because of a crime that he has committed. Such a person comes to be known as having the same descent as those to whom he has attached himself, and is counted as one of them with respect to the things that result from common descent, such as affection, the rights and obligations concerning talion and blood money, and so on.” The same is true among Berbers today.⁴ In practice the degree of openness in the case of a particular group depends on political considerations, the priority given to monopolising material or other advantages over other priorities, for instance that of maximising military manpower.

The tribal sense solidarity too is something problematical. It is often assumed that it is adequately summarised as a sense of identity. But this is surely to define the whole in terms of only a part, because the active component of this sentiment is not what the individual tribesman feels about himself, but what he feels about a complex of obligations, duties and sentiments shared with other members of the group. What makes tribal feeling dynamic is that the individual tribesman feels that his well-being is bound up with the success of the group, and that he must therefore loyally subordinate his own interests to those of the collective. But it is important to realise that tribal feeling is not the same in every tribal grouping, but something whose strength, range and direction differs strongly from group to group, and changes very much with the circumstances in which a particular group finds itself.⁵

³ Ibid., p. 217: “Nicht nur die Tatsache, daß, sondern auch der Grad, in welchem das reale Blutsband als solches beachtet wird, ist durch andere Gründe als das Maß der objektiven Rassenverwandtschaft mitbestimmt.”

⁴ Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah, an Introduction to History*, transl. F. Rosenthal, 3 vols. (London 1958) p. 267. See also M. Brett and E. Fentress, *The Berbers* (Oxford 1996) p. 230: “all that defines any such tribe as an actual social unit is the belief in a common ancestor, whatever the actual genetic reality may be”.

⁵ Weber, *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik*, p. 222: “Der Inhalt des auf ‘ethnischer’ Basis möglichen Gemeinschaftshandelns bleibt unbestimmt. [...] Ganz regelmäßig wird,

Ethnicity is essentially an internal psychological state and as such it is difficult of access to the researcher. This is true even when we are dealing with a people who have left a literature to tell us something about the priorities and emotions of its creators. It is much more difficult when, as with the Germanic *gentes* who founded the *regna*, they have left little or no such direct evidence. In cases like this, the method must be that of behaviourism: the strength and character of the ethnicity of a *gens* must be deduced from both its behaviour in recorded situations, and from institutions such as dress, language, shared traditions, law, and religion, which make tribal distinctiveness visible, and indeed help to create and nourish the underlying emotions.⁶ But this approach too is not straightforward. For the institutions were fluid. Without exception the *gentes* borrowed heavily from the institutions of the Roman world in which they were establishing their kingdoms. But the fact that the institutions which expressed ethnicity were changeable, and that they had in any case often been appropriated from the Romans, does not mean that tribal solidarity which they expressed and upheld was necessarily weak and insignificant.⁷ It is likely that, then as now, tribal solidarity was at some times, and in some circumstances, extremely powerful, whether for creation or destruction. After all the breaking up of the century old imperial structure which these *gentes* brought about involved a massive change.

The occupation of North Africa by the Vandals after 429 A.D. was a decisive turning point in the disintegration of the Western Empire.

wenn diese Ausdrücke [Völkerschaft, Stamm, Volk] gebraucht werden, entweder eine [...] gegenwärtige politische Gemeinschaft oder Erinnerungen an eine früher einmal gewesene [...] oder Sprach- bzw. Dialektgemeinschaften oder endlich eine Kultgemeinschaft, mit hinzugedacht." In other words the content of "ethnicity" is provided by the situation and history of the particular ethnoses.

⁶ Ibid., p. 219: "Fast jede Art von Gemeinsamkeit und Gegensätzlichkeit des Habitus und der Gepflogenheiten kann Anlaß zu dem [...] Glauben werden, daß zwischen den sich anziehenden oder abstoßenden Gruppen Stammverwandtschaft oder Stammfremdheit bestehe". Ibid., p. 217: "Die Frage [...] ob die als auffällig abweichend und also scheidend empfundenen Differenzen auf 'Anlage' oder 'Tradition' beruhen, ist für ihre Wirksamkeit [...] normalerweise gänzlich bedeutungslos".

⁷ Ibid., p. 223: "Praktisch [...] pflegt die Existenz des 'Stammesbewusstseins' wiederum etwas spezifisch Politisches zu bedeuten: daß nämlich bei einer kriegerischen Bedrohung von außen oder bei genügendem Anreiz zu eigener kriegerischer Aktivität nach außen, ein politisches Gemeinschaftshandeln besonders leicht auf dieser Grundlage [...] entsteht."

The organisation and character of the Vandal group which had such a powerful impact on history nevertheless remain very obscure: unlike Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Lombards, the Vandals have left practically no literary records of their own. The fact that we have no Vandal laws makes it almost impossible to assess what changes in the “constitution” of the *gens* were linked with the establishment of the Vandal kingdom. The major accounts we have were written by their enemies and are all—though in different ways—extremely one-sided and incomplete.⁸ Victor of Vita’s *History of the Vandal Persecutions* is as selective and one-sided as all histories of martyrdom. This means that it is focused on the pitiful sufferings of martyrs and without any attempt to give an account of the state of the Church as a whole, much less to show the wider social and political background to the persecution. The *Life of Fulgentius of Ruspe* is written to display its subject’s saintliness and asceticism, not to provide a picture of the society in which he moved. Procopius’ history of the destruction of the Vandal state by the Byzantine army led by Belisarius is the account of an eye witness, but like most ancient historians of war, Procopius was content to limit himself to military operations. Facts of the social organisation of the territory in which the campaign took place may emerge, but only incidentally. The account of the early history of the Vandals, which Procopius wrote as an introduction to the campaign-history proper, is scrappy and careless. This does not however mean that everything in it must be discarded. Information like the statement that there were 80 officials with the title *millenarius* will still have been true when Procopius came to Africa with Belisarius’ force.

II. *Did the gens exist before the entry of the Vandals into the empire?*

Vandal (like Goth, Alaman and Frank) appears to be a collective name shared by a grouping of sub-tribes. The components sub-tribes that constituted the Vandal group may well have changed over time.

⁸ C. Courtois, *Victor de Vita et son oeuvre* (Algiers 1954); H.I. Marrou, “Le valeur historique de Victor de Vita”, *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 15 (1967) pp. 205–8; Y. Modéran, “La chronologie de la vie de Saint Fulgence de Ruspe”, *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome* 105,1 (1993) pp. 135–88. Although mainly on a later period see also Averil Cameron, “Byzantine Africa—the literary evidence”, *Excavations at Carthage 1978 conducted by the University of Michigan*, vol. 7, ed. J.H. Humphrey (Ann Arbor 1982) pp. 29–62.

Pliny (c. A.D. 23–79) tells us that the Vandals were one of the principal subdivisions of the “Germans”, and that the Vandals were in turn subdivided, Goths and Burgundians and others being their sub-tribes.⁹ For Tacitus (c. A.D. 56–118) too, the Vandals were one of the principal divisions of the “Germans”, though he does not list their subdivisions.¹⁰ The origin of the relationship between the various collective *gentes* and their sub-tribes, and the precise nature of the ties that gave the relationship meaning, are still fairly obscure. They certainly need not have originated in the same way for each tribal group.¹¹

The difficult question of the relationship between *gens* and sub-tribe is a problem of the same kind as that of the relationship of the *gentes* to the “Germans” as a whole. According to Tacitus certain collective tribal names, e.g. those of the *Vandili* (surely our Vandals?) and the *Suebi* are ancient. But the designation *Germani* was originally only attached to a single tribe (the Tungri as he thought) who had settled in northern Gaul. From being a description of a particular tribe it came into wider use to describe all *gentes* who were known as *Germani* in Tacitus’ time, until finally the *Germani* adopted the name for themselves.¹² So the concept of a Germanic people originated not with the “Germans”, but with their neighbours, the Gauls and the Romans. It is a *Fremdbezeichnung*. But this does not mean that it was without any basis in reality. Tacitus clearly thought that he was concerned with a distinct people. He did his best to describe their common customs. He shows himself aware of their common language.¹³ He knows that there was

⁹ Pliny, *Natural History* 4,99, ed. and transl. H.R. Rackham (London-Cambridge 1949–68).

¹⁰ Tacitus, *Germania* 2, ed. R. Much and W. Lange with H. Jankuhn (3rd edn., Heidelberg 1967) [henceforth: Tacitus, *Germ.*].

¹¹ One possibility: K. Strobel, *Die Galater. Geschichte und Eigenart der keltischen Staatsbildung auf dem Balkan des hellenistischen Kleinasien* 1 (Berlin 1996) p. 131: “Die Selbstbezeichnung des Kriegerverbandes hat die grundsätzliche Tendenz, die Grenzen der unmittelbaren Stammeszugehörigkeit zu überschreiten, und als Namen der handelnden Kollektive vor die Benennung nach der jeweiligen Stammes- oder Abstammungsidentität zu treten. Die Benennung des Heerbannes wird durch die Übernahme von Seiten der mit ihnen konfrontierten Gruppen zu einer Fremdbezeichnung, die nun auf das Volk oder die Völkergruppen selbst übertragen werden kann”.

¹² Tacitus, *Germ.* 2.

¹³ *Ibid.* 43: Gallic and Pannonian language disqualify respectively Cotini and Osi

a difference between the language of the “Germans” and that of the Britons (i.e. Celtic).¹⁴ For him “Germanicity” was certainly more than a matter of geographic location. For he can point out that certain peoples living to the right of the Rhine, among the so-called “Germans”, are really Gauls,¹⁵ and the Nervii and Treveri who lived among the Gauls were, or at least themselves claimed to be, of Germanic descent.¹⁶ Moreover Tacitus thought that some peoples occupying the left bank, that is the Gallic bank of the Rhine, were certainly Germani.¹⁷ So he did distinguish between “Germans” and Gauls and others whom he thought non-“Germans”. “Germanicity” was something real and recognisable. Moreover I think it can be shown, though there is not the space to do so here, that other Romans, who referred to “Germans” in the last decades of the Republic and after, similarly visualized a distinct people. There remains the question what the so-called Germanic peoples thought about their “Germanicity”. In my opinion it is taking scepticism too far to reject Tacitus’ express statement that they applied this name to themselves. But once a collective name for these *gentes* existed, it is likely to have made them much more conscious of what they had in common.¹⁸

But if a certain sense of relationship, and some genuine, if rather vague and not easily assessed emotional bonds linked the members of the various Germanic *gentes*, these sentiments do not appear to have been very strong. After all the concept of “Germanicity” did not survive the Roman Empire. Even in Britain the word “German” had to be rediscovered: it is not documented before the sixteenth

from being considered “Germans”. However in *Germ.* 28 the Germanicity of the Osi is asserted. Perhaps there *germanorum natione* is purely geographical. *Germ.* 46 Bastarnae are Germanic in language as well as other respects.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 45 (Aestii).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 28 (Helvetii, Boii) and 43 (Cotini and Osi).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 28.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* (Vangiones, Triboci, Nemetes).

¹⁸ Just as *deutsch* started as a *Fremdbezeichnung*. See J. Jarnut, “Teotischis homines (a. 816). Studien und Reflexionen über den ältesten (urkundlichen) Beleg des Begriffs ‘theodiscus’”. *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 104 (1996) pp. 26–40. At the oath of Strasbourg, February 843, the languages of the two Frankish kingdoms were respectively *lingua romana* and *lingua teudisca* (Nithard, *Historiarum libri IIII* 3,5, ed. E. Müller, MGH SSrG 44 [Hannover 1907] pp. 35–7).

century.¹⁹ Indeed one wonders whether the various *gentes* whom the Gauls and Romans described as “Germans” even had a word of their own to describe what they had in common, before they appropriated the description used by their neighbours. The likelihood is that they did not. Clearly in the Age of Migrations the active allegiance of individuals was to the *gens*, and especially to the sub-tribe, that is in the case of a Vandal to the Silingi or Hastingi, in the case of the Visigoths to the Tervingi or Greutungi.²⁰ But if the strength of the emotional bonding represented by shared “Germanicity” is very uncertain, the cultural kinship of the bulk of the people involved must have assisted the integration of such tribal federations as that of the band which was to establish the Vandal *regnum* in Africa. In short, it must have greatly facilitated ethnogenesis.

As for the Vandals, the fact that they were mentioned by Tacitus (c. A.D. 56–118) is evidence that they are one of the older tribal collectives. As such they are certainly considerably older than the Franks and the Alamanni. The earliest occasion that the Vandals are reported to have taken an active part in history was in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161–180). At that time the name was attached to two sub-tribes. One of the two, the Silingi, lived in what were then known as the Vandal mountains,²¹ situated in what used to be known as Sudetenland, in what is now the Czech Republic.²² The name of the former German province of Silesia possibly preserves their memory. The second group the (H)astingi arrived at around the same time on the western border of Dacia, that is around the border of modern Hungary and Romania.²³ *Hastingi* was the name of the royal dynasty of the Vandals when they entered the Empire.²⁴ The earliest known ruler of this line was Visimar, a

¹⁹ *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford 1971) vol. 1, p. 1134, s.v. German. Previously the expression was Almain, or Dutch.

²⁰ A. Lund, *Die ersten Germanen: Ethnizität und Ethnogenese* (Heidelberg 1998), and the pioneer E. Norden, *Die germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus' Germania* (Leipzig-Berlin 1920), especially chapters five and six.

²¹ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 55,1, ed. and transl. E. Cary (London-Cambridge Mass. 1969) [henceforth: Dio]: the Elbe rises in “Vandal mountains”.

²² Ptolemy (A.D. 146–170), places them between the Sudeten Mountains and the Oder; for their early history see L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Vandalen* (2nd edn., Munich 1942) pp. 2–17; C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris 1955; repr. Aalen 1964) pp. 11–37.

²³ Dio 72,12,1 (A.D. 172).

²⁴ Jordanes, *Getica* 113, ed T. Mommsen, MGH AA 5,1 (Berlin 1882): *Visimar*

contemporary of Constantine.²⁵ So the eastern component of the Vandal group took their name from its dynasty. It is a likely hypothesis that the subgroup originated as a war band that had split off from the Silingi at the time of the Marcomannic wars, under the leadership of this family.²⁶

Subsequently Silingi and Hastingi appear to have operated independently, though both described themselves, or at least were described by others, as Vandals.²⁷ We do not know what institutions, customs and memories underlay this shared identity. But the problem of what precisely it was that induced groups living in separate territories, each having its own leadership, to think of themselves in some important respect as one, is raised by the early history of the Franks, Alamanni, Goths and Saxons no less than that of the Vandals. The inhabitants of the numerous, constantly warring, cities of Greece shared the belief that they were all Hellenes. Among Greeks, as among the Germanic Sueves,²⁸ the sense of shared identity was maintained by shared cult.²⁹ Something of that kind might well have preserved the sense of shared “Vandalicity”. But we do not know. The fact however that we do not have the information, does not mean that we can assume that this *Traditionskern* did not exist, or that it was insignificant. It may be that it played a significant, even an essential, role in the “crystallisation” of the larger group in the course of the Vandals’ progress through the Empire. But we simply lack the evidence to judge.

[. . .] *Asdingorum stirpe*; Cassiodorus, *Variarum* 1,9, ed. and transl. S.J.B. Barnish, *Translated Texts for Historians* 12 (Liverpool 1992); cf. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l’Afrique*, pp. 391–404.

²⁵ Jordanes, *Getica* 22,123.

²⁶ According to Dio 71 (72),12,1 the Asdingi were led by Raus and Raptus, presumably the ancestors of the royal dynasty.

²⁷ Deuxippus, *Fragmenta* 24, ed. C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, vol. 3 (Paris 1849; repr. 1928) pp. 685–6) describes the tribe that invaded Greece in A.D. 270 as Vandals—they clearly were the eastern group.

²⁸ Tacitus, *Germ.* 39.

²⁹ Modern scholars have identified the Silingi with the Naharvali, who according to Tacitus, *Germ.* 43, controlled the sanctuary of the Lugian federation. But this is mere speculation, based on the fact that the Naharvali appear to have lived in roughly the same geographical position as the Silingi, and the fact that Tacitus mentions the Naharvali, but not the Silingi.

III. *What sorts of changes and conditions led to the establishment of the kingdom?*

Each of the Vandal groups from time to time came into military contact with the Roman Empire, the Hastingi more often than the Silingi, as the latter lived at some distance from the imperial frontier. But for around two hundred years neither group presented any serious threat to the Empire—in this way they were quite unlike the Goths. This changed quite suddenly. In the late 390s the Vandals began to move.³⁰ In 401 Stilicho expelled Vandals from Raetia, before returning to Italy to deal with the first invasion of Alaric's Goths. Stilicho's expedition into Raetia was not a major campaign, though evidently a necessary one.³¹ Clearly the Vandals and their federates were not yet the formidable band that they soon became. Then on the last day of 406³² the Empire suffered one of its worst ever disasters, when a huge band of barbarians made up both groups of Vandals, as well as of Alans, Sueves,³³ and even some Pannonians from within the Empire,³⁴ crossed the frozen Rhine and broke into Gaul.³⁵ The background of the invasion is obscure, but what made it so formidable was an alliance between the two groups of Vandals and the Alans.³⁶ The attack was perhaps planned to exploit the

³⁰ According to Procopius, *Wars* 3,1,22,1–5, ed. J. Haury, transl. H.B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library (London-Cambridge Mass. 1914–28) [henceforth. Procopius] hunger was the motive. He relates that many years later the Vandals left behind in their original home sent an embassy to their successful kinsmen in Africa asking them to renounce their property rights at home. Geiseric was persuaded to reject the request on grounds of the changeability of human fortune. A good story, but doubtful history. Procopius knew of no Vandals left in their native land in his time.

³¹ Claudian, *De bello Pollentino sive Gothico* 363–6; 414–5, ed. T. Birt, MGH AA 10 (Berlin 1892; repr. 1962) pp. 259–83, here pp. 273–4.

³² The date: *Continuatio Havniensis Prosperi* a. 406, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 9 (Berlin 1892; repr. Munich 1981) p. 299; Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1229–1230, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 9 (Berlin 1892; repr. Munich 1981) p. 465.

³³ Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum, Wandalorum, Sueborum* 71, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 11 (Berlin 1894); Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* 7,38,3; 7,40,3, ed. K. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna 1882; repr. Hildesheim 1967) [henceforth: Orosius]; Zosimus, *Histoire Nouvelle* 6,3,1, ed. and transl. F. Paschoud (Paris 1971–89).

³⁴ Jerome, *Lettres* 123,16, ed. J. Labourt (Paris 1961).

³⁵ By the time they came to Africa, and besieged Hippo, they are said also to have included Goths (Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 30, PL 32).

³⁶ The Alans too were made up of two groups, respectively ruled by the kings

difficulties created for the Empire by Radagaisus' invasion of Italy. In fact Radagaisus had already been defeated in August 406, but the Vandals and their allies could not have anticipated that. The invasion certainly required careful preparation and planning. The organising and diplomatic brain behind it may well have been king Godigisel of the Hastingi Vandals, who did not however live to see the success of his scheme, because he was killed in a battle against the Franks before the breaking of the Rhine frontier of the empire.³⁷ The Pannonian provincials could have been drawn in to the allied band by a group of Vandals who had been settled in Pannonia since 335.³⁸ In time the Pannonians were no doubt absorbed into the Vandals.

We have no figures at all, but the number of invaders must have been large.³⁹ This is a necessary deduction from their record. They recovered from a defeat by the Franks, suffered before they had even entered the Empire. They devastated the north-western frontier provinces of Gaul,⁴⁰ and even besieged and captured cities,⁴¹ in spite of the fact that there must still have been a significant number of troops, if only *limitanei*, or other garrison troops, in the area. After that, they cut a swathe of devastation through Gaul as far as the Pyrenees, and finally spread into the provinces of south-eastern Gaul without the Roman troops being able to do anything about it.⁴² Each tribal section must have been numerically strong, for each group was in 411 given separate, and very extensive, settlement areas in Spain.⁴³

Goar (J. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2 [Cambridge 1980] pp. 514–5) and Respendial (*ibid.*, p. 940). The former went over to the Romans (Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,9, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SSrM 1,1 [2nd edn., Hannover 1951] pp. 55–6).

³⁷ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,9; cf. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* 2, pp. 515–6, s.v. Godigisel 1.

³⁸ Jordanes, *Getica* 113.

³⁹ For the following I owe much to J.F. Drinkwater, “The usurpers Constantine III (407–11) and Jovinus (411–13)”, *Britannia* 29 (1998) pp. 269–98, though in my opinion the invading force must have been very considerable. On the other hand I am sure that “rather less than 200,000”, the estimates of E.A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians: the Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison 1982) pp. 158–9, is several times too high.

⁴⁰ Jerome, *Lettres* 123,16; Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei Libri VIII* 7,12(50), ed. F. Pauly, CSEL 8 (Vienna 1883).

⁴¹ Jerome, *Lettres* 123,16; Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei* 6,8 (39).

⁴² Orosius 7,40.

⁴³ *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana* 297,17 a. 411 A.D., ed. R.W. Burgess (Oxford 1993) [henceforth: Hydatius, *Ol.*]. The settlement would

Finally when the Sueves had been settled in Gallaecia,⁴⁴ and the Silingi were destroyed by the Visigoths, the Hastingsi on their own, together with the battle-reduced Alans, were still extremely formidable, so that the Roman army in North Africa was not a match for them. All this suggests a large invasion force.

The attack across the Rhine achieved complete surprise, and once they had broken into the Empire the barbarians seem to have been extremely mobile. Neither achievement would seem compatible with an operation that involved the migration of three entire peoples, including women, children and the old. It is likely therefore that the invading force did not consist of three whole peoples on the move, but rather of contingents, and presumably large contingents of chosen, or volunteering, warriors, each war-band being led by its tribal king. In the course of the campaign the band will have grown considerably. We are told that the federate Honoriaci, who had been supposed to guard the passes of the Pyrenees, joined them and received land allotments, presumably at the same time as the invaders.⁴⁵ It is possible that the Vandals and their allies were joined by survivors of Radagaisus' band.⁴⁶ Merging of warrior bands must have been easier when both parties spoke Germanic dialects. But the cohesion and discipline necessary for a long and strenuous campaign must surely have been built around the ethnic solidarity of the original ethnic units, and above all of the Vandals.

On the last day of 406, when the tribal band invaded Roman Gaul, it was still a confederation of different *gentes*. No fusion had taken place. Subsequent events showed this clearly. In 411 the general Gerontius, acting in the name of the usurper Maximus, who was briefly in control of Spain, reached an agreement with the invaders assigning each group a different region of the country.⁴⁷

seem to have been made with the usurper Maximus: See W. Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III., Studien zu seiner Tätigkeit und Stellung im Westreich 411–21* (Bonn 1998) p. 45.

⁴⁴ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, pp. 161–87.

⁴⁵ Orosius 8,40.

⁴⁶ This was deduced from Zosimus, *Histoire Nouvelle* 6,3 and *Chronicorum a. CCC-CLII* 52, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 9 (Berlin 1892) by F. Paschoud, *Zosimus, Histoire nouvelle*, vol. 3,2, pp. 22–3, and accepted by Maria Cesa, *Impero tardoantico e barbari* (Como 1994) pp. 124.

⁴⁷ I am following J.F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364–425* (Oxford 1975) p. 311 and Drinkwater, “The usurpers Constantine III (407–11) and Jovinus (411–13)”, pp. 287–8 against Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, pp. 155–6, who interprets Hydatius strictly, to conclude that the barbarians drew lots for

The Hastingi received eastern Gallaecia for settlement, the Sueves the lands of western Gallaecia bordering on the ocean, the Alans Lusitania and Carthaginiensis, and the Silingi Baetica.⁴⁸ Each *gens* was ruled by a king, the Hastingi by Gunderic, the Alans by Addace, the Sueves by Hermeric. The name of the king of the Silingi is not known.⁴⁹ It would appear that both Silingi and Sueves were in some sense also subjects of the king of the Alans.⁵⁰ To judge by the quality of the land assigned to them, the Hastingi, who were to be masters of Africa, were at this time actually the weakest of the barbarian groups.⁵¹

Then in 417/18 the Visigoths under their king Vallia, and operating as allies of the Empire, destroyed the Silingi, and killed the king of the Alans and greatly weakened his people. The Alani thereupon placed themselves under the patronage of the king of the Hastingi.⁵² The Alans long retained their tribal identity, so that the title of the later kings of Vandal North Africa was “king of the Alans and Vandals”. Nevertheless the events of 418 meant that the Alans ceased to have any independent political or military existence. In a sense they mark the beginning of an Alano-Vandal people. Subsequently “Vandal” is used in two senses. Strictly speaking it refers only to the Hastingi contingent, but it is also applied, and perhaps by provincials and outsiders particularly, to the whole of the warband, Vandals, Alans and anybody else, who had been received into their fellowship. The group did not straight away become a powerful military force. In 420 the Vandals, presumably now including the surviving Alans, were expelled from Gallaecia by a Roman army,⁵³ and after they had retired to Baetica, they were only saved from further defeat in 422 when the Roman commander was deserted by

different regions of Spain without participation of the Roman authorities. On this settlement see also J. Arce (this volume).

⁴⁸ Hydatius, *Ol.* 297,17 a. 411 A.D., p. 86.

⁴⁹ See Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* 2, s.v. Gundericus, Addac, Hermericus.

⁵⁰ The Alans saved the Vandals in the course of 406, when they had lost a battle against the Franks, and their king Godesil had been killed: Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,9. When they crossed the Rhine Gunderic was king: *Continuatio Havniensis Prosperi* a. 406.

⁵¹ Unless, as argued by Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, p. 156, land assignment was simply due to the luck of the draw.

⁵² Hydatius, *Ol.* 299,24 a. 418 A.D., p. 86.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 299,26 a. 420 A.D., p. 86.

his Gothic federate troops. This incident marked the turning point in their fortune.⁵⁴

Their recovery was remarkable. They acquired ships and raided the Balearic Islands.⁵⁵ In 428 king Gunderic, died and was succeeded by his brother Geiseric, as the events showed a ruler of genius. Then in 429 Geiseric took the fateful decision of shipping the whole of his people Vandals and Alans and some other “barbarians”⁵⁶ and even some hopeful Roman provincials,⁵⁷ with their families over to Africa. According to Victor of Vita, Geiseric had his people counted after the crossing, with the result that they were found to number 80,000 men, women and children. He insists on the comprehensive character of the figures because the number of Vandal fighting men at the time of writing—around 490 A.D.—was very much less, “small and feeble”, in fact.⁵⁸ The narrative of the Vandals’ ultimate defeat confirms this estimate, since Belisarius succeeded in defeating them with an army of only around 16,000.⁵⁹

A very approximate estimate of the strength of the Vandals at the time of their conquest of North Africa can be derived from the size of the Roman army in Africa which they defeated. According to the *Notitia Dignitatum* the garrison of the African provinces was composed of ten units of *limitanei* and thirty six field army units. However thirty of the latter appear to have been upgraded *limitanei*.⁶⁰ If we take the average unit-strength to have been five hundred, the imperial army in Africa will have amounted to 23,000. The total that could actually have been assembled to face the invaders will have been

⁵⁴ Ibid. 300,28 a. 422 A.D., pp. 86–8.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 301 a. 425 A.D., p. 88.

⁵⁶ Some Sueves: *Année Epigraphique* 1991, no. 267 = Courtois, *Les Vandales et l’Afrique*, Appendix II, no. 70; Mike Clover informs me that some more inscriptions of the Sueves have turned up in North Africa. Goths: Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 28. Victor of Vita, *Historia Persecutionis Africanae Provinciae* 1,19–21, ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 7 (Bonn 1881) [henceforth: Victor of Vita] shows how the *comes* Sebastian became a close adviser of Geiseric, refused to become an Arian, and was eventually executed.

⁵⁷ For instance the four Spaniards who for a long time *apud Gisiricum merito sapientiae et fidelis obsequii cari, clarique habebantur* (Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1329 a. 437), until they were eventually executed for refusing to convert to Arianism.

⁵⁸ Victor of Vita 1,2; in the face of this Procopius’ statement (3,18, part of his unreliable historical introduction) that the 80,000 refer to fighting men, is to be rejected.

⁵⁹ Procopius 3,11,1.

⁶⁰ A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A social, economic and administrative survey* (Oxford 1964) p. 197.

considerably less, say 10,000 to 15,000. The fighting strength of the Vandals is likely to have been of the same order. It could well have been smaller.

A plausible explanation of how the figure 80,000 arose can be suggested. According to Procopius the Vandals were divided into eighty units each commanded by a *millenarius*.⁶¹ Procopius knew that the *millenarii* commanded military units.⁶² It is however likely, though not certain, that the *millenae* were also divisions of the total population, and that the *mille* in *millena* was a notional figure, like the hundred of the *centuria* of the political assembly of the Roman Republic, and that a *millenarius* was in fact the officer who was responsible for the civil administration of his subsection of the Vandal people, as well as being the commander of the tactical unit furnished by it on active service.⁶³ We are explicitly told that the Alans were included in this registration, and so presumably were any other members of Geiseric's band who were not Vandals by descent.⁶⁴ The bulk of the local populations was excluded. Subsequently the population of Vandal North Africa was made up of three peoples: Vandals, Romans and Moors. That is how Procopius saw it. Nevertheless the description "Vandals", in the wider of its two senses still included some Alans and others conscious of their non-Vandal origin. The king's title remained "king of the Vandals and Alans".⁶⁵

⁶¹ Procopius 3,5,18. Procopius was aware that the assumption of a fighting force of 80 units of a thousand each resulted in an excessively high total, and quotes a tradition that the total of Alans and Vandals at the time of the invasion, before they had grown by natural increase and by associating other barbarians with themselves, had only amounted to 50,000.

⁶² *Ibid.* 4,3,8: each *millenarius* (Chiliarch) commands his unit. The fact that we read about Vandal forces totalling round thousands (5,000 in 3,11,23; 2,000 in 3,18,1) does not necessarily mean that the basic tactical unit was 1,000 strong.

⁶³ Victor of Vita 1,30,35: an anonymous *millenarius*, the only one known, owns slaves, including a weapon-smith, and cattle. He looks like a great landowner.

⁶⁴ E.g. the Sueve, *Année Epigraphique* 1951, no. 267 = Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, p. 375 n. 70; and some Goths, Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 28.

⁶⁵ Victor of Vita 2,39. The close association of these Alans and certain "other barbarians" with the Vandals (in the narrow sense of the word) was something like that of the Rugii with the Ostrogoths. At least Procopius uses *apokrinesthai* in each case to describe the association of the client with the master people. See Procopius 3,5,22 and 7,2,2 following Thucydides 1,3). On the obstinate survival of submerged tribal identities see P.J. Heather, "Disappearing and reappearing tribes", *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998) pp. 95–111.

IV. *What sorts of changes were linked to the establishment of the kingdom?*

The Vandal conquest of proconsular Africa was followed by the confiscation of land on a large scale, the exiling of many of the landowners, and the granting of their estates to the Vandals. Lots were assigned to the warriors, and large blocks of land to the king and his sons, who needed a great deal of land in order to be able to display generosity to their followers. “Byzacena, Abaritana and Gaetulia and part of Numidia he kept for himself, Zeugitana and the proconsular provinces he divided up as an allotted portion for his people”.⁶⁶ The confiscation was certainly not nearly as complete as is suggested by our sources.⁶⁷ There continued to be wealthy Roman landowners.⁶⁸ The location of the settlement areas is still obscure. It would seem more likely that regions of Vandal settlement were dispersed over the kingdom rather than consolidated into one continuous block.⁶⁹ But the Vandal areas were nevertheless distinct. For Catholic priests could be penalised for holding services in the *sortes Vandalorum*.⁷⁰ It also seems as if they lived on farms or in villas rather than in cities.⁷¹ That would explain their policy of dismantling the fortifications of cities, as well as the fact that when the men were called up against the army of Belisarius, their families accompanied them into the camp.⁷²

⁶⁶ Victor of Vita 1,13; Procopius 3,5,11–15.

⁶⁷ The archaeology shows little trace of a widespread upheaval at the time of the Vandal conquest, e.g. the production of fine pottery seems to have continued with little change, M. Mackensen, *Die spätantiken Sigillata- und Lampentöpfereien von El Mahrine (Nordtunesien): Studien zur nordafrikanischen Feinkeramik des 4. bis 7. Jahrhunderts* (Munich 1993) pp. 487–91.

⁶⁸ *Tablettes Albertini, actes privés de l'époque vandale*, ed. C. Courtois, L. Leschi, C. Perrat and C. Saumagne (Paris 1952).

⁶⁹ G.G. König, “Wandalische Grabfunde des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts”, *Madriider Mitteilungen* 22 (1981) pp. 299–360; Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, pp. 218–9 with map; P. von Rummel, *Die beigabeführenden Gräber im vandalenzeitlichen Nordafrika*, Magisterarbeit der Albert-Ludwig Universität zu Freiburg i. B. (Freiburg 2000), table 18. In the opinion of von Rummel the grave evidence is insufficient to locate Vandal settlement areas (pp. 132–3). See also C. Eger, “Vandalische Grabfunde aus Karthago”, *Germania* 79,2 (2001) pp. 347–90.

⁷⁰ Victor of Vita 3,4; cf. Ferrandus, *Vita Fulgentii* 6–7, PL 65. On taxes see chapter VI below.

⁷¹ Procopius 4,6,9—which is highly moralising.

⁷² *Ibid.* 4,2,8.

After their settlement the “Vandals”, in the wider sense of the ruling people, were a sharply distinct group. We lack the quantitative information to assess how accessible to outsiders they were. There is no evidence to suggest that there was a marriage bar between Vandals and Romans, as there was between Romans and Visigoths.⁷³ Certainly after the defeat of the Vandals their wives and daughters were quick to marry Roman soldiers.⁷⁴ It is moreover clear that in the process of building up their formidable land and sea power the Vandals absorbed numerous individuals from among stray barbarians and Roman provincials.⁷⁵ In addition some of the many Romans who served at court or in the administration of the Vandal kingdom are likely to have been admitted into the *gens*.⁷⁶ But we certainly do not know that this happened. Again it is likely that the Vandals became more exclusive in the course of their stay in Africa, than they had been at the start. But once more we don't know whether this was so.

When we try to define the essence of what it meant to be a Vandal we cannot get at the patriotic sentiments of the individual member of the *gens*, but we can recognise some of the external signs of their tribal solidarity.⁷⁷ A Vandal could be defined by his enrolment in a *millena* and the possession of a “lot”. The Vandals had a

⁷³ See my “Citizen status and law”, *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, The Transformation of the Roman World 2 (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998) pp. 131–52, especially pp. 139–41. I am not persuaded by Hagith Sivan, “Roman-barbarian marriage in Visigothic Gaul and Spain”, *ibid.*, pp. 189–204. Endogamy may be, but is not by any means always, an essential instrument of ethnicity. It is introduced for a particular purpose, though the purpose is likely to be forgotten (Weber, *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik*, p. 218: “Die ursprünglichen Motive der Entstehung von Verschiedenheiten der Lebensgepflogenheiten werden vergessen, die Kontraste bestehen als ‘Konventionen’ weiter”).

⁷⁴ Procopius 4,14,8–9. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l’Afrique*, p. 220 nn. 1 and 2 refers to two possible cases of intermarriage (*ibid.*, Appendix II, no. 153 and Victor of Vita 3,24).

⁷⁵ See above nn. 34, 45, 46, 52, 56, 57, 64, and below n. 125.

⁷⁶ As I have argued for Alaric's Goths in my *Barbarians and Bishops* (Oxford 1990) pp. 75–8.

⁷⁷ For a comprehensive discussion of “signs of distinction” see W. Pohl on “strategies of distinction” and “telling the difference” in *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, pp. 1–69. But it is unhelpful to minimize the importance of these signs automatically and indiscriminately.

Germanic dialect of their own, closely related to Gothic.⁷⁸ It may well have remained the principal language of Vandal religion,⁷⁹ even though Vandals increasingly found it more convenient to speak Latin. If they had inscriptions on their tombstones, they were in Latin.⁸⁰ In fact the Vandals could hardly have continued to make use of the Roman administrative machinery in the way they did unless many of them had fully mastered Latin. Nevertheless we read that Cyrila, an Arian, that is a Vandal bishop, demonstratively insisted on speaking the tribal language in discussions with the Roman, that is Catholic, bishops, even though Cyrila was known to speak Latin.⁸¹ Most, though certainly not all, Vandals appear to have had Vandal names.⁸² Of the five Arian bishops, Iucundus and Antonius had Latin names, the others Cyrila, Barbas, and Pinta are probably Germanic. Of the lower clerics Anduit and Mariuadus had Germanic names. Felix had a Latin name, but was of Vandal origin. The names of Fastidiosus and Elpidoforus are respectively Latin and Greek, but both were converts.⁸³ There was a distinctive Vandal dress, though this might also be adopted by Romans who served at the Vandal court.⁸⁴ No doubt it also happened that a Vandal wore Roman dress. The indicators of “Vandalicity” were not obligatory and exclusive in the way a particular uniform is obligatory for soldiers on duty in a modern army. But in general it must have been pretty clear who was,

⁷⁸ Procopius 3,2,5; *Anthologia latina* no. 285, ed. F. Bücheler and A. Riese (Leipzig 1894).

⁷⁹ Victor of Vita 2,4. We have no epigraphic evidence of the use of the Vandal language, nor explicit reference to its employment in religious services in Vandal Africa. It is however likely that the Vandals who received their Arian Christianity from the Goths, continued to use Ulfila's Gothic bible, on which see P.J. Heather and J.F. Matthews, *The Goths in the fourth Century* (Liverpool 1991) pp. 155–97.

⁸⁰ See references in Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, pp. 219–20, and the texts *ibid.* in Appendix II. Most are undated, four out of 34 are dated by the year of the king. Tombstones of Romans are dated much more frequently, and by the provincial era.

⁸¹ Victor of Vita 2,55.

⁸² This could be a circular argument, after all we can only recognise a Vandal if he has a Germanic name.

⁸³ Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, p. 225 n. 3.

⁸⁴ Victor of Vita 1,8. But P. von Rummel, *Die beigabensführenden Gräber*, pp. 78–91, argues that buckles and *fibulae* found as grave gifts were too widely worn to serve as adequate evidence for what was specific in Vandal *habitus*. The presence of some grave gifts is probably evidence that the burial was Vandal, but not of specifically Vandal attire. For evidence making likely a specific *habitus* for aristocratic Vandal women see Eger, “Vandalische Grabfunde aus Karthago”.

and who was not, a Vandal. We do not have the evidence to see at all clearly the nature of these “signs of distinction”, much less how they were maintained or modified in the course of time. But in the end, after the reconquest, the distinction was still clear enough to enable the Byzantine authorities to carry out a policy of general deportation of Vandal men.⁸⁵

V. *What was the role of the king in the establishment of the regnum?*

Throughout the first half century or so of their stay in North Africa, certainly as long as Geiseric was king, the Vandals were a formidable people. Their fleet dominated the Mediterranean. No coast was safe from their raids. In 455 Geiseric sacked Rome itself. In 461 Geiseric defeated a major attack by the western emperor Majorian, in 468 a great Eastern expedition led by Basiliscus, the Eastern Emperor Leo’s brother in law. Clearly Geiseric was one of the outstanding leaders of the age of migrations, like Alaric and Theoderic and Clovis, all of whom built up a *gens* into a major power within the former Empire. But whatever the others may or may not have done, Geiseric built his *regnum* around the core of an existing tribal unit. Classical sources describe earlier leaders of the Vandals as kings. But in the case of Geiseric we know that he succeeded his brother Gunderic in 428, but he only counted his regnal years from 439, the year of the capture of Carthage. So he evidently considered that in an important sense it was the settlement in North Africa that marked the beginning of the *regnum* of the Vandals.⁸⁶

At the core of the *regnum* of the Vandalic *gens* was the tribal dynasty of the Hastingi. The king’s sons had courts as well as the king. An unusual rule governed the succession of the monarchy, according to which the kingdom was transmitted along the line of the deceased monarch’s brothers, before being passed on to the generation of his sons.⁸⁷ This rule is said to have been instituted by Geiseric. It may

⁸⁵ See below chapter VIII.

⁸⁶ F.M. Clover, “Time-keeping, monarchy and the heartbeat of Vandal and proto-Byzantine Africa” (forthcoming).

⁸⁷ Procopius 3,7,29; 3,9,10; 3,16,13; Jordanes, *Getica* 169; cf. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l’Afrique*, pp. 238–42.

however be traditional, since Geiseric himself had already succeeded a brother. If the existence of a dynasty made for stability, the rule of inheritance created a conflict of generations, and repeatedly resulted in reigning uncles killing their nephews, and other prominent Vandals thought to be suspiciously close to them. From the start the Vandal *regnum* had a fixed capital at Carthage. That is where the king spent his working life. As a rule the Vandal kings did not lead their armies, but delegated this duty to their relatives or others. In this they resembled contemporary Roman emperors. The kings resided in what had been the palace of the proconsul of Africa. There he dined in Roman style.⁸⁸

There was a Vandal aristocracy, and we can be sure that some its members were part of the inner circle of royal followers⁸⁹ and advisers.⁹⁰ But this group included Romans as well as Vandals.⁹¹ Confidential envoys of the king had the title *comes*.⁹² Roman Landowners continued to be addressed with titles of Roman senatorial rank. Like an emperor, a Vandal king displayed his munificence by paying for public buildings. In return he would be praised in Latin verse. A great deal of Latin was certainly spoken at court, where there evidently were quite a few people, including some of the kings, who appreciated Latin poetry.⁹³ It is certain that the Vandals that could afford to do so adopted the way of life of wealthy Romans, and enjoyed life in rural villas.⁹⁴ No doubt both groups enjoyed watching chariot races in the hippodrome and dancers in the theatre. The court was where the leaders of the Roman and the Vandal divisions of North African society met and conferred. To make the system work, there must have been far more co-operation, flexibility, and give and take, than our sources would have us believe.

⁸⁸ Procopius 3,21,1-5.

⁸⁹ *Domestici*: Victor of Vita 1,19; 2,42. Admission to court services was by oath, Victor of Vita 2,39.

⁹⁰ Mentioned by Victor of Vita 1,18; 1,19; 2,24; 2,27.

⁹¹ Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1329 (four Spaniards).

⁹² Victor of Vita 2,14; 2,28. Is this a translation of a Germanic title?

⁹³ For references to Latin poems dedicated to Vandals, and for other evidence for the use of Latin at the Vandal court see Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, p. 222 n. 6. See also F.M. Clover, "Carthage and the Vandals", *Excavations at Carthage 1978 conducted by the University of Michigan*, vol. 7, ed. J.H. Humphrey (Ann Arbor 1982) pp. 1-22, especially pp. 20-2.

⁹⁴ Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, p. 250.

Leading Romans were evidently quite ready to work with the Vandals, and probably even to make concessions to their Arianism. The last Vandal kings evidently assimilated their ceremony to that of an emperor. A Latin poet, by name of Florentinus, describes the emperor-like position of Thrasamund (A.D. 496–532), praised the dual heritage, Vandal and Roman, of Hilderic (A.D. 523–530), but puts the emphasis on his descent from the emperor Theodosius.⁹⁵

VI. *The administration of the regnum*

The genres to which our sources belong limit the information they provide about the institutions of the Vandal kingdom. But this also means that we must not be too hasty to conclude that a particular institution did not exist because we do not hear about it. Since the conquest the royal family owned a great deal of landed estate. The king's land was administered by a *maior domus*, that of the princes by procurators.⁹⁶ The king had a chief assistant who engaged in negotiations on his behalf with the title *praepositus regni*.⁹⁷ He would normally seem to have been a Vandal. I have argued earlier that the Vandals were subjected to the administration of *millenariū*. We know practically nothing of the traditional custom that the *millenariū* upheld, except that we know that the Vandals, like the Visigoths, employed the non-Roman punishment of *decalvatio*.⁹⁸

How much of the Roman administration survived has to be deduced from disparate and fragmentary pieces of information, but the impression is that a good deal of it continued to function under the Vandals. The king employed *notariū*. These included senior officials, perhaps corresponding to the *tribuni et notariū* of the imperial court. One Vitarit is the only holder of this office to be named, evidently a Vandal.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ *Anthologia latina* nos. 371 and 206. Hilderic's father was married to Eudocia, daughter of Valentinian III.

⁹⁶ Victor of Vita 1,45 (Felix); 48 (Saturus); Ferrandus, *Vita Fulgentii* 1 (Fulgentius). All have Latin names and were Catholics.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 2,15 (Heldic); 2,43 (Obadus).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 2,9, which probably involves not only shaving of the head but scalping. See E.A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford 1969) pp. 103–4 and Averil Cameron, "How did the Merovingian kings wear their hair?", *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 48 (1965) pp. 1203–14.

⁹⁹ Victor of Vita 2,3; 2,41; 2,54.

Other notaries mentioned evidently were simple clerks.¹⁰⁰ A *primi-scrinarius* with the Roman name of Victorianus had influence over appointments.¹⁰¹ He may be identical with the Victorianus who was proconsul of Africa and executed by Huneric for refusing to be rebaptised as an Arian. He is one of only two provincial governors to be mentioned in the sources.¹⁰² But Huneric's law of 384 mentions judges,¹⁰³ and the provinces of Proconsularis, Byzacena, and Numidia are mentioned too. Inscriptions commemorate *flamines perpetui* and a *sacerdos provinciae* dated by the year of the Vandal king. So the Roman system of provincial administration, and even Roman provincial assemblies continued. However the fact that governors are not reported to have played a role in the persecution—or prosecution—of Catholics suggests that this duty was in practice not assigned to them, presumably because as a rule they must have been Catholic themselves.

There was a public fiscal administration in addition to the private property of the royal family.¹⁰⁴ Taxation continued. The Romans are said to have been heavily taxed,¹⁰⁵ while the Vandals were exempt.¹⁰⁶ In practice this seems to have meant that taxes were collected only over part of the territory.¹⁰⁷ After the reconquest the Byzantine administration had new tax registers made.¹⁰⁸ We are not told how taxes were collected. But Huneric's law of 384 mentions civic *ordines* among the institutions responsible for enforcing the law.¹⁰⁹ So the *ordines* of decurions were still functioning, and it is likely that they collected taxes, as they had always done. At Carthage the clerks

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 3,19; cf. also the epigram *Anthologia latina* no. 341 on one Eutyclus, *in ministrum regis, qui alienas facultates vi extorquebat*.

¹⁰¹ *Anthologia latina* no. 254.

¹⁰² Victorianus: Victor of Vita 3,27, the other proconsul is Pacideius (Dracontius, *Romulea* 5, ed. F. Vollmer, MGH AA 14 [Berlin 1905] pp. 132–96, here p. 148).

¹⁰³ Victor of Vita 3,13: *iudices provinciarum*; cf. 3,11: *iudices*; 3,9: *officiales iudicum*; 3,11: *primates officiorum*.

¹⁰⁴ *Fiscus* and *domus regia*: Victor of Vita 3,11; *fiscus*: ibid. 2,23; Procopius 3,5,15.

¹⁰⁵ Procopius 1,5; Victor of Vita 2,2.

¹⁰⁶ Procopius 1,15.

¹⁰⁷ Victor of Vita 3,22: *sacerdotibus qui in his regionibus versabantur quae [...] palatio tributa pendebant*.

¹⁰⁸ Procopius 4,8,25: the Roman registers are said to have been destroyed by Geiseric. Presumably the Vandal replacements were unacceptable to the Byzantines. The Byzantine registers were disliked by the tax-payers.

¹⁰⁹ Victor of Vita 3,12. There is no mention of a royal representative in the cities (such as the *comes civitatis* in the *regna* in Italy, Gaul and Spain) in Vandal Africa.

of local government organised the billeting of imperial troops in the traditional way.¹¹⁰ The *cursus publicus* was functioning.¹¹¹ When the little town of Syllectus was taken over by Belisarius, the *ordo* appears not to have played a part. The bishop and notables (δόκιμοι) represented the city,¹¹² as they did by this time in most cities in the East. A striking example of continuity between Roman and Vandal Africa is the survival of provincial assemblies (or at least one such assembly) together with some of the officials of what had been the imperial cult, and was now presumably a ceremony of loyalty to the Vandal king.¹¹³

That administration of the Vandal kingdom was far from “primitive” is shown most strikingly by its coinage. The administration needed money. As imperial currency only came into Vandal Africa in very limited quantities, Gunthamund (484–96) and his successors created silver and bronze coinage in their own names. This was based on the imperial coinage, but it also in an important respect improved on it. For in the second half of the fifth century imperial silver coins had almost ceased to be issued, and the bronze coinage had been reduced to small coins of very low value. So the Vandal state was the first government in the Roman world to bring back a stable currency of coins of small and medium denominations. The size of these issues, and the range of their distribution outside Carthage are still to be found out. The Vandal example was quickly followed by Theoderic the Ostrogothic king of Italy and not long after by the imperial government of Constantinople.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Procopius 3,21,10.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 3,16,12.

¹¹² Ibid. 3,16,11.

¹¹³ On Astius Mustelus, Christian and *flamen perpetuus* (A.D. 526), and Astius Vindicianus, *vir clarissimus* and *flamen perpetuus*, and Astius Dinamius, *sacerdotalis provinciae Africae*, see A. Chastagnol and N. Duval, “Les survivances du culte impériale dans l’Afrique du Nord à l’époque Vandale”, *Mélanges d’histoire anciennes offerts à William Seston* (Paris 1974) pp. 87–118; F.M. Clover, “Le culte des empereurs dans l’Afrique vandale”, id., *The Late Roman West and the Vandals* (Aldershot 1993) chapter 8, pp. 121–8.

¹¹⁴ M.F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Money Economy* (Cambridge 1985) pp. 478–90; K.W. Harl, *Coinage in the Roman Economy, 300 B.C. to A.D. 700* (Baltimore-London 1996) pp. 186–95; C. Morrisson, “Les origines du monnayage vandale”, *Actes du 8ème Congrès international de numismatique 1973* (Paris-Basel 1976) pp. 461–72.

VII. *Arians and Catholics*

Among the features that distinguished and divided Vandals from their non-Vandal neighbours by far the most conspicuous, to us at least, was their Arian religion. Whether the Arianism of Vandals—or of the Visigoths or of the Ostrogoths—ought to be classified as a “strategy of distinction” can be a matter for debate. On the level of conscious decision conversion to Christianity can rarely have been a strategy whose objective was “distinction”. It was rather a “strategy of salvation”, and inevitably, in such troubled and dangerous times, above all a “strategy of insurance”, aimed at ensuring divine support in all contingencies. As far as the controversy between Catholics and Arians was debated the argument was entirely theological.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, as can be observed in the history of the Byzantine Empire, and more recently of Greece, and Ireland,¹¹⁶ and Poland, and many other countries,¹¹⁷ a particular brand of Christianity can become an extremely powerful factor in creating regional, ethnic, or national sentiments of solidarity.

In the Age of Migrations the Arianism of most of the Germanic peoples separated its adherents from the worship of their Roman neighbours. It took them out of the responsibility of the bishop. At least potentially it attracted abuse, and subjected them to discriminatory legislation. In the nature of things the facts of separation and discrimination must have strengthened the internal bonds of the immigrant group. The Arian form of Christianity became “their” religion. It attracted group loyalty, and in turn further strengthened the group. This development was probably not anticipated and consciously steered from the start, but I find it very difficult to believe that men with exceptional instincts of leadership, like Alaric, Geiseric or Theoderic, were not fully aware of the political uses of the situation.

How far can it be said that the Arianism of the Vandals had become an ethnic religion, that is an essential qualification for a

¹¹⁵ E.g. Victor of Vita 2,56–101: “The Book of the Catholic Faith”.

¹¹⁶ E.g. A. Clarke, “Varieties of uniformity: the first century of the Church of Ireland”, *The Churches, Ireland and the Irish*, ed. W.J. Sheils and D. Wood, *Studies in Church History* 25 (Oxford 1989) pp. 105–22.

¹¹⁷ See the essays in *Religion and National Identity*, ed. S. Mews, *Studies in Church History* 18 (Oxford 1982).

person to be accepted as a full member of the *gens*? In terms of theology the answer must be not at all. Vandals did not think of their Arianism as restricted to the Vandal *gens*. They considered their Church the true universal Church, just as the Catholics regarded theirs as universal. On both sides that was the moral justification for the coercive proselytising (which its victims called persecution), and it was that which induced king Huneric to demand the right to unrestricted worship for those (mainly Gothic federates) who practise “our religion” in the provinces of the Eastern emperor.¹¹⁸ Sometimes Vandals did convert to Catholicism, but this did not mean that they ceased to be Vandals.¹¹⁹ Numerous Romans certainly converted to Arianism. They were still in Africa, and in public service (*militia*), after the Vandals had been deported.¹²⁰ From the point of view of Justinian their conversion had turned these people into heretics, whom he gave a chance to repent. It had not turned them into Vandals.

But these qualifications do not affect the basic situation. In practice the Arian Church in Africa was the Church of the Vandals. It had its own patriarch of Carthage, and bishops, though probably only a few. For as far as we can see there was no attempt to set up a bishop in every city, and the bishops we hear about usually do not have the name of a city attached to their title.¹²¹ The Arian bishops supervised parishes (*parochiae*).¹²² These presumably covered areas where Vandals were settled, perhaps a number of *millenae*. The services were at least partly in Vandal “German”, otherwise Huneric would surely not have demanded the right to use their own language in services for the Arians in the East.¹²³ It was the Arian bishops and clergy who enforced the anti-Catholic measures. Unlike the civic bishops of the Empire, and the orthodox bishops in even some of the successor kingdoms,¹²⁴ the Arian bishops in Vandal Africa

¹¹⁸ Victor of Vita 2,4.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 3,33 (the wife of Dagila, *cellarita regis*); 3,38 (two anonymous wealthy Vandals); 2,9.

¹²⁰ Justinian, *Novellae* 37,10 (335 A.D.), ed. R. Scholl (Berlin 1895): *rebaptizatos autem militiam quidem habere nullo modo concedimus*. On deportation of Vandals see below chapter VIII.

¹²¹ But Cyrila was Arian bishop of Tipasa in Mauretania (Victor of Vita 3,29).

¹²² Ferrandus, *Vita Fulgentii* 6.

¹²³ Victor of Vita 2,4.

¹²⁴ Particularly under Ostrogoths and Visigoths.

were not given any secular responsibilities, at least as far as we know. The Arian Church in Vandal Africa was essentially concerned with worship for Vandals. We may doubt whether conversion to Arianism, whether forced or not, would by itself have been enough to transform a Roman provincial into a full member of the Vandalic *gens*. But it would surely have been an essential step.¹²⁵ That may well be why the Vandals were not content with simple attendance at Arian worship, but insisted on rebaptism.

We do not know when the Vandals were converted to Christianity. The earliest evidence that the Vandals were Christians comes from the year 423, when they are reported to have chanted verses from the Bible during their battle against the Roman general Castinus.¹²⁶ They, or some of them, might well have already been converted in the Balkans. The conversion of the king, whenever that happened will have been decisive. But we are not told when that happened. Hydatius knew of a report that Geiseric had been converted from Catholicism to Arianism.¹²⁷ However that may be, when the Vandals arrived in Roman North Africa they were Arians, and they very soon entered into severe conflict with the Catholic bishops.¹²⁸

At the same time as they confiscated secular estates, the Vandals confiscated some churches together with their property for use by their own Arian clergy.¹²⁹ The clergy who had lost their churches were exiled. Subsequently relations got worse. The Catholics preached anti-Arian sermons.¹³⁰ The Vandals exiled numerous bishops and did not allow those who died to be replaced. Victor claims that at the time of writing, that is around 489—sixty years after the arrival of the Vandals in Africa¹³¹—there were no more than three Catholic

¹²⁵ I am assuming that the Vandals admitted outsiders (e.g. Procopius 3,5,20). We lack the prosopographical data to even begin to assess the extent to which outsiders were admitted.

¹²⁶ Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei* 7,11(45).

¹²⁷ Hydatius, *Ol.* 301,79 a. 428 A.D., pp. 88–90.

¹²⁸ I use “Catholic” and orthodox to describe the religion of the Empire as opposed to the religion of the “Arians”. This usage is conventional, though biased. Arians of course assumed that their Church was Catholic and orthodox.

¹²⁹ Victor of Vita 1,9; 1,14–8. On churches confiscated at Carthage see L. Ennabli, *Carthage, une métropole chrétienne du IV^e à la fin du VII^e siècle* (Paris 1997), especially the summary pp. 150–1.

¹³⁰ If the sermons attributed to Quodvultdeus of Carthage were really spoken at this time, see Courtois, *Les Vandales et l’Afrique*, pp. 166–7.

¹³¹ Victor of Vita 1,1.

bishops officiating.¹³² Moreover while this and related actions were justified in terms of theology, they had clearly recognisable ethnic and political components. The Vandal authorities were strongly concerned that there should be no Catholic proselytising among the Vandals themselves.¹³³ Members of the Vandal *gens* who were seen entering a Catholic church—note that such people existed—were attacked, and if they were women, publicly shamed.¹³⁴ Moreover Huneric, the most consistent persecutor, evidently suspected the Catholics of disloyalty, for he tried to make them swear that they would recognise the succession of his son Hilderic, and also that they would refrain from sending letters across the sea.¹³⁵ Presumably he feared that they would intrigue against himself and his son with the imperial government. Throughout the period of Vandal persecution bishops bore the brunt of the attack.¹³⁶ In this the Vandal kings' policy towards Catholics was no different from that of emperors, whether Catholic or Arian, who took action against what they took to be heresy. But the Vandals put pressure on individual laymen as well, and significantly they focused on laymen who served the Vandals as administrators or entertainers. A regulation was that only Arians might hold office at the court of the king and those of his sons, and severe pressure was put on Catholics already serving—and there must have been many of those—to convert to Arianism by rebaptism.¹³⁷

As had been the case when the Christians were persecuted in the pagan Empire, the discriminatory legislation was irregularly observed. Numerous Catholics continued to attend the Vandal court,¹³⁸ and the pressure on the Catholics was relaxed from time to time; particularly when the Vandals were seeking to improve relations with the eastern or the western Empire,¹³⁹ Persecution reached a climax under Geiseric's son Huneric in 484. In the course of this action severe pressure including exile, torture and confiscation of property

¹³² Ibid. 1,29.

¹³³ Ibid. 3,4; Ferrandus, *Vita Fulgentii* 6–7.

¹³⁴ Victor of Vita 2,9.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 3,19.

¹³⁶ N.B. not on monasteries. The period may even have seen an expansion of monasticism.

¹³⁷ Victor of Vita 1,19–22; 1,43–48; cf. Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1329 a. 437 A.D., pp. 475–6.

¹³⁸ Victor of Vita 2,8; 2,10; 2,23.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 2,4.

was employed against thousands of clerics, as well as against numerous lay people to force them to convert.¹⁴⁰ Under Huneric's successor the pressure on Catholics to convert was gradually relaxed.¹⁴¹ It is likely that the sources, by virtue of the kind of texts they are, give a significantly exaggerated picture of the persecution of the Catholics by the Arians, as well as of the steadfastness of Catholic resistance to pressure to conform. It is nevertheless evident that for most of the history of the Vandal kingdom in North Africa, that is over something like eighty years,¹⁴² the *regnum*, and the *gens* of the Vandals and the Arian form of Christianity were closely linked. This created a real division between the Vandals and the bulk of the population among whom they had settled. Paradoxically, after the state of the Vandals had been overthrown, Arian Christianity was to create a bond between Vandals and some of the Arian soldiers in the Byzantine army.¹⁴³

VIII. *The end of the Vandals*

In Procopius' account of Belisarius' campaign we have an eye witness report from Vandal North Africa, which even if it is largely focused on military operations, nevertheless gives us glimpses of the wider context of the campaigning. According to him Africa was inhabited by three kinds of inhabitants. There were Libyans, who had once been Romans,¹⁴⁴ but who now were very far from identifying automatically with the imperial army. Their support might go to either side according to circumstance.¹⁴⁵ Both sides made efforts to win their support.¹⁴⁶ Then there were Moors under their own kings, who were still formally rulers of federates appointed by the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 2,23 to end. Huneric was married to a daughter of Valentinian III and at peace with the Empire. The motives of the persecution are not clear.

¹⁴¹ Procopius 3,8,6–91; though contrary to the impression given by Procopius, Trasamundus (A.D. 496–23) forbade the ordination of Catholic bishops and exiled those ordained against his command: Ferrandus, *Vita Fulgentii* 13.

¹⁴² Say from the capture of Carthage in 439 to the accession of Hilderic in 523 (Procopius 3,9,1).

¹⁴³ Procopius 4,14,11–15.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. 3,16,3: Libyans are Romans of old, but now their allegiance depends on how they are treated. Procopius consistently refers to them as Libyans.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. 4,1,8: "treason" of Carthaginians.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 3,17,6 (Belisarius); 3,23,1,4 (Gelimer).

emperor,¹⁴⁷ but who were in practice independent monarchs. In previous decades they had been extending their territories at the expense of the Vandals. When faced with the choice between supporting the imperial forces or the Vandals they consulted nothing but their own interest.¹⁴⁸ Lastly there were the Vandals themselves. These had their own nobility.¹⁴⁹ But Vandalicity was by no means restricted to nobles. The Vandals were much more numerous than that. They constituted a large, ruling minority group, who were clearly distinguishable from the Libyans.¹⁵⁰ After their defeat they had to seek sanctuary. They could not just melt into the population.¹⁵¹ It was principally the Vandals whom Gelimer called up to defend his kingdom.¹⁵² They brought their wives¹⁵³ and their treasures¹⁵⁴ with them into the camp. Evidently they did not think that these would be safe among their Libyan neighbours. After his victories Belisarius had the Vandal prisoners of war deported.¹⁵⁵ The wives of the Vandals were now remarried to Roman soldiers, who expected to become owners of their wives' Vandal estates.¹⁵⁶ Subsequently too, whenever Belisarius or his successors came into conflict with Vandals, they had them deported.¹⁵⁷ If the Vandals disappeared from history, it is because their *gens* was deliberately broken up.

IX. *Conclusions*

The story of the Vandals in Africa is the story of barbarian conquerors sharing the country with its native inhabitants. The kingdom was a kingdom of the Vandals. The *gens* represented the military power of the state, and the coercive power of the government. The

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 3,25,5–9.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 3,25,1–10.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 3,25, 2; 4,3,14; 4,4,32; 4,6,4.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 3,17,11: the Vandals and others called on to defend Carthage.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 3,20,1–2; 3,21,11; 4,4,10–13.

¹⁵² Ibid. 3,25,1.

¹⁵³ Ibid. 4,2,8.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 4,3,25–28.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 4,5,1; formed into five cavalry units: 4,14,17–18; some avoided deportation: 4,15,3–4.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 4,14,8–11: an attempt to reclaim the lands as imperial property led to mutiny.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 4,19,3; 4,28,40.

effectiveness of the state depended on the cohesion and military spirit of the Vandal *gens*, as it had been built up during the migration. However the administration of the kingdom depended on the old Roman system of administration. This must have been run mainly by Romans. The Vandals, the ruling people, were quite distinct from other inhabitants of their territory. We don't know the conditions which had to be fulfilled for somebody to qualify as a Vandal. The Romans were divided from Vandals by the fact that in the main they adhered to the Catholic form of Christianity, while Arianism was the religion of the Vandal *gens* and kingdom. Religious conflict was sharper and more persistent in the Vandal kingdom than in any other of the successor kingdoms. In practice there must have been a great deal more compromise and co-operation than our sources imply. The king was king of the Romans as well as the Vandals. One imagines that many Catholics were prepared to become token Arians, and thus made themselves acceptable to the king, whether as members of the court, or of the administration. Culturally too there was compromise. Romans wore Vandal dress, leading Vandals took up the way of life of members of the Roman ruling class, including in some cases at least the higher literacy. Without such compromises the society could not have worked. Even so plenty of tension remained. To counteract this required dynastic loyalty, and above all strong leadership on the part of the king. It is probable that the kingdom could not have been established without the genius of Geiseric. The *regnum* survived under his successors. But the extraordinary dynamism it had displayed under Geiseric faded fast. The weakening of the *regnum* was demonstrated by the ease with which Belisarius overthrew it. This weakness had become apparent earlier in the inability of the Vandals to contain the expanding Moorish (i.e. Berber) kingdoms. It looks as if the Moors were building up *gentes* and turning *gentes* into *regna* just as the Germanic peoples had been doing before, and during, their march through the Empire.¹⁵⁸ Once the Vandals had settled, and become accommodated to Roman society, they soon became as helpless in the face of the *gentes* evolving along their borders, as the Romans had been in the face of the Vandals themselves. A comparable weakening was experienced by the Visigothic *regnum* in Hispania, but not, however, by the *regnum* of the Franks.

¹⁵⁸ E.g. CIL 8,9835 = Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, Appendix II, no. 95: *pro salute et incolumitate regis Masunae gentium Maurorum et Romanorum*.

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GENS AND REGNUM AMONG THE OSTROGOTHS

Peter Heather

One of the most striking aspects of the career of Theoderic the Amal is the number of times he was actually made king. He was declared king first of all in c. 471, after his return from Constantinople, where he had spent ten years as a hostage, king again upon the death of his father Thiudimer in c. 475/6, and king still a third time after his army conquered the forces of Odovacar to take control of Italy.¹ Kingship among the Ostrogoths was thus multi-dimensional, involving the exercise of control not only over the governmental institutions by which the Italian successor state was run, but also, and from an earlier date, over the military force by whose arms that kingdom was created. The use of *regnum*—in the singular—in relationship to the Ostrogoths is in a sense misleading. Theoderic was king separately of his army, and of the Italian kingdom: the fact that both occupied the same geographical space after 489 should not lead us to confuse them conceptually.

Whether this still remained the case in Theoderic's later years, and under his successors after 526 very much depends upon our understanding of the military force by which the kingdom was established. Did this force replicate itself in the generations after the conquest; did it have a sense of its own separate identity which continued over time? Was it, in short, some kind of a *gens*, a grouping of people with a continuous history which continued even after the settlement in Italy, or was its existence no more than a brief phase in the history of the rise of the Amal dynasty? It is these demanding questions that this paper will attempt to address, taking full account of the now considerable scholarly debate surrounding the whole question of identity in the early middle ages.

¹ D. Claude, "Zur Königserhebung Theoderichs des Großen", *Geschichtsschreibung und geistiges Leben im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Heinz Löwe zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. K. Hauck and H. Mordek (Cologne 1978) pp. 1–13.

A. *The Ostrogoths before Italy*

The Ostrogoths did not have a long history as a united entity prior to their entry into Italy in 489. Some of their number, a group of refugee Rugi fleeing from the destruction of their kingdom by Odovacar in 487, attached themselves to Theoderic's train only immediately before the Italian expedition set out in autumn 488.² More substantially, Theoderic's conquering force was composed in large measure of two militarized groups—both labeled Goths in their own right—which he had brought together in the Balkans only within half a decade of their departure for Italy. One of them comprised the army which Theoderic and his father Thiudimer had brought with them from Pannonia into East Roman territories in 473/4, so that, by 489, theirs was a history of reasonably well-established loyalty to the Amal dynasty.³ The same was not true of the other Gothic group, known to contemporaries as the Thracian Goths. In c. 470, they appear in Byzantine sources as a force of allied soldiery with a range of established connections to court circles in Constantinople. The murder of their preeminent patron Aspar, in 471, led them into open revolt, and it is very arguable that Theoderic and Thiudimer brought their Pannonian Goths south in an attempt to convince the Roman Emperor Leo I that they would make a more trustworthy set of Gothic allies than their revolting Thracian counterparts.⁴ Whatever the case, the move initiated a decade of direct competition, in which the Pannonian and Thracian Goths occasionally confronted each other directly, but more generally tried separately to convince a sequence of imperial regimes that they were the better recipients of the one available set of subsidy payments. This rivalry was brought to an end only in 483/4, when Theoderic the Amal

² Eugippius, *Vita Sancti Severini* 44,3–4, ed. R. Noll and E. Vetter, *Schriften und Quellen der Alten Welt* 11 (Berlin 1963); Procopius, *Wars* 7,2,1–2, ed. J. Haury, transl. H.B. Dewing, 7 vols., Loeb Classical Library (London-Cambridge Mass. 1914–28).

³ There are many modern discussions of the Pannonian history of the Amal-led Goths; two recent ones are H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley 1988) pp. 258–68; P.J. Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford 1991) pp. 240–51.

⁴ The history of the Thracian Goths needs to be reconstructed from more fragmentary references in a range of Byzantine sources, especially but not solely from the *Chronicles* of Malalas and Theophanes, and the surviving fragments of the histories of Malchus and John of Antioch. Fuller discussion and argument: Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 251–63.

organized the assassination of the newly appointed leader of the Thracian Goths, Recitach son of Theoderic Strabo (the Amal's main rival over the previous decade), and united the bulk of the Thracians behind him.⁵ Indications in Byzantine sources suggest that both the Pannonian and Thracian Goths numbered around 10,000 fighting men each, and the general course of the narrative certainly confirms that they were of a similar order of magnitude to one another. Otherwise direct rivalry would never have continued for an entire decade; one would have quickly been defeated, or swallowed up, by the other.⁶ The Ostrogoths who set off for Italy in 488 were thus the product of a very recent unification between two groups of more or less equal size, who had not only not been united in recent past, but had an immediate history of competition.

Moreover, while the sources make the details impossible to recover in full, both the Thracian and the Pannonian Goths were themselves the products of further processes of unification which had occurred within what was, in c. 490, still living memory. The Thracian Goths suddenly vault into documented history already fully formed as a unit, as it were, with Theoderic Strabo as their king in one of the earliest surviving fragments of the history of Malchus of Philadelphia, which is clearly relating events of the year 473. Goths are a presence in Byzantine sources of the 450s and 460s, as army officers allied to Aspar politically and matrimonially, and a major part of the imperial palace guard, but there is no sign that at that point they formed a united force under a single designated leader. No individual is so labeled in sources prior to the 470s, and instead one meets a whole series of prominent military officers with Gothic names, some of whom are explicitly linked to the Thracian military. One Anagastes, for instance, had been first a military *comes* in Thrace in

⁵ Assassination: John of Antioch, *Fragmenta* 214,3, ed. C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, vols. 4 and 5 (Paris 1868/70). That this caused Gothic unification has to be argued, but, although some Goths clearly preferred to retain a Byzantine allegiance (e.g. Bessas and Godigisclus: Procopius, *Wars* 1,8,3; cf. Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 302, for other possible examples), no large and distinct body of Gothic soldiery remained in the Balkans after 489 and it is generally accepted that unification did follow the assassination: e.g. Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 300–3 (with further argumentation); Wolfram, *Goths*, p. 276; L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme bis zum Ausgang der Völkerwanderung: Die Ostgermanen* (2nd edn., Munich 1933) pp. 267–8.

⁶ Pannonians: Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 248–9; Thracians: *ibid.*, pp. 253–4.

the 460s and then *MVM per Thracias*; he was killed when he led a rebellion in 469/70, but that had been substantial enough to involve the seizure of some towns. It followed, moreover, his successful suppression of a revolt of another Thracian military leader with a Gothic name, Ullibos. Ostrys, likewise, commander of the Gothic palace guard rebelled on the murder of Aspar, fled with his comrades into Thrace. And, as we have seen, yet another Goth, Theoderic Strabo, the son of Triarius, finally appears in Malchus of Philadelphia as the leader of the revolting Thracian Goths in 473. To my mind, all this suggests that the Thracian Goths were probably recognizable enough within Thrace in the 460s—one source suggests, indeed, that they may have been there since the 420s—but they did not function as a unitary entity with a single overall leader. They should probably be envisaged instead as semi-separate groups under a number of separate leaders.⁷ Interestingly enough, this would appear to be exactly the kind of arrangement that Theodosius I attempted to enforce upon the Gothic groups he made his allies under the peace treaty of 382. Then, too, no single leader was recognized and all existing leaders of the Tervingi and Greuthungi were suppressed. From the Roman perspective, this had the very desirable effect of dampening the capacity for united action on the part of potentially dangerous allies. And, like the Goths of 382 in the 390s, the formal entry of the Thracian Goths into rebellion in the 470s involved the overturning of this arrangement and promotion of a single preeminent leader. The Goths of the 390s chose Alaric, the Thracians of the 470s, Theoderic Strabo.⁸

The Thracian Goths may thus have been living in geographical proximity to one another before the 470s, and may even have had developed relations with one another (see below), but did not function as an autonomous entity under a single leader. The same was probably also true of the Pannonian Goths before the 450s. When we first encounter them in detail in the pages of the *Getica* of Jordanes,

⁷ Full discussion and argument: Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 256–63. That some at least were settled in Thrace as early as the 420s is suggested by Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5931, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig 1883).

⁸ Treaty of 382 and no overall leader: Themistius, *Orationes* 10, ed. G. Downey (Leipzig 1965) p. 203, ll. 11 ff.; as interpreted by e.g. Wolfram, *Goths*, p. 133 (the *communis opinio*) contra Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 419. On events 382–95, see Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 191–9.

they were united, but operated a devolved political structure, where each of three brothers—Valamer, Thiudimer, and Vidimer—had their own followers living in separate zones of Pannonia.⁹ They could and did sometimes act separately. Valamer was attacked at different points by Huns and Sciri without his brothers participating in the action,¹⁰ and Thiudimer alone attacked the Suevi.¹¹ Valamer's superiority was acknowledged by the other two, and was inherited by Thiudimer after his death.¹² This suggests very strongly that the departure from the group of the third brother, Vidimer, on the eve of the move south into the Roman Balkans, was not the good natured and politically neutral event portrayed in the *Getica*. Rather, it was much more likely the result of tension within the dynasty as Thiudimer manoeuvred to secure the succession of his son Theoderic—who had already received his own followers and a first royal promotion—over that of his younger brother, Vidimer, who was surely expecting to succeed Thiudimer in turn.¹³ We also know that Theoderic had at least one brother,¹⁴ but the power-sharing arrangements of the previous generation were not recreated.

This phase of centralization probably had a longer pre-history. In what has long been recognized as one of its most problematic passages, the *Getica* preserves a series of stories about Gothic defeats at the hands of a Hunnic king Balamber. The chronology of these stories is impossible—as their original composer clearly thought too, since he inserted an unlikely forty year interregnum into the history of Amal domination to make it work—and they also pose very substantial problems of historical coherence.¹⁵ The name Balamber is

⁹ Jordanes, *Getica* 52,268, ed T. Mommsen, MGH AA 5,1 (Berlin 1882). Their exact geographical location is left uncertain by this passage, but was probably east-west, rather than north-south, around Lake Balaton: Wolfram, *Goths*, p. 260.

¹⁰ Jordanes, *Getica* 52,268–9; 53,275–6.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 56,283.

¹² *Ibid.* 54,278.

¹³ *Ibid.* 56,283, with the discussion of Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 250–1. The early middle ages throws up many examples of brother to brother succession systems being interrupted at crucial moments by fathers' ambitions for sons: not least King Alfred favouring the claims of his own son Edward over those of the son of his elder brother.

¹⁴ Theodimund: Malchus of Philadelphia, *Fragmenta* 18, ed. and transl. R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire 2* (Liverpool 1882; repr. 1983).

¹⁵ Jordanes, *Getica* 48,246–52. There is a long history of discussion of these

suspiciously similar to that of Theoderic's uncle, Valamer (especially in its Greek form: βαλαμηρ), and the problems all resolve themselves, if one takes the view that the campaigns of Balamber are actually confused reminiscences of Valamer's early career, with a chronology constructed on the basis of a confusion between Vinitharius (mentioned as Ermenaric's successor in these stories) and Vithimiris mentioned in Ammianus Marcellinus (a text clearly known to the author of this part of the *Getica*) as the successor of Ermenaric. Taken together, the stories would imply that Valamer's career was very similar to that of Clovis among the Franks. Prior to his activities, what were to become the Pannonian Goths actually comprised a series of separate warbands under at least three dynasties of leaders: those of the Amal brothers themselves, those of Vinitharius, and those of Hunimund and his offspring. Valamer united these groups through a mixture of successful military and political action—defeating and killing Vinitharius,¹⁶ forcing Hunimund's grandson Beremund to flee¹⁷—and conciliation (marrying Vinitharius' grand-daughter Vadamerca, and being accepted as ruler by Hunimund's son Gensemund).¹⁸ The Amal genealogy (figure 1) presents all of these figures as ancestors or close collateral relatives of Theoderic; it seems much more likely that it is collating separate warband dynasties here into one.¹⁹

The creation of the Ostrogoths was thus a long drawn out affair. The Pannonian and Thracian Goths were united only in 483/4 on the assassination of Recitach, and, while the sources become less good, and hence details more arguable, before that there are excellent reasons for supposing that the Thracian and Pannonian groupings each had complicated pre-histories of their own. Such a picture

problems: Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 253–7; H. Wolfram, “Theogonie, Ethnogenese und ein kompromittierter Großvater im Stammbaum Theoderichs des Großen”, *Festschrift für Helmut Beumann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. K.-U. Jäschke and R. Wenskus (Sigmaringen 1979) pp. 80–97 with references. The problems include (amongst others) an extremely unlikely 40-year interregnum in Amal rule and the claim that the Huns had a king in the 370s, a fact denied by contemporary sources such as Ammianus.

¹⁶ Jordanes, *Getica* 48,246–8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 33,174–5; 48,251.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 48,249; 48,250–2.

¹⁹ Note though the Vadamerca marriage, which means that Vinitharius is in the “right” place in the genealogy, although he was Valamer's maternal not paternal grandfather. The case is fully argued in P.J. Heather, “Cassiodorus and the Rise of the Amals: Genealogy and the Goths under Hun Domination”, *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989) pp. 103–28.

of the creation of the Ostrogoths of c. 490 from diverse origins, very much within living memory, obviously raises fundamental questions about the coherence and strength of any sense of identity which may have operated amongst them at the time of their invasion of Italy and beyond.

For one thing, it makes it quite clear that old nineteenth- and earlier twentieth-century visions of the Ostrogoths as an ancient Germanic “people” are entirely inappropriate. Jordanes’ sixth-century account of Gothic history suggests that they had a continuous existence as a coherent group from the third century, when they were established north of the Black Sea, but this is part of the sixth-century *Getica*’s generally anachronistic back-projection of the sixth-century order of Gothic society onto the past.²⁰ As we have seen, the Ostrogoths that Theoderic led to Italy were created in the Roman Balkans in the 480s out of two main population fragments, which had had separate histories certainly from the 450s, very probably from the 420s, and quite possibly for much longer. Indeed, although it is impossible to prove such a negative point, there is no good evidence to suggest that the Pannonians and Thracians had *ever* previously formed part of the same political unit, even if they might have had other things in common (see below). The Gothic world north of the Black Sea in the fourth century before the arrival of the Huns was in all probability highly divided in political terms.²¹ I would suspect, therefore, that the Pannonians and Thracians were descended from groups (quite possibly more than one in each case) of Goths who were already separate in the fourth century and who made different choices in the face of the *Hunnensturm* which destroyed this older world in the last quarter of the fourth century. The would-be Pannonians may have remained east of the Carpathians until after the death of Attila in 453; the Thracians were perhaps resettled in Thrace by the East Romans as early as the 420s, when they were detached from Hunnic hegemony. The Ostrogoths were straightforwardly a new creation of the Migration Period. This conclusion fits in perfectly well with both more empirically-led studies, which have

²⁰ Jordanes, *Getica* 5,42; 14,82. Explored fully in Heather, *Goths and Romans*, cc. 1–2.

²¹ I have set out my views on the origins and “shape” of this world in *The Goths* (Oxford 1996) cc. 2–3.

stressed that the Germanic world on the fringes of the Roman Empire was in more or less continuous political flux, and with more comparative perspectives deriving from the work of anthropologists and sociologists, which have stressed that group identities can be remade much more easily than older work—produced in the great era of European nationalism—tended to assume.²²

Nor, this account makes clear, was the creation of the Ostrogoths dependent in any substantial way upon the exploitation of ancient monarchical traditions. One response to the realization that Jordanes' sixth-century account of unchanging political order among the Goths cannot survive a detailed confrontation with more contemporary sources has been to suggest instead that continuity was provided by royal families—the Balthi among the Visigoths and especially the Amali among the Ostrogoths—who ruled both before and after the Hun-induced cataclysm among the Goths. But this idea also comes from Jordanes—here clearly drawing upon materials from Cassiodorus' lost Gothic history—and is equally unconvincing. The main piece of evidence in favour of such a view is Jordanes' account of a family link between Theoderic the Amal and Ermenaric, the one supposed ancient Amal ancestor, who also appears independently in another, more contemporary source: the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus. The link is recounted, however, in the same highly problematic passage of the *Getica* where the Hunnic King Balamber appears (see above), and, looked at more closely, two conclusions emerge. First, the *Getica* is clearly dependent upon Ammianus at precisely the point where Ermenaric appears in its text. Second, many of the problems long-identified in this passage, particularly its chronology, resolve themselves if one supposes that the original author of this part of the *Getica* was attempting to integrate Ammianus' account of Ermenaric and his successors into what he already knew about Theoderic's ancestors. Such a view of the genesis of this text is obviously not susceptible to independent verification, but the hypothesis

²² The flagship of more empirical investigation is R. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln-Graz 1961); the equivalent work in the comparative tradition is in many ways *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, ed. F. Barth (Boston 1969). For general introductions to the literature in the latter tradition, see Heather, *Goths*, pp. 3–7; P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–534*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge 1997) pp. 14–8.

does solve all the passage's problems. It also makes sense in two more general ways. First, it fits in precisely with what the *Variae* tell us about the working methods followed by Cassiodorus when constructing his Gothic history: namely that he supplemented oral memory with what he could find in Roman texts.²³ Second, Ermenaric is given a very significant role in the Amal genealogy, being made the ancestor who provides the missing genealogical link between Theoderic and his chosen heir, the Visigothic noble Eutharic, whom Theoderic imported to Italy to marry his daughter Amalasuenta when it finally became clear that the old king was never going to sire a son of his own (figure 1). Cassiodorus, it would seem, found in Ammianus' Ermenaric a king of sufficient stature to play this crucial genealogical role, and integrated him into the Amal story.²⁴

All of this undermines the idea that there was a living tradition of obedience to the Amali, stretching back from Theoderic to Ermenaric, upon which the former was able to draw, and which provided stability in an otherwise changing Gothic world. Looked at more broadly, the general pattern of the evidence only confirms the point. The separation and diversity in the history of those groups who eventually made up the Ostrogoths makes it extremely unlikely that they would have been much persuaded to throw in their lot with Theoderic the Amal just because he claimed a genealogical link with a famous ruler or rulers of the past. Indeed, such was the level of competition between the two Theoderics in the Balkans in the 470s and early 480s that the giving of allegiance was based upon perceptions of practical leadership ability, not propagandistic claims. In 477/8, some of the Amal's followers transferred to Theoderic Strabo. At that date, the Amal was young and untried (having just succeeded his father and born in the mid 450s, he was in his early 20s), and Byzantine subsidies promised in 475/6 had not arrived. Theoderic Strabo, with much more established links to the court of Constantinople, may well have seemed the better bet. When the Thracians did transfer en masse to the Amal, likewise, it followed the accidental death of their seasoned leader—his horse threw Strabo onto a spear rack—and the accession of his son, Recitach, who proceeded

²³ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 9,25,4–5, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 12 (Berlin 1894).

²⁴ Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, pp. 471 ff. originally stressed royal tradition over any broader continuity; the model was largely followed by Wolfram, *Goths*. I originally explored the arguments summarized here in Heather, "Cassiodorus".

to murder at least two of Strabo's brothers to secure his position. Again, a younger leader probably failed to command confidence.²⁵

Even in Italy, after the staggering practical success of Theoderic's reign, the Amal tradition, by then being fully developed both in letters of the *Variae* collection, which stressed that the family was a unique purple (i.e. "imperial") dynasty, and in Cassiodorus's Gothic history (see above), played a very far from determinative role in Ostrogothic politics. Theoderic's choice of heir, after the early death of his first choice Eutharic, fell upon Athalaric, his grandson by the marriage of Eutharic and his daughter Amalasuenda. Nonetheless, presumably because he was still a child (he was either 8 or 10), Athalaric faced serious challenges not only from within the dynasty, but also from without; the probability is that one group of opinion saw a seasoned military veteran by the name of Tuluin as a much better choice. Athalaric did eventually succeed, but even immediately after Theoderic's death, there was no automatic loyalty to the Amal dynasty. Subsequent events confirm the point. Athalaric died young after which power passed to his mother and eventually, by a complicated route, to his uncle Theodahad, Theoderic's nephew. Theodahad, however, was not very warlike and, as soon as his incapacity was shown up by the Byzantine invasion in 536, the Gothic nobility, we are told, organized his murder and elected in his stead one Wittigis, who had previously shown himself a capable military commander in Pannonia. In Wittigis' case, an Amal connection was maintained, since he married Theoderic's grand-daughter Matasuenda, but Procopius is explicit that he was chosen for his military ability.²⁶ Wittigis' own propaganda within Italy likewise stressed that he belonged to Theoderic's family because his deeds qualified him, and made mention of the marriage only in a letter to the Emperor Justinian, where the fact of it was deployed to attempt to dissuade Justinian from continuing to pursue the war.²⁷ After Wittigis, Ildibad, Eraric, Totila and Teias were elected by different Gothic factions at different points in the war; none of them had Amal connections.²⁸ Broader

²⁵ Transfer of loyalty: Malchus, *Fragmenta* 18,1. Death of Strabo and assassination of Recitach: John of Antioch, *Fragmenta* 211,5; 214,3. For commentary, see respectively Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 279–80; 297 ff.

²⁶ Procopius, *Wars* 5,11,1–9.

²⁷ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 10,32; 33.

²⁸ Respectively: *ibid.* 6,30,4–17; 7,2,4–5; 7,2,10–13; 7,33,6.

historical evidence thus confirms that the deconstruction of the Amal genealogy and its associated pseudo-history suggested above is broadly along the right lines, even if details remain arguable. A tradition of obedience to one royal, Amal dynasty was not a major explanatory force in shaping the course of Ostrogothic history. Theoderic's successes brought him huge personal charisma, which he clearly tried to translate, via dynastic propaganda, into unchallenged preeminence for his immediate heirs. To a very considerable extent, however, his efforts fell on deaf ears. As in the Balkans in the 470s and 480s, so in Italy from the 520s: kings of the Ostrogoths relied fundamentally on their own merits for their election and survival, not an overwhelmingly powerful and ancient dynastic tradition.²⁹

If the Ostrogoths were neither an ancient "people", nor the product of unchallengeable dynastic tradition, how, then, should we explain their creation? Part of the nineteenth- and earlier twentieth-century vision of Germanic groupings of the Migration Period was to suppose that they consisted largely of freemen. Differentials of power, status, and wealth were always part of the picture, but, largely after the picture of Germanic society drawn in the *Germania* of Tacitus, it was generally supposed that political participation was very wide, in contradistinction, say, to contemporary imperial Roman society, where politics was the preserve of an oligarchy. This may or may not have been true of Germanic society in the first century, but in the last generation or so, there has been a well-conceived reaction to ideas of broad social equality and attendant widespread political participation among Germanic societies of the late Roman period in general, and the Goths in particular. In the 1960s, Edward Thompson published a series of studies which argued that the institutions guaranteeing equality and participation in early Germanic society could no longer be found among the fourth-century Goths. Different strands of an in some ways parallel tradition in the German-speaking world have argued along similar lines. Working from some of the ideas of Reinhard Wenskus, Herwig Wolfram in particular has made the idea of the *Traditionskern* a major feature of discussions of Germanic society in the Late Roman period. Instead of political participation being quite general, this view argues—on the basis of the massive

²⁹ For fuller discussion of succession matters in Italy, see P.J. Heather, "Theoderic, king of the Goths", *Early Medieval Europe* 4 (1995) pp. 145–73, here pp. 168–72.

discontinuities evident in the history of named Germanic groups such as those behind the creation of the Ostrogoths reviewed above, where even explicitly non-Goths (such as the Rugi) became involved in the process—that group identity was both carried and determined by a relatively small, elite group, comprising a few (how many is never explicitly defined as far as I can see) royal or noble clans. Such ideas have been highly influential, and have largely superseded romantic nineteenth-century visions of egalitarian Germanic society.³⁰

This reaction to older assumptions was entirely necessary, and, in part, soundly based. A broader run of evidence suggests to me, however, that an intermediate position between the two views is both possible and more accurately descriptive of the inner operation of Gothic and some other Germanic societies in the fourth and fifth centuries. To start with, there are some Graeco-Roman descriptions of decision-making among Gothic groups which suggest that it was not the preserve of a very small elite. As Edward Thompson himself pointed out, Ammianus in particular among fourth-century sources describes Gothic leaders arguing with and persuading followers towards specific courses of action, and even being disobeyed, rather than simply issuing orders.³¹ For the fifth century, likewise, Priscus describes a revolt of Gothic subordinates against Hunnic overlords in a context where the Goths concerned had explicitly failed to preserve the kind of independent centralized leadership provided by a king.³² Here the decision-making clearly wasn't the preserve of a small, royal elite. Malchus of Philadelphia, likewise preserves an account of a confrontation between the two Theoderics at Mt. Sondis, somewhere in the eastern Balkans, in 478, where a broader social group applies

³⁰ E.A. Thompson, *The Early Germans* (Oxford 1965); id., *The Visigoths in the Time of Ulfila* (Oxford 1966). The *Traditionskern* idea has been developed (with differences) by Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, passim, and specifically applied to the Goths by Wolfram, *Goths*, passim, but esp. pp. 5–12 (cf. 92 ff.; 115 ff.; 231 ff.). It has proved highly influential: see e.g. P.J. Geary, *Before France and Germany. The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York-Oxford 1988) pp. 61 ff.; L.A. Garcia-Moreno, "Gothic Survivals in the Visigothic Kingdom", *Francia* 21/1 (1994) pp. 1–15.

³¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 31,5,8–9; 6,3–5; 7,2–3; 7,8–9; 12,9–4; 15,2 ff., ed. C.U. Clark, 2 vols. (Berlin 1910/15). E.A. Thompson discussed this material in "The Visigoths from Fritigern to Euric", *Historia* 12 (1963) pp. 105–26, but argued, overall, that social hierarchies were becoming more pronounced at this time (cf. his slightly later works cited in note 30).

³² Priscus of Panium, *Fragmenta* 49, ed. and transl. R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* 2 (Liverpool 1982).

telling political pressure on the Amal to make him accept an alliance with his Thracian namesake. This evidence is obviously rather un-specific and sometimes has literary overtones: particularly, for instance, in the speeches created by Malchus for the Mt. Sondis incident.³³

It is, however, suggestive of a pattern of broader political participation, which finds very much more specific and, to my mind at least, convincing support in the picture of Ostrogothic society which emerges from Procopius' account of the Byzantine conquest of Italy.³⁴ Procopius' war narrative consistently distinguishes between two categories of troops in the Gothic army, the higher always picked out by one of three synonyms: "the best" (*aristoi*), "the notable" (*dokimoi*), and "the worthy" (*logimoi*).³⁵ All three terms are used of significant Gothic individuals, and to small groups making important policy decisions.³⁶ These usages are consistent with what we might think of in a Gothic "nobility". More interestingly, all three terms are also applied to much larger militarized Gothic groups. *Logimoi* alone at one point in the war manned 47 ships in Totila's raiding fleet.³⁷ One thousand *dokimoi* attended the marriage of Theoderic's sister to Thrasamund, king of the Vandals,³⁸ and *dokimoi* later comprised the entire manpower of units detached for particular purposes during the war: the garrison of Auximus, and Teias' force sent against Verona.³⁹ *Aristoi*, likewise, could comprise entire garrisons,⁴⁰ or detached forces,⁴¹ while "many" (*polloi*) of them manned the defences of the Cottian Alps.⁴²

³³ Malchus, *Fragmenta* 18,2.

³⁴ To introduce this evidence at this point obviously begs the question of whether anything substantial changed in the workings of people named "Goth" between the Balkans and Italy, and at least one major recent study by Patrick Amory (see note 22) would argue that it did. Amory's arguments will be reviewed below, but I do not find them convincing.

³⁵ Procopius, *Wars* 6,20,2 and 6,23,8, respectively, apply the terms *apistoi* and *dokimoi* to the same group of Goths; the usages are otherwise very generally synonymous. What follows is based on my arguments in *The Goths*, Appendix 1.

³⁶ Individuals: Procopius, *Wars* 5,4,13 (*logimoi*); 6,1,36; 6,20,14; 7,18,26; 8,26,4 (*dokimoi*); 7,1,46 (*aristoi*). Policy makers: *ibid.* 5,13,26; 7,24,27; 8,35,33 (*logimoi*); 6,28,29 (*dokimoi*); 6,8,9 (*aristoi*).

³⁷ *Ibid.* 8,23,10.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 3,8,12.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 6,23,8; 8,26,21.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 6,20,2: Auximus again.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 5,13,15: Marcias' force sent to Dalmatia.

⁴² *Ibid.* 6,28,29 ff.

These latter examples suggest that to use the modern word “nobility” for this group gives much too restricted an impression of their number. In the entourage sent to the Vandal wedding, they formed one fifth of its military manpower, the rest being armed servants. If these proportions were sustained throughout Theoderic’s following, which, as we have seen, probably numbered at least 20,000 fighting men by the time he reached Italy, then upwards of 4,000 individuals fell into this category. I have argued elsewhere that this group might be equated in legal terms with the freemen class mentioned in some contemporary law codes (as we shall see, for ideological reasons Theoderic never issued a law code), and the subordinate class of fighting servants, again found in other contemporary Germanic groups, perhaps with freedmen. Other evidence from the fifth and sixth centuries suggests that this kind of social structure may have been reasonably general in Germanic society of the period. Note, for example, *Codex Theodosianus*, where *foederati* recruited into the Roman army are expected to have fighting servants;⁴³ this probably refers to Gothic survivors of Radagaisus’ attack on Italy in 405/6, who were recruited into the Roman army by Stilicho. Procopius likewise describes a sixth-century Lombard military contingent as consisting of 2,500 “good” fighting men and “3,000” fighting servants.⁴⁴ More generally, studies framed from a variety of perspectives have begun to suggest that, while there were certainly richer and poorer, greater and lesser landowners among the Germanic elites of the early middle ages, nonetheless political power and participation was much more widely spread than it was to be in and from the Carolingian period, when the effects of manorialisation transformed social structures, producing a smaller, more tightly defined and much more dominant socio-political elite.⁴⁵ This suggests a compromise between nineteenth-century romantic and nationalistic visions of Germanic groups of the Migration Period, composed entirely of free and equal freemen, and the much more restrictive social models constructed in

⁴³ *Codex Theodosianus* 7,13,16, ed. T. Mommsen and P.M. Meyer (3rd edn., Berlin 1962).

⁴⁴ Procopius, *Wars* 8,26,12.

⁴⁵ See e.g. G. Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization. The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge 1995) (Franks); R. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (Leicester 1997) (Anglo-Saxons); more generally, C. Wickham, “Problems of comparing rural societies in early medieval western Europe”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th series 2 (1992) pp. 221–46.

some modern studies. In my view, the freemen of Gothic and other Germanic groups formed an elite minority within these groups, but a comparatively broad one. The Lombard evidence might indicate that just under half of Lombard fighting men fell into this category. Among the Goths, the elite fighters who attended the Vandal wedding formed one fifth of the attendant guard of honour.

For present purposes, the main point is what the existence of this broader elite suggests about political participation and decision-making among late fifth-century and early sixth-century Gothic groups. While there certainly was a small core of “the great and good” who advised Theoderic and his successors, held major administrative positions and even commanded their armies,⁴⁶ this was not the only politically enfranchised group in Gothic society at this date. Alongside them, there also existed a broader militarized elite, and there is some good evidence that they were central to group cohesion and morale. When all members of this class in a Gothic army sent to Dalmatia were killed, for instance, the remainder (presumably comprising the armed servant class) simply surrendered.⁴⁷ Procopius also records the highly deleterious effects which the loss of the elite fighters on board Totila’s 47 raiding ships had upon Gothic confidence.⁴⁸ Any account of the creation of the Ostrogoths in the Balkans, therefore, needs to be modeled in terms of the interests of this group. Theoderic’s super-group could only come into existence because this numerous and politically enfranchised group wanted it to.

The full story of how Theoderic the Amal persuaded the former followers of Theoderic Strabo to join him after the death of Ricitach will never be known, but the sources and documented sequence of events make clear the critical role played in the process by the power of the East Roman state on a whole series of levels. First, it was the tax machinery of the state which provided Theoderic with the subsidies which underpinned his power as leader. As we have seen, the three-way struggle which developed after 473 between the two Gothic leaderships and the authorities in Constantinople was all about

⁴⁶ Examples of such men are known from the Balkans (Anstat, Invila, and Soas: Jordanes, *Getica* 56,285; Malchus, *Fragmenta* 20) as well as in Italy (the well-known Pitzas and Tuluin), where Theoderic never again led his armies personally on campaign after the defeat of Odovacar.

⁴⁷ Procopius, *Wars* 7,7,26–37.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 8,23,29 ff.; 24,3.

securing Roman subsidies, which those leaderships then redistributed to their followers. Some of the Amal's supporters defected to Strabo in 477/8 when the latter seemed the better bet, and it was the Amal's successes in 483/4—he was made both *MVM Praesentalis* and *Consul* (the latter a distinction that even Strabo never achieved)—which surely made the Thracian Goths ready to attach themselves to his leadership. He was very obviously by this date the Gothic leader most likely to succeed.⁴⁹ More generally, it was probably only the relative productiveness of the Roman economy, and the redistributive power of its taxation system, which made it possible for one Germanic leader to command sufficient powers of patronage to keep so many followers happy at one time. Outside the Empire, lower productivity and lesser taxation powers would have meant that any leader had less of a surplus to manipulate and thereby manage his following. Without coexistence of some kind with the more developed Roman world, therefore, the creation of Theoderic's supergroup would have been impossible. This is also true, to my mind, in the case of other kingdom-founding Germanic groups of the Migration Period and the early middle ages. Alaric's unification of three previously separate Gothic groups—the Tervingi, the Greuthungi, and the followers of Radagaisus—similarly proceeded on the back of the wealth of the Roman world, and the same was probably also true of Clovis' unification of the Salian Franks. Leaders need patronage to distribute, economic productivity defines the surplus they have available for generating loyalty, and hence the overall amount of loyalty—as it were—that might be purchased.⁵⁰

Aside from providing Theoderic with the wealth which made it possible for him to attract an unprecedentedly large following, Roman power also worked to create the Ostrogoths in another important way. In the winter of 477/8, the Eastern Emperor Zeno agreed with Theoderic the Amal and his Pannonian Goths on a plan for a joint attack on the Thracian Goths. A total of 38,000 Byzantine troops were to be committed to the plan, together with Theoderic's own forces (c. 10,000) with battle being envisaged somewhere in the vicinity of the city of Hadrianople. In the event, no Roman troops ap-

⁴⁹ See, in more detail, Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pt. 3.

⁵⁰ Attila was able to do the same thing largely from beyond the frontier by extracting Roman wealth in the form of tribute payments to sustain his Empire.

peared and Zeno's guides led the Amal straight into a confrontation with Strabo somewhere in the Haemus Mountains, not south of them in the environs of Hadrianople. One can only agree with the Amal's subsequent complaints to Zeno. He had clearly been deliberately misled into a trap, to try to force him to fight Strabo on his own. Zeno's Gothic policy was duplicitous in the extreme. Rather than favouring the Amal over his Thracian namesake, what the emperor really wanted was for the two Gothic groups to fight each other and inflict mutually significant casualties. The East Romans would then have been in position to exert their military strength to solve the Gothic problem once and for all.⁵¹ As well as the positive factor that was Roman wealth, therefore, we must also take into account the negative factor represented by Roman military power. The two Gothic groups were playing a dangerous game in the Balkans in the 470s and 480s. They were using their own military capacities to convince the Constantinopolitan authorities to pay one of them rather than the other. The Romans, of course, were always likely to get fed up with these demands for money with menaces and to take appropriate counteraction, as Zeno was attempting to do in 478.

In these circumstances, it made extremely good sense, if it could be arranged, for the two Gothic groups to cease to compete with one another, and to work as one unit. The great obstacle to such an outcome, of course, was the fact that each group had its own leadership. While the rank and file could (and did) swap sides, the same was not true of the Pannonians' and Thracians' ruling dynasties who would have found it difficult if not impossible to occupy a subordinate position under a former rival, having once been an independent king; nor, indeed, would their rival have tolerated them. They were committed to continuing rivalry, therefore, but the danger posed by the Roman state made unification a much more beneficial outcome for their followers. These factors, it seems to me, dictated the means by which the situation was resolved. The power of the Roman state meant it was better for the Goths to be united, but also meant that a head-on confrontation between the two leaderships was impossible; from 478 onwards, all were well aware that only the Romans could gain from the casualties this would

⁵¹ Malchus, *Fragmenta* 18,1–3, with the commentary of Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 282–6.

generate. When unification came about, therefore, it was through the assassination of Strabo's son and heir, Recitach. This removed the major obstacle to unification without damaging the overall military capacities of the Goths: a highly satisfactory outcome for everyone—except Recitach.

Even Zeno was happy enough to accept Gothic unification in the short-term, having fostered it by the unprecedented honours he granted Theoderic: above all the Consulship for the year 484. He was at this point much more concerned with the threat to his throne posed by the revolt of the Isaurian general Illus in alliance with members of the old imperial family. For Zeno, therefore, it was imperative that there should be no disaffected Goths around with whom Illus might intrigue. As soon as the threat from Illus subsided, however, matters changed. Events from 485 to 489 cannot be reconstructed in great detail, but it is clear nonetheless that the united Goths were now too powerful for Zeno to tolerate. Such was their power that their leader, buoyed up by his increased powerbase, threatened to dominate court politics much as Aspar had done in an earlier generation. Zeno wanted to get rid of him, therefore, but didn't want to fight a costly battle, while the Amal, we know, was worried that the emperor would resort to assassination: a favoured move for resolving political problems in contemporary Constantinople. The end result of this impasse was that both sides, after revolts and temporary solutions, agreed that the best way to solve their problem was at the expense of Odovacar. Zeno's Frankensteinian monster, the newly united Goths, was shipped off to Italy: the problem solved by exporting it to the west.⁵²

It is possible, and indeed convincing, thus to explain much about the creation of the Ostrogoths in terms of positive and negative interactions with the East Roman state. That does not seem to me, however, a *fully* sufficient explanation. At least for the Thracian Goths, or the politically-enfranchised freemen amongst them, a major alternative did exist to the option of throwing in their lot with Theoderic the Amal. For certainly twenty, and perhaps as much as forty years they had formed part of the East Roman military establishment in the Balkans. Aside from joining the Amal bandwagon, therefore, they might have reintegrated themselves into a Roman military world

⁵² In more detail, with full references, Heather, *Goths and Romans*, c. 9.

with which they were extremely familiar. In the summer of 488, this had to be compared to the perils and uncertainties of a huge trek to Italy, part of it through substantially hostile territory. On the journey, Theoderic's followers confronted both Sarmatians and Gepids. The final achievement of an advantageous outcome in Italy would also depend upon waging successful warfare upon Odovacar and his army, which had just proved itself so successful in campaigning against the Rugi, whose refugees had just attached themselves to Theoderic's forces. Some Goths, indeed, but clearly only a minority, took this option, preferring to remain in the Balkans and the Roman army rather than following the Amal to Italy.⁵³ Given the uncertainties of the Italian expedition, why was this such a minority option?

No doubt much freeman decision calculation took the form of weighing up possible and probable material advantages in Italy and the Balkans, and the Roman option had the immediate disadvantage that the imperial throne was currently occupied by Zeno. The emperor was in origin an Isaurian military commander who had been lifted to prominence as a deliberate counterweight to Aspar and his Gothic military supporters.⁵⁴ The current climate in Constantinople may well not have been very attractive, therefore, for large numbers of the Thracians. Nonetheless, the fact remains that most of the Goths chose the option which promised best to preserve their political autonomy as a distinct, Gothic political unit, rather than disappear back inside, as it were, the East Roman military establishment. It is quite possible, therefore, that this also played a major part in the decision-making processes of Thracian and Pannonian freemen in the summer of 488, especially as they contemplated the hazards and highly uncertain outcome of the proposed trek to Italy.

Given the nature of the source material, this thought is not susceptible to proper proof, and, to that extent, should not be pressed. It is very important, however, not to collapse the range of options that one allows to remain in play. The sources do not allow us to

⁵³ See above note 5. The story of the trek is well told in Wolfram, *Goths*, pp. 279–81.

⁵⁴ The story is very fully told in E.R. Brooks, "The Emperor Zenon and the Isaurians", *English Historical Review* 8 (1893) pp. 209–38, but the anachronistic nationalistic assumption that all Goths and all Isaurians would side naturally with one another sometimes distorts his analysis.

document that a sense of Gothic identity played a key role in the decisions being taken in the summer of 488, but, equally important, *neither do they deny it*. In such circumstances, sound scholarship does not consist of reverting to the lowest common denominator—the point at which sources cease to provide unassailable documentation—but in defining the range of possibilities which the sources leave open. And, looked at more generally, the behaviour of the mass of the Thracian Goths in particular does seem less than fully explained unless we invoke some factor beyond mere material calculation, like the operation of an active sense of Gothic identity.

I don't want to labour the point, but it is worth pointing out that general circumstances would indicate that an active, shared sense of Gothicness is not an impossible thing to suppose to have been in operation. The Thracians and Pannonians are both labelled as Goths in independent sources, before they united to create the Ostrogoths.⁵⁵ I would not want to argue that the Pannonian and Thracian Goths, or their ancestors, had ever previously formed part of a single Gothic political unit. They had, however, a broader history in common. Significant processes of migration from north-central Europe to the Black Sea in the third century underlay the creation of the Gothic realms of the fourth century.⁵⁶ The groups caught up in these events then subsequently also faced the fury of the *Hunnensturm* which again provided a common stimulus to the Gothic world, even if different Gothic groups washed up in different corners of Europe as a result.⁵⁷ Some common memories of third-century migrations and the arrival of the Huns, no doubt in the form of mythicising stories, would have played a major role in the evolving identity of both of the Thracian and Pannonian Goths. In this context, “mythic” does not simply

⁵⁵ See above on the evidence for the Thracian Goths prior to the revolt of 470. Amory, *People and Identity*, c. 8, has recently argued that East Roman military culture in the Balkans was such a composite that no genuine and operative sense of Gothic identity could have survived. He is surely right to see the Balkans as a melting pot to a considerable extent, but his argument does nothing to counter the specific evidence in Malchus, John of Antioch and Malalas that, prior to the arrival of the Amal-led Goths in 473/4, there was already a large and distinct body of Gothic *foederati* established in Thrace.

⁵⁶ General account: Heather, *The Goths*, cc. 2–3. It sometimes goes unnoticed that contemporary Graeco-Roman sources (not just Jordanes' *Getica*) provide strong support for the operation of migratory processes of some kind from the Baltic to the Black Seas in the third century.

⁵⁷ For a recent survey of the Hunnic revolution, see Heather, *The Goths*, pt. 2.

mean “false”, but a conceptualization of past events, which accords them a significant role in the history of the group concerned, which may or may not be in accord with their real significance at the time the events occurred.⁵⁸ There is some evidence, interestingly enough, that Goths in France in the later fifth century and Goths in Constantinople in the sixth were telling some similar stories about the ancient Gothic past, and, in particular, about how they came to find themselves beside the Black Sea.⁵⁹ These and similar stories *may* have played some role in generating a sense of commonality, which became politically active, when broader circumstances made it advantageous, in the Balkans in the summer of 488.

Alongside this shared broader history, it is likely enough that the new unity of the Pannonians and Thracians was sustained by shared values, institutions, and expectations. Again, we are entering murky waters, but a few comments are worth making. First, as we have seen, it is probable that a shared basic social organization marked out most of the Germanic groups operating in and around the fringes of the Roman world between the fourth and the sixth centuries, with a shared tripartite division of humanity into three castes: free, freed (but permanently dependent), and slave. This was not something specifically Gothic, but, in the Balkans of 488, would certainly have separated Goths off from Roman society.⁶⁰ They also had in common the same variant of non-Nicene, Homoean Christianity (commonly known as Arianism). Again the evidence for this is better from the Italian period, but, contrary to some recent assertions, there is no sign that this was an invention of the Italian period (see below). The united Goths brought their religion with them from the Balkans. In other key respects too, Gothic ways of doing things probably differed from Roman norms: marriage practice, inheritance, and

⁵⁸ For an introduction to myth in this sense, see e.g. A.D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford 1986) c. 1.

⁵⁹ Jordanes in mid-sixth century would appear to have heard similar stories about the deep Gothic past as those collected by the mysterious Ablabius, who was certainly working somewhere in the west (quite probably in Visigothic Gaul) in the later fifth or very early sixth centuries: *Getica* 4,28–9, with Heather, *Goths and Romans*, p. 328.

⁶⁰ It is very striking that such a categorization of society later replaced Roman social models among the successor states: see further P.J. Heather, “State, Lordship and Community in the West (c. A.D. 400–600)”, *Cambridge Ancient History* 14 (2nd edn., 2000) pp. 437–68, here pp. 461 ff.

dispute settlement. Again, we have no evidence that there were shared and specific Gothic ways of doing these things which the Thracians and Pannonians might have preserved to underpin their unification in the Balkans. Again, however, there is equally no evidence that they did not, and, as we shall see in due course, arrangements in Italy make it very clear that dispute settlement, at least, was carried on in a manner which was very different from what established norms in Roman society. Most of these items might be thought of as generally Germanic rather than specifically Gothic, but in the Balkans of 488 that really didn't matter. The key context here was self-definition against Constantinople and a possible Roman option, not self-definition against other Germanic-speakers, so that these elements would have been sufficient for the task in hand.

These intriguing possibilities must not be accorded too much air time. We have little (but not no) evidence for such commonalities, one can get most of the way towards a satisfactory explanation for the unification of the Goths, as we have seen, on the basis of simple material calculation, and the history of the fourth to the sixth centuries does throw up examples of new groups being created where there certainly wasn't a shared past or common grammar of social norms. The best instance of this is provided by the Vandal and Alan coalition which made its way eventually to Carthage. This was born out of shared perceptions of a need to operate in larger numbers on a more permanent basis following the punishment inflicted upon both groups by joint Romano-Visigothic campaigns in Spain between 416 and 418. And where the Vandals were Germanic-speakers like the Goths, the Alans were Iranian-speaking nomads, with—originally at least—an entirely different economy and social structure. As one might expect, the stock-dependent Alans had a much more egalitarian social structure in the fourth century than agricultural Germanic societies of the same period.⁶¹ Nonetheless, these very different groups, when placed under sufficient duress, found it possible to work together.

⁶¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 31,2,25.

B. *Ostrogoths in the Italian kingdom*

The Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy was an effect of western imperial collapse. As we have seen, Theoderic the Amal put together a new and very substantial militarized force of Goths in the Balkans between 473 and 488. Everything suggests that this was a larger unit than had ever previously existed in Gothic society east of Italy or outside of the Roman Empire.⁶² Nonetheless, as the history of its relations with Constantinople makes clear, this force was not by itself large enough to confront even half of the Roman Empire and win. In the short term, it was too large to be easily defeated, but nevertheless not strong enough to force the Constantinopolitan authorities into an agreement which they did not want to maintain. There is every reason to suppose that this would also have been the case in Italy had Theoderic found there the western half of the Empire still substantially intact. Like Alaric before him between 408 and 411, Theoderic would have been too powerful to defeat easily, but not powerful enough to constrain the Ravennate authorities into accepting his domination.⁶³ In other words, Theoderic's ability to carve out an independent kingdom at the heart of the old Western Empire was the product not only of his own ability to create a new Gothic force of unprecedented power, but also of the collapse of the west. In the fractured post-Roman west, Theoderic's Ostrogoths were powerful enough to carve out a kingdom; before the fracturing, they would not have been.

On another level, however, the Ostrogoths can be seen as symptom—if not cause—as well as effect. For, like the Ostrogoths, the other main kingdom-forming entities at the heart of the old Roman west were new power combinations, created in similar circumstances. The Hasding Vandal monarchs, who established themselves in North Africa, sat at the head of a new coalition of previously separate groupings: the Hasding Vandals, the Siling Vandals, and a number

⁶² Although the available figures suggest that Alaric's newly united Visigoths may have been similar in order of magnitude: Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 213–4 (commenting on passages in Zosimus and Photius' summary of Olympiodorus of Thebes; these figures are highly problematic).

⁶³ The fundamental problem which confronted Alaric as he sat in only temporary control of events outside the city of Rome in these years, and recognition of which on both sides underpinned the eventual peace deal between the Romans and Alaric's successors Vallia and Theoderic I: Heather, *Goths and Romans*, c. 6.

of separate groups of Alans. Like the constituent parts of the Ostrogoths, all these groups were refugees from the ebb and flow of Hunnic power in east-central Europe, and they were forced to unite in the face of the power of the Roman state, whose campaigns in Spain threatened their piecemeal destruction. The same was true of the Visigoths. Composed of the Tervingi and Greuthungi of 376 and survivors of Radagaisus' attack on Italy in 405/6, these constituent elements can again be shown to have learned to work together because, in the face of Roman power, there was safety in numbers.⁶⁴ While the creation of the Ostrogothic kingdom belongs in the category of "effects" of Roman imperial collapse, therefore, the processes of group-creation fit a more general pattern which can be found at various points and places in the fifth-century west, and which was a fundamental cause of the eventual deposition of Romulus Augustulus in early September 476.

Settlement and Ostrogothic Identity

Up to the late 1970s an unhealthy scholarly consensus prevailed over the question of how exactly the Ostrogoths were settled in the Italian landscape after Theoderic's overthrow of Odovacar. The Ostrogoths, it was argued, were granted land—designated *tertia* "thirds" in the sources because the allocations comprised one third of the available land—in a number of distinct clusters in the northern part of the peninsula. This view was overturned by Walter Goffart, who successfully showed that the technical term *tertia* actually referred to one third of the existing land tax paid to designated Goths as a military donative on an annual basis. Goffart concluded, indeed, that these land tax allocations comprised the entire economic reward which Theoderic granted to his followers upon the conquest of Italy. His further thoughts then turned to how individual Goths turned this monetary reward into the ownership of actual landed estates.

⁶⁴ Spanish campaigns and Vandals: Hydatius, *Chronicon* 24, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 11 (Berlin 1894). The Sueves of north-western Spain would also appear to have been a new or renewed amalgamation, created on the march out of Quadi, Marcomanni and other Middle Danubian groups: Wolfram, *Goths*, p. 387 n. 55. On the motivations behind the unification of the Visigoths, see Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 315–7.

This was a necessary part of the argument, because there is no doubt that Goths did eventually come to own land in Italy.⁶⁵

In 1997, Patrick Amory went further, adding a few new elements of his own to Goffart's vision of the economic terms of the settlement, to argue that its more general conditions made it impossible for any separate sense of Ostrogothic identity to have survived the integration of Theoderic's followers into the Italian landscape. First, Amory argues, Theoderic's following consisted overwhelmingly of armed men—an army—who did not bring dependent families of women and children with them into Italy. Once in Italy, therefore, they must, for the most part, have intermarried with the indigenous population.⁶⁶ Second, Theoderic recruited widely into his army from among indigenous Italian groups, once his kingdom was established. Former members of Odovacar's army, together with large numbers of native Italo-Romans were incorporated into the military establishment of kingdom, so that, again, no continuous sense of community was maintained between the army that conquered Italy between 489 and 493, and the army of Italy as it stood in 526.⁶⁷ Third and finally (this being the intersection between Amory and Goffart), members of the incoming army used the financial gains they made on an annual basis from the *tertia*e payments to buy land piecemeal right across Italy between 493 and the 520s. This process facilitated their rapid assimilation into local Italian landowning societies, from which Justinian's war of conquest dragged them in the 530s and 540s, forcing them to choose to be either Goths or imperial Romans, when what they really wanted to be was Tuscans, Campanians, Umbrians, or whatever.⁶⁸ The question of further recruitment will be dealt with below, but, in my view, Amory's overall vision of the Ostrogoths' settlement cannot stand, and, as a

⁶⁵ W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans A.D. 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton NJ 1980), esp. c. 3 on Italy.

⁶⁶ Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 95–102 passim, esp. p. 95 “an army is not a self-replacing breeding community”; cf. pp. 41–2, esp. n. 108, arguing that while there were some women, there were not many, and that Procopius' vision (Procopius, *Wars* 5,1,12) of Goths coming to Italy with their wives and families is a distortion rooted in Procopius' ethnographic assumptions (on which see further below).

⁶⁷ Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 93–5.

⁶⁸ This argument is spread over more pages than the other two, but see e.g. Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 95 (initial financial arrangements); pp. 149–65 (longer term consequences); c. 5 (the war and its effects).

consequence, the conclusions he draws about the (non-)continuity of Ostrogothic identity are unconvincing.

First, there is actually much evidence that Theoderic's armed followers brought families with them to Italy on a substantial scale. Amory says that the presence of families on the trek is only reported by Procopius—writing forty to fifty years after the event—and dismisses it as a product of the latter's ethnographic ideology. Procopius expected foreign powers to be tribal, so he recorded them as moving about with families as a matter of course. This highly convenient blanket dismissal is very problematic. Procopius was more or less a contemporary observer who had seen many more Goths than Amory. The immigrant Goths' families are also mentioned in a wider range of sources than he supposes. In particular, they are mentioned in Ennodius' *Panegyric to Theoderic*, composed about fifteen years after the trek and pronounced before the very people who had participated in it, and in his *Life of Epiphanius*.⁶⁹ Detailed, if fragmentary, records of the Amal's force in the Balkans also record that in the late 470s, the Goths' forces included a "multitude of non-combatants", and a wagon train 2,000 strong, which seems even to have included seed grain among its baggage. East Roman negotiators at this point certainly assumed that any settlement would involve the granting of good agricultural land to Theoderic's followers, and that a lack of indigenous inhabitants would be an advantage. In other words, they were expecting that the Goths would do their own farming, not just live off a surplus pushed in their direction by an indigenous population.⁷⁰ This evidence is neither ideal nor comprehensive, but, collectively, makes it pretty clear that a numerous non-military and at least partly familial element was part of Theoderic's following. The idea that Theoderic's followers *had* to marry local Italians is thus unconvincing.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ennodius, *Panegyricus Theoderico* 26–7, ed. W. Hartel, CSEL 6 (Vienna 1882); Ennodius, *Vita Epifani* 118–19; cf. 111–12, *ibid*.

⁷⁰ Malchus, *Fragmenta* 18,4, with Heather, *Goths and Romans*, pp. 244–5.

⁷¹ Amory's prosopography offers only two possible examples (both based on name forms and mentioned in the same letter) of Gothic men marrying Roman women: Brandila and Procula, Patza and Regina (Cassiodorus, *Variae* 5,32). The prosopography also includes one Tzitta married to Honorata, but Tzitta was the commander of a Byzantine unit in the Cottian Alps in the period after the reconquest. Similarly sparse are the prosopographical records of (again to judge by the names) Goths married to Goths: Waduulfus and Riccifrida, Felethanc and Ranilo (both

Amory's evidence that the Goths were dispersed right across the Italian landscape, often as urban garrisons, is no more compelling. He argues this in particular against John Moorhead, who viewed the dispersal of Goths into urban garrisons as an effect of mobilisation against the Byzantine threat in the 530s, rather than the normal course of affairs.⁷² In part, Amory may be right, but not completely so. The Gothic garrison of the city of Naples, for instance, besieged by Belisarius at the beginning of the war for Italy proper, was specifically sent there by their king, while their families were elsewhere.⁷³ Naples was clearly not where they normally lived. More generally, Procopius' evidence indicates very strongly that, in the 530s, the Goths of Italy were concentrated in three regional clusters: in Samnium and Picenum on the Adriatic coast and between Ravenna and Rome, in Liguria to the north west, and in the Veneto to the north east.⁷⁴ This picture is not entirely incompatible with some of Amory's views, since the Goths might well have been settled as urban garrisons within each regional clustering,⁷⁵ but he would very much dispute Procopius' overall implication that the Goths settled from 493 onwards were still recognisable as such in the landscape thirty-five or so years later. He would—I take it—regard Procopius' evidence as another element in the ethnographic “lie” running through his work (see above), that the Goths were an alien “people” holding Roman territory which needed to be returned to Roman control.

This is, of course, possible, but Procopius was a contemporary observer, and Amory has no positive counter-evidence to offer in support of his hypothesis. It is worth underlining, moreover, just how “big” the lie would have to have been in this case. The vision of

from Ravenna papyri of the 540s and 550s) and the royal pairing of Theodahad and Gudeliva. The real point is that the prosopography offers no help here at all.

⁷² Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 93–4 (with notes), contra J. Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy* (Oxford 1993) p. 69 with n. 12.

⁷³ Procopius, *Wars* 5,8,8–9. Note too *ibid.* 5,11,28–9, where the ceding of territory to the Franks allowed troops to be mobilised for the war in Italy which would otherwise have had garrison duties. The ease with which this was done does not suggest that the Gothic troops in question were being resettled from previously permanent homes in southern Gaul.

⁷⁴ Evidence conveniently gathered by V. Bierbrauer, *Die Ostgotischen Grab- und Schatzfunde in Italien*, Biblioteca degli studi medievali 7 (Spoleto 1975) pp. 23–39.

⁷⁵ E.g. the Goths guarding the routes through the Cottian Alps into Liguria were clearly settled in the fortresses of the region: Procopius, *Wars* 6,28,30–5.

regionally clustered Gothic settlement is not transmitted in one self-contained, descriptive, passage of the *Wars*. Rather, it is embedded in its detailed narrative progression. After he had been holed up in Rome for over a year (December 536 onwards), besieged by the Gothic army under Wittigis, Belisarius received some cavalry reinforcements, which he used to regain the strategic initiative. They were employed in separate groups to attack the besieging Goths' wives and children in their settlements in Picenum. By March 538, enough pressure had been applied to cause the relevant Gothic menfolk to want to return home to protect their families. This in turn prompted the ending of the siege of Rome,⁷⁶ allowing Belisarius' forces to regain control of the war's progression. In 539, the same tactic was applied in Liguria, causing the dispersal, at a crucial moment, of two elements of his army: the garrisons of the Cottian Alps and a mobile force commanded by his nephew Urais.⁷⁷ It was precisely this pressure on the Gothic settlements, indeed, which prevented the raising of any relief force and ultimately caused Wittigis' surrender in May 540.⁷⁸ If Procopius' vision of distinct and clustered Gothic settlement is held to be false, therefore, his whole war narrative must be so too. This is, of course, possible, but surely not likely.⁷⁹ I see no reason not to accept, therefore, that the Goths were settled in regional clusters.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Ibid. 6,7,28–34.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 6,28,30–5.

⁷⁸ For a fuller account, see Heather, *Goths*, pp. 264–7.

⁷⁹ The biographical information in the prosopography, drawn from other sources, adds very little to Procopius' account, and certainly does not contradict it. The *Variae* mention Goths with property interests in Picenum and the two Tuscanies north of Rome (4,14), and Adria (1,19) and Faventia (8,27) in the vicinity of Ravenna. It also reports the obviously exceptional cases of Tuluin (on whom see below) being offered a royal estate at Lucullanum near Naples, which he turned down (8,25), and Theodahad's land-grabbing in Tuscany (4,39; 5,12; cf. Procopius, *Wars* 5,4,1 ff.). The papyri mention possible Goths with property interests in Ravenna (*Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700* 8,II,16, ed. J.-O. Tjäder, 3 vols. [Lund-Stockholm 1954–82] [henceforth: *P. Ital.*]) and surrounding regions: Rimini (*P. Ital.* 36–7, but dated 575/91), Faenza (*P. Ital.* 8), and Faventia (*P. Ital.* 30). In Samnium, we hear of Goths with property in Rieti (*P. Ital.* 7), and north of Rome in the town of Nepi (*P. Ital.* 49). There is nothing here to contradict Procopius' general account, and the papyri clearly confirm the Samnium and east coast distributions.

⁸⁰ Such a distribution also made good strategic sense. So disposed, Theoderic would have settled his army to cover the main transalpine routes into his new kingdom, the east coast against possible Byzantine intervention, and main internal east-west routes across the Apennines.

I would also, finally, take a somewhat different view of the economics of the Gothic settlement than does Amory. I do think Goffart successfully showed that Cassiodorus' *tertia*e were indeed one third of existing tax revenues now earmarked for Gothic use. In my opinion (and that of others), however, this money was used to pay an annual donative to Goths of military age, which only supplemented initial grants of land to all of Theoderic's original followers. Goffart's attempts to argue away all the references to land grants are not convincing. His main argument, for instance, is the entirely negative one that we do not hear of much complaining, which there surely would have been, had land really been transferred from Roman landowners to Gothic settlers. Given that all our sources stem directly or indirectly from Theoderic's court, however, it is hard to see where these complaints would be preserved. Goffart also failed to take account of other possible sources of land, namely the substantial imperial and other public lands administered by city authorities, which could have been used to endow the in-coming Goths without any need to resort to private confiscations. While accepting his account of the *tertia*e, therefore, Goffart has failed, in my view, to subvert the indications in Procopius, Cassiodorus, and Ennodius that there was, in addition, an original tranche of land grants as well.⁸¹ Such a vision of the economic arrangements makes good sense of Theoderic's general political situation. By 493, he needed to reward followers who, as we have seen, had spent the last twenty years marching behind him from Hungary to Constantinople and back to Italy, fighting countless engagements on the way. Rewards on a generous scale were a political necessity by this point, and it is hard to believe that his followers would have been content with a share only in the interest generated by Italy's landed economy (tax revenue), rather than a stake in its landed capital.

⁸¹ The most important for Ostrogothic Italy of the many responses to Goffart's work is S.J.B. Barnish "Taxation, Land and barbarian settlement in the Western Empire", *Papers of the British School at Rome* 54 (1986) pp. 170–95; cf. I.N. Wood, "Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians," *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 1, ed. W. Pohl and H. Wolfram, *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 201. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 12 (Wien 1990) pp. 53–69 (on the Burgundian evidence). Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 95 n. 45, claims that it makes no difference to his argument whether the Goths were given land or tax shares. If they were given land, with their families, in clusters, it certainly does.

All in all, there is nothing in the detailed terms of the Ostrogothic settlement in Italy, which leads one *a priori* towards the view that it must necessarily have undermined whatever sense of group identity already existed among Theoderic's followers. For Amory's vision of a cash rich group of men buying land at random across the Italian landscape, I would substitute one where Theoderic's followers, often consisting—as the sources describe them—of family groups, benefited from organised land grants, which placed them in clusters in strategically chosen corners of Italy. This initial pay-off was then supplemented by an annual donative to designated males of military age, some of which income may have been used to buy further lands. In my view, the overall effect of the settlement was to install Theoderic's followers as a highly privileged and therefore distinctive, group in certain parts of the Italian landscape.

Identity and Structure in the Ostrogothic Kingdom

If there was thus nothing about the detailed terms of the settlement immediately to undermine the corporate identity of Theoderic's followers, there is no doubt that many of the structures by which the kingdom was subsequently run were thoroughly Roman in inspiration and substance. Odovacar's seizure of power in 476 had been by nature a coup d'état rather than a conquest, and both ideologically and structurally he had wanted and largely maintained the late imperial world as he found it.⁸² This heritage was in turn passed on to Theoderic, the Roman or rather sub-Roman structure of whose kingdom emerges very clearly from the *Variae*, the collection of official correspondence penned by Cassiodorus in two periods of office: one 507–11, the other c. 523–538/9.⁸³ Administrative organization remained as it had been under the fifth-century emperors. The main unit of local government was the *civitas*, comprising both an urban centre and a stretch of dependent rural territory which was administered by a council of local landowners (overseen by various imperially-

⁸² Malchus, *Fragmenta* 14, is the fundamental source for Odovacar's constitutional posturing.

⁸³ P.S. Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects and Kings. The Roman West, 395–565* (London 1992) c. 15 unconvincingly argues that Cassiodorus' career is a fabrication. A better introduction by S.J.B. Barnish in Cassiodorus, *Variae*, ed. and transl. S.J.B. Barnish, *Translated Texts for Historians* 12 (Liverpool 1992).

appointed officials) meeting in the town, where all the relevant records were kept. The *civitates* were grouped into provinces, each with their own governor. At the centre, a number of bureaux both supervised the broader edifice, not least that of the Praetorian Prefect, and exercised such central functions as the control of revenues and disbursements. The court to which all of these officials were ultimately responsible was that of a king rather than an emperor, but otherwise the bureaucratic skeleton of the Ostrogothic Italian kingdom preserved Roman patterns to a remarkable degree. Most of the other successor kingdoms did so to some extent, but the range of appointment letters preserved in books six and seven of the *Variae* show that the Ostrogothic kingdom retained a highly differentiated and specialized bureaucracy where some of the other kingdoms were moving towards a smaller number of less specialized officials.

The tasks being carried by these offices, and the men undertaking them also represented substantial holdovers from the genuinely late Roman world of the mid-fifth century. The main governmental tasks addressed by these structures were the raising of taxation, and the maintenance of law and order. The nature and even the names of the taxes being raised directly continued late Roman systems, both in terms of the overwhelmingly important land tax, and other lesser taxes, such as those on senators and upon mercantile activity. Law and order, likewise, was administered through the same hierarchy of courts as it had been under the Empire, and, throughout his reign, Theoderic was extremely concerned to emphasise that the law being applied in these courts was straightforwardly Roman law, whose remit had not been disrupted by the arrival of Gothic rule. As we shall see, there is more to this than meets the eye, but it does seem to have been substantially true that Roman law continued to be applied, at least to the non-Gothic population of Italy, entirely as before.⁸⁴ The men undertaking these bureaucratic tasks, likewise, were from the Roman landowning classes of Italy, as, indeed, they always had been. These Italians did not, and had never, formed one homogeneous, undifferentiated group. There had always been great differences of wealth and status between them, and different

⁸⁴ Good accounts of the governmental structure of the kingdom and its functioning can be found in A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A social, economic and administrative survey*, 3 vols. (Oxford 1964) pp. 253–7, or Moorhead, *Theoderic*, cc. 2–3.

types of career profile to suit. These different career trajectories remained, and there is no sign in fact, contrary to Momigliano's famous thesis, that the more blue-blooded aristocracy based in and around Rome failed to accept Gothic rule with the degree of enthusiasm shown by an aristocracy of service based on Ravenna.⁸⁵

In spirit too, the kingdom remained thoroughly Roman. The *Variae* collection is a plentiful source for ideology and propaganda, arguably better on these matters than for points of historical substance. What emerges very clearly is that Theoderic's regime maintained all the major elements of the legitimizing discourse which had provided ideological justification and hence general political consent for the Roman Empire in its heyday. The Ostrogothic kingdom, as the first letter of the *Variae* collection famously maintains, was the second properly "Roman" state in the world. This meant that it had been put in place to further the grand, Divine design for humankind and the universe at large, its king, like the emperor in Constantinople, directly appointed by God. At heart, this design was to ensure that human beings reached the full zenith of individual development where the rational mind controlled the physical senses, thus generating a fully civilized social order: in the technical Latin term, the state of *civilitas*. The main building blocks of this higher order were a proper classical education, and the maintenance of Roman law, the former guiding individuals, the latter society in general towards the teleological conclusion that the Divinity had planned for humankind. It has sometimes been supposed that this ideological stance was a trope of Cassiodorus alone, but this is not in my view a tenable position. Cassiodorus was in office only for a very limited period under Theoderic, and the ideology can be found deployed in fully developed form in a whole range of governmental programmes and stances,

⁸⁵ The thesis is argued in A. Momigliano, "Cassiodorus and the Italian Culture of His Time", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 4 (1955) pp. 207–45. Although still highly influential, it is flawed in two crucial respects. First, it fails to recognize how close to Theoderic Symmachus and Boethius actually were up to the 520s, and, second, is unaware of the succession crisis which hit the kingdom after c. 522 and of the evidence that Boethius' fall was probably caused by him having backed the wrong contender: Theoderic's nephew Theodahad rather than his grandson Athalaric. On these points, see P.J. Heather, "The Historical Culture of Ostrogothic Italy", *Teoderico il grande e i Goti d'Italia. Atti del XIII Congresso internazionale di studi sull'Alto Medioevo* (Spoleto 1993) pp. 317–53, here pp. 332–41, and S.J.B. Barnish, "Maximian, Cassiodorus, Boethius, Theodahad: literature, philosophy and politics in Ostrogothic Italy", *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 34 (1990) pp. 16–32.

a number of them known entirely independently. In short, Ostrogothic rule presented itself ideologically as the Roman Empire continued, and many of its structural forms added real substance to the claim.⁸⁶ This being so, how were Theoderic's followers integrated into the functioning Roman structures of the kingdom, and is there any reason to think that they preserved any continuing sense of corporate identity?

Theoderic's propaganda is highly suggestive of the main means by which the king's followers, although now, as we have seen, to some extent dispersed across Italy preserved some sense of community. As illustrated in the *Variae*, the propaganda of Theoderic's regime consistently plugged the line that the incoming Goths had taken the place of the old Roman army in the structures of the state. There was, in short, a separation of function. The Goths fought, so that the Italo-Romans, so long as they paid their taxes, could enjoy the benefits of peace. This idea appears at several points in the *Variae*, being by nature an extension of traditional Roman propaganda which justified taxation in terms of the need to pay for defence, and has traditionally simply been accepted as broadly true in descriptive terms. Separation of function thus provided a simple means by which the immigrant Goths could slot into existing structures with a minimum of disruption to all concerned: both Goths and Romans.⁸⁷ This scholarly consensus has again been challenged by Amory, as part of his revisionary study of identity in Ostrogothic Italy. In his view, the propaganda of Theoderic's regime is here deliberately misleading rather than descriptive. In his view, Theoderic recruited widely into his army from among indigenous Italian groups, once the kingdom had been established. Former members of Odovacar's army, together with large numbers of native Italo-Romans were incorporated into the military establishment of the kingdom, and no continuous sense of community was maintained between the army that

⁸⁶ The evidence is surveyed in more detail in Heather, "The Historical Culture", pp. 320–32. This does not mean, however, that Theoderic was ideologically subservient. Looked at closely, the flattery deployed in Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1,1, towards the Eastern Emperor Anastasius barely conceals a demand note, in which Theoderic's claimed Romanness was used to berate Anastasius for his alliance with the Franks against the Goths: Heather, *The Goths*, pp. 221–30.

⁸⁷ The evidence has long been recognized, but for a good modern account, see Moorhead, *Theoderic*, pp. 71–5.

conquered Italy between 489 and 493, and the army of Italy as it stood in 526.⁸⁸

Amory is quite right that substantial numbers of Italo-Romans—i.e. non Goths—are found in the sources serving the Ostrogothic regime in a variety of military capacities. What he does not explore, however, is the categorisation of the troops involved. Some Italo-Romans do seem to have served with Gothic field armies on campaign. The famous case of the two brothers Cyprianus and Opilio, who participated in the capture of Sirmium from the Gepids, learned Gothic, and played a prominent role in the downfall of Boethius in the 520s is a straightforward case in point. The career of Cyprianus' sons seems to have followed a similar trajectory. The vast majority of militarised Italo-Romans encountered in both the *Variae* and Procopius' *Gothic War*, however, consist of local defense forces. Such, seemingly, was the nature of the forces commanded by Servatus in Raetia and Ursus in Noricum, and the detailed narrative of the *Gothic War* makes a consistent distinction between the Gothic field army and local defence forces with primarily garrison responsibilities.⁸⁹ While there was clearly no absolute boundary preventing Italo-Romans from serving on particular campaigns, we have no evidence that this happened on any substantial scale, or that such service entailed the individuals concerned being accepted into the field army of the kingdom in regular fashion and qualifying for annual donatives.

In particular, there is nothing in the *Gothic War* to suggest either that large numbers of Roman landowners served with militarized contingents of their dependents, as seems to have happened in the Visigothic kingdom of the early sixth century,⁹⁰ or that the Ostrogoths drafted into their field armies contingents—again consisting of landowners and their dependents—organized corporately on the basis of

⁸⁸ Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 93–5.

⁸⁹ Servatus: Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1,10. Ursus is known from dedicatory inscriptions to a Catholic Church in Noricum: Wolfram, *Goths*, pp. 292–3 with n. 397. In his prosopography, Amory categorises both as Goths because they were military men, but the former in particular is said to have led *limitanei* (i.e. inferior quality troops), and I would interpret this—after Wolfram, *Goths*, pp. 316–7—to mean forces that did not form part of the Gothic field army. Amory would not recognise that such forces existed, but see below.

⁹⁰ At least at the battle of Vouillé: Gregory of Tours *Historiae* 2,37, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SSrM 1,1 (2nd edn., Hannover 1951).

civitates. The latter was certainly happening in the Frankish and Visigothic kingdoms from the middle of the sixth century.⁹¹ In the Ostrogothic kingdom, townsmen were generally responsible—if often only in alliance with Gothic or East Roman troops—for defending city walls, but these units are never recorded fighting outside their walls, and it is unclear that these forces encompassed landowners from the surrounding dependent territory (the situation later among the Franks and Visigoths) as well as actual townsmen. I suspect, therefore, that rather than representative of a general trend in recruiting, Cyprian and his brother were individual volunteers seeking favour and political promotion by serving on a particular campaign. This—rather than the more organized conscription which followed later—may also have been the basis on which some Roman landowners found themselves on the losing side at Vouillé. The sources also preserve some contradictory accounts of what happened to the military establishment of Odovacar, with one reporting that they were simply massacred. A total massacre is surely unlikely, but one can well imagine that key elements loyal to Odovacar, cut in half by Theoderic at a dinner party, would have been purged for the threat they would otherwise pose to the new regime. A former bodyguard of Aetius, it might be recalled, was responsible for the eventual assassination of the Emperor Valentinian III, about six months after the latter had killed his former master.⁹²

Even if there was no absolute barrier, therefore, there is no good evidence that Theoderic's propaganda was substantially misleading in its account of a functional distinction which would necessarily have preserved a continuing sense of corporate identity among the Gothic immigrants. Indeed, some of the institutional arrangements surrounding military service both explain why such a boundary existed and how it was maintained once the settlement process had dispersed Theoderic's following (in so far as it did: see above). According to Procopius, all male Goths of military age received an annual

⁹¹ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 4,30, shows that the *civitas* contingents in Merovingian Gaul consisted of local Gallo-Romans; for a survey of the evidence more generally, see B.S. Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organisation 481–751* (Minneapolis 1972) pp. 66 ff. For Visigothic Spain, see e.g. *Leges Visigothorum antiquiores* 9,2, ed. K. Zeumer, MGH Fontes iuris Germanici antiqui 5 (Hannover 1894) (within which chapter, laws 8–9 make clear that military obligations fell on Hispano-Romans).

⁹² Aetius was murdered on 21 or 22 September 453, Valentinian III on 16 March 454.

donative in return for which they held themselves ready for military service.⁹³ The sources do not make it explicit how this was administered, but the money was paid out from Ravenna, at the centre as it were, so that it is extremely likely that some kind of register was kept of all Goths entitled to payments. Retirement from the army involved losing the donative, and, in the one specific case for which we have evidence, an honourable discharge was granted in writing to the *vir sublimis* Starcedius.⁹⁴ Whether this represents general practice is unclear, but a centrally organized distribution of annual payments would certainly have involved keeping a register.⁹⁵ Control of such a register represented an important lever of power in royal hands, but also had a communal dimension. The *Variae* collection preserves one order to the Goths of Samnium and Picenum to assemble in Ravenna as a body to receive their donatives. This gave Theoderic the chance, as the letter declares, to investigate the martial vigour of each individual.⁹⁶ But if this was done on an annual basis, and the many references in the *Getica* to “annual gifts” suggest that it may well have been, then, even when not campaigning, there will have been an annual occasion where the Gothic soldiery of particular regions met up with one another. This will obviously have maintained mutual recognition and sustained senses of corporate belonging.

In the highly competitive post-Roman world of western Europe, which saw successor kingdoms seek to establish and extend frontiers, where previously there had been none, the premium was very much on military service. Not surprisingly, therefore, the descendants of Roman landowners quickly began to change career paths towards

⁹³ Procopius, *Wars* 5,12,47–8.

⁹⁴ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 5,36.

⁹⁵ The need to declare to which kingdom’s register one would henceforth belong may well explain why, on the death of Theoderic when the two kingdoms were divided again, individual Goths about whom there was any confusion had to declare whether they would henceforth be Visigoths or Ostrogoths: Procopius, *Wars* 5,13,7–8.

⁹⁶ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 5,26–7. The letters have occasioned debate. First, they summon so-called *millenarii*, who, in the Visigothic kingdom, were officers commanding one thousand men. Hence some, despite their obvious sense, have thought that they summoned only a few Goths. See, however, W. Ensslin, *Theoderich der Große* (Munich 1947) pp. 195–6. Second, Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 82–8, argued that they concerned the distribution of tax shares by which all Goths—he supposes—were supported in Italy. Again, the letters quite specifically refer only to serving soldiers: Barnish, “Taxation”, pp. 181–3.

the military service which successor state kings so needed, and were hence likely to reward. For Ostrogothic Italy, however, there is no evidence that this was already happening in an organized and general fashion. All we have are one or two individuals who did campaign, and no certain evidence that even these graduated to full field army status with an annual donative. Rather, it would seem that the sub-Roman population was largely limited to defensive garrison duties in its home cities, while field army service, with its annual donative, remained a privilege of Theoderic's original followers and their descendants, the youngsters of the new generations no doubt being introduced to their older peers at pre-campaign musters, and in the donative assemblies.⁹⁷

The arrangements established for the practical settlement of legal disputes in Italy also suggest, first, that there was a real difference between how Theoderic's followers dealt with such matters and the mechanisms of the native Italo-Roman population, and, second, that these differences survived for some time after the initial settlement. As we have seen, it was an ideological conceit of Theoderic's regime that it preserved the existing, divinely-established, Roman order in all matters, a key element of which was legal affairs. Roman law, as we have seen, was the great symbol of society functioning on a civilized, rational basis, rather than in the barbarian mode where "might equals right". In practice, Theoderic was clearly aware, despite ideologically driven statements, that Romans and Goths were now both living under Roman law, that special legal arrangements had to be made. The administration of justice was one of the major tasks of all the administrative officers Theoderic appointed at different levels through the kingdom. Most were "counts"—*comites* (sing. *comes*)—but had varying competences; some controlled individual cities, some provinces, and others particular groupings of Goths. The *formulae* for appointing these counts preserved in the *Variae* collection consistently make the point that cases involving just Romans were to be handled by Roman officials, while the Gothic officers were to handle inter-Gothic disputes. Cases involving both Goths and Romans were to be handled by a pair of judges, the Gothic count and his Roman counterpart.⁹⁸ Nothing could make it clearer that Theoderic was

⁹⁷ In texts such as Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1,38, Gothic *iuvenes* are sometimes picked out by Theoderic as a specific group.

⁹⁸ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, especially 6,22-3; 7,1-4; 9-16 etc. (all separate letters

expecting that the legal integration of Italo-Romans and incoming Goths would not be straightforward: in other words, that the latter had their own ways of doing things. What these ways were, is unfortunately not illustrated anywhere in any detail. For ideological reasons, Theoderic deliberately avoided issuing the kind of lawcode which, in the cases of other western successor states, has given us some idea of how dispute settlement might have worked.⁹⁹ It has recently been suggested that Theoderic's legal arrangements should not be taken as a sign that his followers operated any particularly "Gothic" legal mechanisms. As was rightly pointed out, the old Roman army had its own courts and operated separately, in legal terms, from the surrounding civilian population.¹⁰⁰ The details of the arrangements in Ostrogothic Italy make it clear, however, that we are dealing with a different situation. Gothic cases were judged by Gothic officials, for instance, whether the individual was liable for military service or not; in other words, Goths were Goths throughout their lives, and not just when they were part of the army.¹⁰¹ In my view, therefore, it is extremely likely that Theoderic's followers, with a continuous history of Gothiness stretching back over their time in the Balkans, were used to operating with wergilds, feuds, kin groups and some of the other basic legal mechanisms which appear in the lawcodes of other successor states.

At the very least, certain prominent Goths clearly exercised such a degree of social patronage that the successful implementation of decisions affecting one of their subordinates required their active assistance. One royal lady, Theodagunda, was warned to show prompt obedience to the king's commands in regards to such a legal case,¹⁰² and one particularly intractable dispute was even transferred to Theoderic's nephew Theodahad, perhaps because he had more influence over the people involved than the king himself.¹⁰³ The arrival of

mentioning the importance of using two judges, one Roman one Goth, for "mixed" cases).

⁹⁹ Although, as Patrick Wormald amongst others has rightly cautioned, lawcodes can never be read as a straightforward account of actual practice. See, e.g. id., "*Lex Scripta and Verbum Regis: Legislation and Germanic Kingship, from Euric to Cnut*", *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds 1977) pp. 105–38.

¹⁰⁰ Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 151–65.

¹⁰¹ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 5,29.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 4,37.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* 3,15.

the Goths in Italy thus posed some serious practical legal problems, and Theoderic took appropriate steps.

Internal political structures among Theoderic's followers likewise acted to preserve some continuity of old identities, and hence separation from local Italo-Romans. An interesting case in point is provided by those Rugi who, as we have seen, joined Theoderic (under the leadership of their prince Fredericus) only just before the trek from the Balkans began in 487. As late as 541, they were still identifiable as a separate component of the non-Roman population of Italy, having refused intermarriage not only with the latter but with any of Theoderic's other immigrant followers. They also still had their own sub-leader, one Eraric.¹⁰⁴ For this to have been possible over the two generations separating their first settlement in Italy and Procopius' report of them, it seems extremely likely that the Rugi must have been settled in one cluster, perhaps at some distance from other elements of Theoderic's Ostrogoths (precisely where cannot be recovered).¹⁰⁵ The Rugi are obviously a particular case, but there is no reason to think them unique as a segment of Theoderic's following both in having a pre-existing identity and structure, beyond their membership of the overall group, and in being settled in a manner which preserved it. It is quite clear, first of all, that local, semi-autonomous political structures existed within the Ostrogoths after the Italian settlement. The narrative of the Byzantine conquest throws up several leaders with local powerbases, which were not under close royal control. Early on, one Pitzas surrendered with "half" of the Goths settled in the region of Samnium.¹⁰⁶ These men seem to have been loyal to Pitzas first, and the monarchy only second. Likewise, after Wittigis' surrender, which initially encompassed most of the Goths, one group in Venetia, under the leadership of Ildebad, refused to give in.¹⁰⁷ In similar vein, at least some of the Goths of the Cottian Alps followed the advice of Sisigis (commander of the military garrisons of the region) even when this conflicted with royal commands.¹⁰⁸ Some further light on this phenomenon is

¹⁰⁴ Procopius *Wars* 7,2,1 ff.

¹⁰⁵ So too Bierbrauer, *Die Ostgotischen Grab- und Schatzfunde*, pp. 26–7.

¹⁰⁶ Procopius, *Wars* 5,15,1–2. See on this Wolfram, *Goths*, p. 502 n. 223: this Pitzas was not the victor of the Gepid war.

¹⁰⁷ Procopius, *Wars* 6,29,41; 7,1,25 ff.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 6,28,28 ff.

also shed by one of the *Variae*. This letter records that the Goths of Rieti and Nursia in central Italy had decided that their choice of local leader (labeled a *prior*) was to be a certain Quidila son of Sibia. This choice had been accepted by Theoderic who died almost immediately, and hence a further confirmation needed to be extracted from the king's grandson and successor, Athalaric.¹⁰⁹ These Goths thus chose their own local leader (how is not specified), but had to consult the king and obtain his approval. If we can generalise from this unique exchange, and there is no reason to suppose that we cannot, this illustrates the existence of a clear balance of power in post-settlement Gothic politics. The king surely had a veto, but local Gothic communities had at least semi-autonomous political life around their own leaders. The existence of leaders of this type, and of the processes by which they were appointed, not only explains the semi-autonomous powerbases which turn up in the war narrative, of course, but would also, once again, have served to keep post-settlement Gothic communities to some extent separate from the local Italo-Roman societies in which they were otherwise implanted.¹¹⁰

Indeed, although the point should not be overstressed, some of these post-settlement political structures were probably the direct descendants of much older ones. This is obviously true of the Rugi, whose sense of communal identity drew heavily on a history of association which went back at the very least to the independent kingdom they established on the fringes of Noricum after the death of Attila (453), and, in some way, beyond.¹¹¹ This is the best documented example, but, again, it was not necessarily unique. Not all pre-existing identities and leaderships were destroyed even when other Goths joined the Amal bandwagon. After resigning his claims to

¹⁰⁹ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 8,26.

¹¹⁰ It has been argued that the title *prior* in Cassiodorus, *Variae* 8,26, is simply an alternative for that of *comes Gothorum* ("Count of the Goths"), for whom a general *formula* of appointment also exists in the *Variae* collection (7,3): Ensslin, *Theoderich*, pp. 197–8. This may be, and certainly the fact that Cassiodorus drafted a general letter for their appointment suggests that the Gothic *comes* was a common enough office.

¹¹¹ For an introduction to the Rugi and other groups of the "Attilareich", see W. Pohl, "Die Gepiden und die *Gentes* an der mittleren Donau nach dem Zerfall des Attilareiches", *Die Völker an der mittleren und unteren Donau im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert*, ed. H. Wolfram and F. Daim, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 145 (Vienna 1980) pp. 239–305.

independence in the favour of the Amal Valamer, for instance, Gensemund continued to lead an at least semi-independent military force on the former's behalf.¹¹² And while there is no explicit evidence to this effect, it seems extremely unlikely that intermediate leadership structures among the Thracian Goths who attached themselves to Theoderic in 483/4 were all overturned (even though their ruling dynasty, of course, had to be exterminated). New political stars waxed and waned in the new circumstances created by the Goths' settlement in Italy, and this is only to be expected.¹¹³ Nonetheless, it would clearly be wrong simply to assume that there was no continuity from the past. Either way, the existence of local Gothic communities with their own leaders, their own means of appointing these leaders, and their own ties to the king, clearly allowed for the preservation of a sense of difference among these groups, even though the settlement had now inserted them into the middle of a whole series of local Italo-Roman societies.

At least one further element of cultural baggage—religious persuasion—would also seem to have acted to preserve senses of difference between immigrants and local Italo-Romans. It has long been assumed that, by and large, the Goths held to a non- (or rather pre-) Nicene version of Christianity which argued that the Divine Son should be viewed as “like” the Divine Father rather than “of the same essence” as the Council of Nicaea had asserted in 325 and the Council of Constantinople in 381 eventually definitively maintained. This version of Christianity is often mistakenly called “Arianism”. In reality, it represents an older stratum in the evolution of Christian belief, which was transmitted, it is held, to the Goths by the fourth-century missionary Ulfilas, complete with the associated baggage of a Gothic translation of the Bible and Christian service books. Although as Roman in origin as the Nicene Creed, by the sixth century, adherence to “Homoean” (from the Greek word for “like”) Christianity, expressed through religious books in Gothic translation, could thus serve as another boundary to the assimilation of Goth

¹¹² Cassiodorus, *Variarum* 8,9, with Jordanes, *Getica* 48,246; the illustration works only if the historical reinterpretation of the latter passage offered in Heather, “Cassiodorus”, is accepted.

¹¹³ The classic illustration is Theudis, who went from his youth at Theoderic's court eventually to become first a dominating figure and then actually king in Visigothic Spain: Heather, “Theoderic”, p. 157.

and Italo-Roman after the establishment of the Italian kingdom. This traditional view of the importance of religious difference in the kingdom has, however, recently been challenged on two main grounds. First, it has been argued, there was nothing specifically Gothic about Homoean Christianity even by the sixth century. Rather, communities of such believers had had a continuous history in both the Roman Balkans and Roman Italy since the fourth century. What happened in practice was that the Homoean Church of Italy reinvented itself as a more specifically Gothic Church in order to attract the patronage of Theoderic, who just happened to share the same Creed. Second, if one actually looks at documented religious affiliations, then a “surprisingly high” number of Catholic Goths appear. Taken together, these two arguments reverse traditional views on the importance of different religious affiliations to a continued separation between Goths and Italo-Romans in the Ostrogothic kingdom.¹¹⁴ Both, however, are deeply flawed.

To start with, while the continued existence of Homoean communities in the Roman Balkans can be documented into the early fifth century, there is no evidence for them at a later date. Likewise, while individual Homoeans are known in Italy in the course of the fifth century (all soldiers and military commanders of Germanic origin), no organized Homoean (“Arian”) Church with clergy and buildings is documented in Italy between the rise of Ambrose’s dominance in the 380s and Theoderic’s programme of church construction from the 490s onwards. The Homoean resurgence in early sixth-century Italy, therefore, must be linked to the arrival of Theoderic’s Ostrogoths.¹¹⁵

A closer look at the prosopographical evidence also undermines claims that the evidence throws up a “surprisingly high” number of Catholic Goths. Table 8 of Amory’s prosopographical appendix compiles a list of some “46 named possible Catholics with some other definite attested criterion of Gothic identity”. The figure is worth a closer look, because very few of the individuals belong to the time of Theoderic and the “Gothicness” of others is very much open to

¹¹⁴ Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 237 ff. (the Homoean Church in Italy); pp. 476–7 (Catholic Goths = Table 8 of the prosopographical appendix). The comment on the numbers (“surprisingly high”) is taken from p. 465.

¹¹⁵ I follow here the authoritative response to Amory’s arguments offered by Robert Markus (“Review of P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy*”, *Journal of Theological Studies* ns 49 [1998] pp. 414–7).

question. It includes the names of nine converts from Arianism, eight of whom, according to Amory's own arguments, may well have converted only in the later stages of the war to keep their lands; i.e., as far as we can tell, left to their own devices, they would have happily remained Arians.¹¹⁶ They can certainly not be taken as examples of Catholic Goths from the time of Theoderic. Another six names occur in inscriptions of very uncertain date, which might have been erected either before Theoderic came to Italy (Fravita, Mustila), or only after Byzantine pressure made conversion politic (Guntelda, Basilius, Guntio—all three on the one inscription—and Manifrit). A more conservative approach, less determined to find Catholic Goths, would not be so sure that these should be included either. Another group of three from Ravenna (named in *P. Ital.* 30) are held to be Catholics, because a Catholic banker witnessed their deed in 539. Making these three Catholics certainly involves another substantial assumption. Popes Boniface II and Pelagius II, together with their fathers, Sigibuldus and Uniguldus, also appear, because the fathers had Germanic names. We can take it that the popes were indeed Catholic, and that their fathers were of Germanic origins, but no source either labels them or their fathers Goths, as we might expect in an Italian context had they been so. Definitely not Gothic, or not Ostrogothic at least, are Bessas (a Byzantine Goth), Asbadus (a Gepid), and Cyprianus (a Roman). The list similarly contains two eunuch chamberlains (Seda and Senarius) who can safely be taken as not part of the Gothic inner military elite, and a *vir inluster* Meribaudes who, even according to Amory, is perhaps better attributed to the well-known fifth-century, originally Frankish then senatorial family. I would also count as Roman Ursus, the commander of local forces in Raetia (see above), and his wife Ursina, while Amory himself has various reservations about the Catholicity of another six (Simplex-Lavinia, Erdui, Trasimundus, Gundeberga-Nonnica, Montanus, and the princess Ostrogotho-Areagni). The "surprisingly high" number of forty-six thus quickly reduces itself to eleven, or fourteen if we think that using a Catholic banker in Ravenna in 539 is a good sign of religious affiliation. Not even all of these are entirely convincing.

¹¹⁶ The princess Matasuentha taken to Constantinople in 540, and those appearing in *P. Ital.* 13 and 49: Sitza, Gundila, Aderit, Ademunt-Andreas, Felithanc, Ranilo, Eusebius-Riccitanc.

To my mind, the forty-six comes down to four (or seven if we count the three who used the Catholic banker) more or less unproblematic internal Italian examples from the time of Theoderic himself. This is obviously a much smaller number, and even if one allowed some of the more debatable cases, the basic picture would not change.¹¹⁷

While there were clearly *some* Catholic Goths in the Italian kingdom, nothing suggests that there were huge numbers of them, and it would seem clear that an organized, endowed Homoean Church was indeed a Gothic import into Italy at the start of the sixth century. As for more positive evidence of Gothic “Arianism”, aside from the royal family, the vast majority of known Gothic “Arians” are in fact clergy, twenty-seven out of thirty-three secure examples by my count, and twenty of these are known from just two papyri.¹¹⁸ We are looking, therefore, at the detritus of accidental survival, and it is simply impossible to draw any conclusion—positive or negative—from this kind of evidence. It is certainly going far beyond the available evidence to deny the *possibility* that most of the clustered Gothic elite were or remained Homoean Christians down to the outbreak of war in 536.¹¹⁹

Conclusion: Trajectories of Transformation

There is obviously much more that one would like to be able to document about the immigrants who followed Theoderic to Italy in 489. More than enough evidence survives about the structural arrangements and political conditions attendant upon the settlement, how-

¹¹⁷ The eleven are Ereleuva-Eusebia (Theoderic’s mother), Dumilda and her son Theodosius (but this is another dodgy inscription dated only 477–531), Ariver, Vonosus (both inscriptions of uncertain date), Alico (mentioned by Ennodius), Ara (an unlikely story in Gregory of Tours), Transmundus (an inscription securely dated to 523), Hildevara (who made a gift to a Catholic Church in 524: *P. Ital.* 4), Amalafriadas (half-Amal, refugee Thuringian prince), and Ranilda (Cassiodorus, *Variarum* 10,36). The really convincing internal Italian examples are thus Ereleuva-Eusebia, Hildevara, Alico, and, to a lesser extent, Ranilda (see Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 409).

¹¹⁸ The names are listed at Table 7, Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 475. Apart from ten members of the royal family, only six Gothic lay Arians are attested in contemporary sources, with, much less impressively, another five mentioned in stories told by Gregory the Great. Even if one included the latter, the overall picture would not change.

¹¹⁹ As does Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 274: “most people who were considered Goths, like most people in Italy, were or became Catholics”.

ever, to suggest that a consciousness of separate identity continued among at least the elite core of the immigrants down to the 530s. The economic terms of the settlement—initial land grants—made them an obviously privileged group in the Italian landscape, and the subsequent annual donatives paid out of Italo-Roman taxes to those of military age not only confirmed that sense of privilege, but also required list-keeping and distribution mechanisms, which cemented that sense of difference in place as a major feature of the socio-political structure of the kingdom. The immigrants' geographical placement in clustered settlements within Italy, likewise, meant that it was possible for a sense of community to exist among various component parts of the Ostrogoths at the local level. This certainly operated in the field of politics, where locally-placed sub-groups had their own leaders and a continuous, semi-autonomous existence only partly controlled from Ravenna. It may also have operated at the cultural level, in at least two specific areas. As we have seen, practical administrative arrangements within the kingdom on the legal front clearly imply that the immigrants had norms of dispute settlement which differed from those operating among the Italo-Romans. On the religious front too, the revived Homoean Church was a structure created by and serving the immigrant Goths.

Significant elements of economic and political advantage combined with the continuation of their own political, social, and cultural lives to keep immigrant communities separate in some important ways from the Italo-Romans among whom they were settled. None of these, of course, represented absolutely impenetrable barriers to assimilation. Even if the number of documented cases is not as high as recently claimed, some of Theoderic's Gothic followers were already Catholic during his reign, and Theoderic never attempted, as did a succession of Vandal kings (if to different degrees), to use religious affiliation aggressively, as a benchmark of group membership among his immigrant followers. Assimilation also operated on a more political level, as both the papyri and Procopius' war narrative demonstrate. As we have seen, some groups among the immigrants preferred to surrender to Belisarius immediately rather than fight to preserve their independent kingdom, and Amory's explication of the Gundilas papyrus is straightforwardly convincing, although there are some serious textual problems.¹²⁰ Gundilas clearly had assimilated himself into

¹²⁰ Amory, *People and Identity*, Appendix 1, pp. 321–5. The text is *P. Ital.* 49.

the local landowning society of Nepi in Etruria, and all his changes of allegiance during the war years, including possibly a conversion to Catholicism, are entirely explicable in terms of his overwhelming desire to hold on to a precious parcel of land.

Indeed, had the Byzantine conquest not intervened, such processes of assimilation would surely have continued, eventually to undermine the boundaries which originally worked under Theoderic to keep the immigrant Gothic elite apart from their Italo-Roman peers. The end result would have created one unified elite. The model of assimilation which pertained in the Visigothic kingdom seems the most likely analogy. In that case, a steady increase in conversions to Catholicism among the Homoean Goths seems to have made possible the final volte face of Reccesuinth's formal conversion at the Third Council of Toledo in 587. At the same time, intermarriage and the generation of new political alliances all focused on the integrating locus of the royal court made originally separate Gothic and Roman landowners more or less indistinguishable from one another by the seventh century, and long years of coexistence eventually generated a legal structure and legal norms which applied to all within the kingdom.¹²¹ There is no reason to think that, left to its own devices, similar patterns of transformation would not also have eventually eroded original distinctions between Ostrogothic and Italian landowners.

Similar patterns are already visible in the time of Theoderic, whose court was a centre of cultural patronage for Romans, and a locus where Romans would appeal to Gothic notables for help with difficult legal cases, and where one set of Italo-Roman and Gothic allies might unite to overturn the influence of another. Even in Theoderic's reign, court disputes did not see simple patterns of Gothic notables on one side and Romans on the other.¹²² That said, it is very clear to me that the speed of these transformations must not be overestimated. For Gundilas and the Goths who surrendered to Belisarius in 536—among whom any sense of the importance of preserving Gothic independence had been eroded—are clearly not representative of majority opinion among the Gothic freeman elite of the 530s, a fact which emerges very clearly from the war narrative. In the

¹²¹ For a brief account of these processes, see Heather, *Goths*, pp. 283 ff.

¹²² Boethius seems to have been an ally of Theoderic's nephew Theodahad (see above), and was famously brought down by a competing combination of Gothic and Roman notables, Cyprianus and Triwila.

year 540, when Wittigis surrendered, it looked as though Belisarius had won a quick victory, almost as brilliant as his recent triumph over the Vandals. At that point, Belisarius indicated to the Goths of northern Italy that, if they would cease hostilities and accept a Byzantine allegiance, they could keep their landed estates.¹²³ If the immigrant Goths really had evolved into local Italian landowners by the 530s, then Belisarius would have been offering them precisely what they wanted. Large numbers of the Gothic elite, however, refused the offer. The two clusters of settlement north of the Po—one around Pavia, the other around Verona—only entered into negotiations at all because Belisarius tricked them into thinking that he was taking seriously their idea of him preserving their special status by becoming western emperor at their head. When the extent of Belisarius' trickery became apparent, and Byzantine preoccupation with the Persian front in the early 540s allowed them the opportunity, they not only continued to resist, but widened dramatically the scale of their revolt. The resulting, increasingly bitter, war lasted in full fury for another decade, with revolts for a further five years. For all the Goths who had other ideas, therefore, there were many who wanted to preserve an independent Gothic kingdom in Italy. The source of this point of view was the Gothic elite, and I have argued elsewhere that the war finally came to an end when mounting casualties among this group destroyed any prospect of preserving an independent Gothic kingdom. Large number of them were also deliberately expatriated from Italy by the Byzantines; in some cases, their precise fate is unknown, but others were transported to the eastern front, and this, I take it, was the fate of most.¹²⁴ Within the Italian

¹²³ Procopius, *Wars* 6,29,35–9.

¹²⁴ Later stages of the war: Heather, *Goths*, pp. 267–71. Elite casualties: 1,000 were killed in the battles outside Rome (Procopius, *Wars* 5,18,14), large numbers when Totila's raiding fleet was destroyed, a further 6,000 deaths were inflicted at Busta Gallorum (we don't know how many of these were among the elite), and another substantial group in Teias' last stand. Expatriation: in 538/9, the garrisons of Petra, Clusium, Tudra, and Auximum were transported south to Naples and Sicily (6,11,19 ff.; 13,2 ff.; 27,31 ff.), in the 550s, 7,000 were taken to Constantinople after Ragnaris' death (Agathias Myrinaei, *Historiarum libri quinque* 2,14,7, ed. R. Keydell, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 2 [Berlin 1967]), and the same fate was suffered by Widin's supporters in 561 (Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 2,2, ed. L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, MGH SSrL [Hannover 1878]). Given that the elite consisted of somewhere between 1/5th and 1/2 of c. 20,000 fighting men, these are very significant casualty rates.

kingdom, therefore, the freemen elite maintained a continuity in their sense of Gothicism until Byzantine aggression destroyed both it and them.

This conclusion, it should be stressed, does not represent a return to the billiard ball view of unchanging identity among migration period groups. Identity is always a situational construct, and can always change if sufficient pressure—whether via positive inducements or overwhelming aggression—is brought to bear. Sometimes, however, identity has more than merely very short-term stability, especially where it is tied into privileged access to resources of some kind. The inner freeman elite of the Ostrogoths, in my view, represent such an example. The conquest of Italy allowed them to establish themselves in a position of great privilege in a new social and geographical context. Not surprisingly, therefore, there were elements of their culture which were different from the indigenous population, and not surprisingly, some of these differences, particularly religious ones, came to symbolize the superiority which their privileges allowed them to claim. Over time, processes of cultural assimilation would no doubt have generated new social and political orders as it did in Gothic Spain, but, by the time the Byzantines launched their war of conquest, this had not yet happened. Their privileges ensured that the Gothic elite was still highly visible in the Italian landscape, and their sense of identity was strong enough to fuel twenty years of resistance to Byzantine aggression.

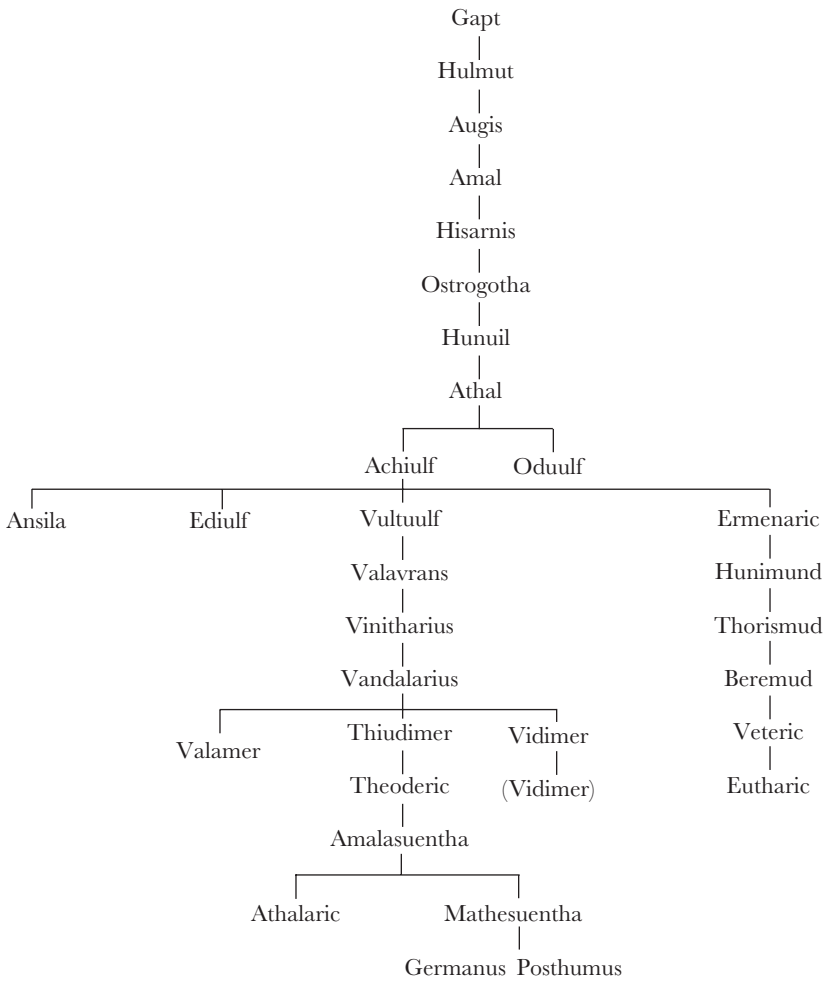


Fig. 1. The Amal genealogy.

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THE ENIGMATIC FIFTH CENTURY IN HISPANIA: SOME HISTORICAL PROBLEMS

Javier Arce

Because night is here but the barbarians have not come.
And some people arrived from the borders,
And said that there are no longer any barbarians.
And now what shall become of us without any barbarians?

(C. Cavafy, "Waiting for the barbarians", wr. 1889, pub. 1904)

I should like to take this opportunity to analyse the situation in Hispania in the 5th century A.D. This is a complex period, which is not particularly clear in the limited written source material of Antiquity, insufficiently studied, intriguing, but all the same fundamental for an understanding how the Roman province of Hispania broke up and was transformed. It was also a crucial period, for it witnessed the establishment of barbarian *regna* within the Iberian Peninsula in a somewhat exceptional and specific way in comparison with the Western Empire in general.¹

¹ I would like to thank all those who took part in the Bellagio colloquium (11–15 December, 2000), directed by Prof. H.-W. Goetz, for all observations and comments they made about my lecture. Some of the problems and ideas that are developed here form part of the first chapter of my next book, *Esperando a los bárbaros en Hispania (409–507 A.D.)*. The bibliography covering the settlement of "Barbarian" peoples in the Roman provinces is extensive. In addition to the contributions included in this volume, I have to make reference to W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans A.D. 418–584. The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton NJ 1980), to *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. W. Pohl, *The Transformation of the Roman World 1* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1997), and to *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998). Always useful A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A social, economic and administrative survey*, 3 vols. (Oxford 1964). For the case of Hispania see R. Collins, *Early Medieval Spain. Unity in Diversity, 400–1000*, *New Studies in Medieval History* (London 1983, 2nd edn. 1995) and P.S. Barnwell, *Emperors, Prefects and Kings. The Roman West 395–565* (London 1992). Finally, W. Liebeschuetz, "Cities, taxation and the accommodation of the barbarians: the theories of Durliat and Goffart", *Kingdoms of the Empire*, pp. 135–51.

In the 4th century A.D. Hispania had remained sheltered from the great problems besetting the Empire. Diocletian's administrative reorganization of the Diocesis and a relatively detailed list of governors—*vicarii*, *praesides* and *consulares*—are well known.² One of the most hotly debated questions in recent years has been whether or not a standing army was to be found in the Diocesis in this century. In spite of the (anachronistic) indications of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, it would seem to have been demonstrated that the regular Roman army was no longer present in the Iberian Peninsula. Indirect proof of this is the fact that no mint was producing coinage within the *Diocesis Hispaniarum*, and that its provinces relied on issues of the Gauls, Rome or the productive mints of the Eastern Empire for supplies of coinage;³ the hypothesis that, at least from the time of Diocletian onwards, there was always, as a norm, a mint in those regions of the Empire where there was an army is well known.⁴ Another piece of evidence for this might be the fact that, when Constantine III's troops entered the Iberian Peninsula in the early 5th century, there is no record of an imperial army having offered resistance in the Diocesis; on the contrary, members of Theodosius' family mustered a private army, recruited from among their own tenants and peasants, which confronted the usurper's imperial army.⁵

² Cf. A. Chastagnol, "Les espagnols dans l'aristocratie gouvernementale à l'époque de Théodose", id., *Aspects de l'Antiquité tardive* (Rome 1994) pp. 11–42; J. Arce, "Los gobernadores de la Diocesis Hispaniarum (ss. IV–V) y la continuidad de las estructuras administrativas romanas en la Península Ibérica", *Antiquité Tardive* 7 (1999) pp. 73–83; id., *El último siglo de la España romana (284–409 d.C.)* (3rd repr., Madrid 1997) pp. 31–63.

³ Arce, *El último siglo*, pp. 63 ff. with id., "La Notitia Dignitatum et l'armée romaine dans la Diocesis Hispaniarum", *Chiron* 10 (1980) pp. 539 ff.

⁴ M.F. Hendy, "Mint and Fiscal Administration under Diocletian, his Colleagues and his Successors, A.D. 305–324", *Journal of Roman Studies* 62 (1972) pp. 75–82.

⁵ Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* 7,40,6, ed. K. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna 1882; repr. Hildesheim 1967) [henceforth: Orosius]: *servulos suos ex propriis praediis colligentes ac vernaculis alentes sumptibus* ("having assembled from their own possessions and with their own resources an army of serfs and local folk"); cf. also Zosimus, *Histoire Nouvelle* 6,4, ed. and transl. F. Paschoud, 4 vols. (Paris 1971–89) [henceforth: Zosimus] and Sozomen, *Kirchengeschichte* 9,1, ed. J. Bidez (Berlin 1960). On this subject cf. Arce, *El último siglo*, pp. 78 and 153. The importance of this information should be emphasized as it clearly demonstrates that there was not an official army of Honorius in Hispania to oppose the *tyrannus* Constantine III, and that it was necessary to recruit troops among the "serfs and family folk" of the villas belonging to the members of the Theodosian family living in Hispania (the reference to "farming folk" is a detail supplied by Zosimus). Recruiting an army

For all these reasons, if any remains of a standing army existed in the Iberian Peninsula, it was no longer operative.⁶ However, Hispania entered the mainstream sphere of events of the Western Empire in the 5th century with Constantine III's usurpation, Gerontius' counter-revolt and the proclamation of Maximus as Emperor in 411. These episodes led to generals paying greater attention to events in the Iberian Peninsula and to Honorius' policy of not resigning himself to losing the Diocesis; but, at the same time, they were to lead to the arrival of the barbarians—the Sueves, Vandals and Alans—who were at the time stationed in the region of Aquitaine and who crossed into the Peninsula in October 409 as allies as a consequence of a pact with Gerontius to contribute to the latter's establishment in Hispania as an usurper in opposition to Constantine III.⁷

implies arming it, and this was possible despite the legislation, collected in the *Codex Theodosianus*, which forbade civilians from making use of weapons. Such private armies, for which we also have evidence on other occasions in other parts of the Empire (Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 29,5,34; 29,5,36, ed. J.C. Rolfe, 3 vols. (Cambridge Mass. 1935–39)—Firmus in Africa under Valentinian I—and other examples in Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 3,13, ed. A. Loyen, 3 vols. (Paris 1960–70); Procopius, *Bellum Gothicum* 3,18–22 etc.; cf. Ch. Lécirvain, “Etudes sur le Bas-Empire”, *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* 10 (1890) pp. 253–83, esp. pp. 267 ff.: The private soldiers of the Late Antique Empire worried the Emperor as they might lead to the creation of independent “kingdoms” in the provinces, and thus a law in the *Codex Theodosianus* (12,14,1, ed. T. Mommsen and P.M. Meyer, 3 vols. [3rd edn., Berlin 1962]) entrusted the care of the countryside to the landowning nobility, although the official authorities were concerned about the risk of these turning against the state: cf. *ibid.* 15,12,3 (A.D. 397). In Hispania, it is clear that this was not the case of the armies of Didymus and Verinianus, since these were raised against the usurper Constantine III.

⁶ Cf. Arce, *El último siglo*, p. 151; J.F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364–425* (Oxford 1975) p. 320; C.E. Stevens, “Marcus, Gratian and Constantine”, *Athenaeum* 35 (1957) pp. 316–47, here p. 318; E.A. Freeman, *Western Empire in the Fifth Century* (London 1904) pp. 66 ff.

⁷ The pact is referred to in Olympiodorus of Thebes, *Fragmenta* 16 (*eivene*), ed. and transl. R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* 2 (Liverpool 1882; repr. 1983) and in Zosimus, 6,5,2 (with the commentary of F. Paschoud) and Orosius, 7,40,9. On this see now: Ph. Wynn, “Frigeridus, the British Tyrants and the Early Fifth Century Barbarian Invasions of Gaul and Spain”, *Athenaeum* 85 (1997) pp. 69–117; J.F. Drinkwater, “The usurpers Constantine III (407–11) and Jovinus (411–13)”, *Britannia* 29 (1998) pp. 269–98 (which fails to take into account either my own works on the subject or that of Wynn) and M. Kulikowski, “Barbarians in Gaul, usurpers in Britain”, *Britannia* 31 (2000) pp. 325 ff.

Barbarians in Tarraconensis

In the first place, I shall discuss a text that I consider to be of fundamental importance for an understanding of the situation in Hispania in the early 5th century, shortly after the arrival of the Sueves, Vandals and Alans, and once the territorial division to which authors such as Hydatius and Orosius make reference had been implemented. I refer to *epistula* 11 from Consentius to Augustine, which is to be found among those recently discovered and published by Divjack.⁸

In the year 418, Consentius, who was an educated monk living in the Balearic Islands, wrote to Augustine in Africa, explaining the situation of the religious problems in the area of Tarraconensis. Both these provinces, *Insulae Balearum* and Tarraconensis, had remained unaffected by the division of lands carried out by the barbarians in 411 and, at that moment, were still under Roman control. The letter describes how Severus of *Osca* (modern Huesca), a rich and powerful priest, had become the leader of the Priscillianist heresy in the region. Among other things, he had bought a large volume containing magical writings. In the year prior to the writing of Consentius' letter to Augustine, in other words in 417, Severus, who thought that the barbarians were at some distance from the region in which he was moving (Tarraconensis, to be more precise the Ebro valley), wanted to take these writings—*volumina*—to the *castellum* that he had inherited, formerly his mother's property. During the journey, he was attacked by a group of barbarians, who stole the books and, believing them to be of great value, went to the nearby city of *Ilerda* (actual Lleida), aiming to sell them. When they found out their contents, they voluntarily handed them over to Sagittius, bishop of the city at that time (417). In turn, the latter, who secretly belonged to the Priscillianist sect, took advantage of the opportunity to tear out the magical passages that seemed to be of greatest interest and sent the volume that he considered to be most dangerous as regards its contents, to the Bishop of Tarraco and kept the others in the archive of his church.⁹

⁸ Augustinus, *Epistulae ex duobus codicibus nuper in lucem prolatae*, ed. J. Divjack, CSEL 98 [Augustinus, *Opera*] (Vienna 1981).

⁹ Cf. *ibid.* 11,2,2-3; 11,2,4; 11,2,5-8 and fig. 1.

The distribution of territory in 411

Several aspects can be deduced from this account. In the first place, the fact that the priest was aware that the barbarians were far away from where he lived: *Severus aestimans barbaros longius abscessisse*. In practice, it was six years since the division of lands among the barbarians in Hispania had taken place. On the one hand, Hydatius describes, or defines, it as the consequence of the Lord's compassion following the disgraces suffered by the Roman inhabitants of the Peninsula because of the barbarians' massacres and destruction;¹⁰ and on the other, he states that the pact or peace was established by the barbarian groupings themselves, who divided lands to settle on (*sorte ad inhabitandum sibi provinciarum dividunt regiones*, "they divided the regions of the provinces among themselves to settle on them"). So, the Sueves, Vandals and Alans had spent two years wandering around the Iberian Peninsula without finding any stable home (from 409 to 411). It is reasonable to suppose that the Sueves, Vandals and Alans did not in the first instance enter the Iberian Peninsula in order to settle, but rather as a result of an agreement with Gerontius, the usurper, in order to collaborate with his plan to obtain Hispania. Their arrival was the result of a specific pact and it is not improbable that they intended to return to their original bases once this mission has been fulfilled.¹¹ This category of "wandering peoples" has nothing to do with the normal process of settlement, that is by agreement with Rome, of the barbarian peoples that took place elsewhere at other moments.¹² However, once these two years had elapsed, the situation in Hispania had changed considerably; Gerontius had to commit suicide, Maximus, the usurping Emperor raised to the throne by Gerontius, had to flee in the face of the decisiveness of the *magister militum* Constantius, who thus recovered a part of the Iberian Peninsula for Honorius. This was the moment when the barbarians scattered throughout Hispania decided amongst themselves to divide up the regions of the provinces. Orosius only tells us how

¹⁰ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 41, ed. R.W. Burgess [*The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana*] (Oxford 1993): *Subversis [...] provinciis Hispaniae barbari ad pacem ineundam domino miserante conversi*.

¹¹ Cf. note 7 and the works cited therein.

¹² Cf. note 1 and the works cited therein.

the distribution of the land was carried out: *sorte*.¹³ Hydatius is more explicit as not only does he mention how it was carried out, but also what the result of the distribution was:¹⁴ the Asding Vandals obtained the easternmost part of Gallaecia, and the Sueves that part closest to the Atlantic; the Alans received Carthaginensis and Lusitania, while the Siling Vandals were given Baetica.

Two questions arise here: did the Roman authorities intervene in this division? In other words, was there an agreement between the barbarians and Romans regarding the splitting of lands among the former and thus were there any established pre-conditions? Or, in contrast, was this a unilateral decision in which the Roman authorities had no say? They drew lots to divide the lands (a well-known custom among the Germanic peoples, cf. note 1), but this does not necessarily imply that there was no Roman involvement. They could have agreed the division with the Romans and then have drawn lots to decide which portions would be allocated to which tribe. Yet no text makes any reference to any type of agreement between the barbarians and the Romans. The barbarians considered themselves entitled to carry out the division because they had been allowed to enter the Iberian Peninsula in 409. Nevertheless, there is one significant fact: the division respected the province of Tarraconensis (as well as the *Insulae Baleares* and Tingitania),¹⁵ which implies that for the time being Honorius' sovereignty in these provinces was recognized, and since it is more probable, that of Maximus, who at that juncture was the usurper in Hispania and resided in Tarraconensis. There was, then, total respect for Roman territorial organization, which would have been strange if the barbarians had acted independently: *sors* would decide who would obtain one region or another, but within the established limits of the provinces. E.A. Thompson¹⁶ considered that the division was carried out without taking the Romans into account at all, but this opinion is difficult to sustain if we bear in mind: a) that in 409 the barbarians had entered as a result of an

¹³ Orosius, 7,40,10 ("according to luck" or "by lots").

¹⁴ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 41 (a. 411).

¹⁵ These provinces had formed part of the *Diocesis Hispaniarum* since different moments in the 4th century. On the evolution of administrative divisions in the Iberian Peninsula from Diocletian onwards see Arce, *El último siglo*, pp. 31 ff.

¹⁶ *Romans and Barbarians: the Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison 1982) pp. 155–6; contra Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, pp. 287–8, and Arce, "Los gobernadores" pp. 79 ff.

agreement with Gerontius¹⁷ and b) because in that case there would be no explanation why the province of Tarraconensis was left untouched for the Romans. Having reached this point, there are three possible scenarios to explain what happened: first, that the settlement was in accordance with a pre-established agreement with Gerontius and that all that happened in 411 was the division by means of *sortes*. This pact would have included an undertaking not to settle in Tarraconensis, which would have remained in the hands of Gerontius and Maximus; second, that the 411 agreement was made with Fl. Constantius, Honorius' *comes et magister utriusque militiae*, who after having defeated Constantine III and deposed Maximus, had banished him to live in the regions assigned to the barbarians.¹⁸ Constantius had retained a certain control over the Iberian Peninsula (included in the agreement) and continued to command in Tarracoensis, which thus constituted a sort of hinterland with respect to Gallic territories. Shortly afterwards, in 418, Constantius was to give lands between Toulouse and Aquitaine to the Goths, thereby providing an additional safeguard against the tribes settled in the *Diocesis Hispaniarum*; and third, that the barbarians made the agreement with the usurper Maximus. Once the latter was overthrown, Tarraconensis remained in the hands of legitimate Roman forces and he had to take refuge among his former allies (with whom he was later, in 422, to attempt a further revolt),¹⁹ who were already de facto masters of the rest of the Iberian Peninsula.

Of these three possibilities, I consider the last to be the most likely: after having wandered for two years, the Sueves, Vandals and Alans reached an agreement with their former ally, now Emperor; they divided up the territory, leaving Tarraconensis in his hands. But the fall of Maximus left the province in Honorius' hands again. From this moment onwards, Tarraconensis was to be a constant target of conquest on the part of the barbarians.

The kings who divided up the territories of the rest of the Peninsula were Guteric, for the Asding Vandals;²⁰ Fredbal for the Siling Vandals²¹

¹⁷ Olympiodorus, *Fragmenta* 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; Orosius, 7,42,5.

¹⁹ J. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* 2 (Cambridge 1980): Maximus 4 [henceforth: *PLRE* II].

²⁰ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 71; C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris 1955) p. 393; *PLRE* II, s.v.

²¹ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 62; Courtois, *Les Vandales*, pp. 54 and 237 with n. 1.

and Hermeric, king of the Sueves.²² Their followers cannot have been very numerous and could not have occupied all the lands; for that reason, Severus of Ilerda thought that they were far away from Tarraconensis when he undertook his journey. But Consentius' letter enables us to see that one of the activities of the newcomers was to attack and rob, even outside the frontiers of the regions that they had been assigned for settlement purposes. An old custom that was not only a characteristic of the barbarians, but also an endemic feature of earlier periods.²³

Barbarians as book thieves

In the episode that Consentius recounts the haul was by no means spectacular—neither *solidi*, tableware nor any other object of immediately obvious value, but rather a number of books (*volumina*). These barbarians were able to appreciate them (the books were probably illustrated), to such an extent that they at once took them to the nearest *civitas*, Ilerda in this case, in order to make enquiries about their value and sell them. By no means were these uncouth, desperate highwaymen unable to appreciate the value of a book or a manuscript and only seeking gold or other precious metals. Their contact with Roman culture had made them aware of, understand and appreciate the value books might have, above all some, as unusual and intrinsically valuable objects.²⁴ They almost certainly did not stop to enquire about their contents. In fact, they went straight to Ilerda and there they discovered how much they might be worth and, when they found out that the contents were of a religious nature (whether heretical or otherwise), they sought out the bishop and voluntarily handed them over. Here we have, in my opinion, another detail of fundamental significance: when some barbarian highway robbers in Tarraconensis realized the religious and magical contents

²² *PLRE* II, s.v.

²³ Cf. Brent Shaw, "Bandits in the Roman Empire", *Past and Present* 105 (1984) pp. 3–52.

²⁴ See C. Bertelli, "The Production and Distribution of Books in Late Antiquity", *The Sixth Century. Production, Distribution and Demand*, ed. R. Hodges and W. Bowden, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 3 (Leiden 1998) pp. 41–60, here p. 39: "Books are indicators of wealth in any time, but in late Antiquity they have a particular significance in this sense".

of their loot, they understood that they were holding something that it was advisable to return and preferable not to traffic in or attempt to take advantage of. It is as if the taboo nature of the volumes has been disclosed to them, or if profaning their sacred nature the volumes might be dangerous, and so it was simply better to get rid of them. For this reason, they sought out Bishop Sagittius and handed them over to him. This fear on the part of the barbarians of having or keeping sacred texts and their willingness to renounce the opportunity to sell them once their contents were made known, are equally meaningful and are probably indicative of their religious beliefs (Arians, pagans, Catholics) and, at the same time, their ingenuousness.

However, there is something even more significant in this account by Consentius. These barbarians are not only unknown, strange highway robbers and outlaws. These barbarians calmly enter cities with absolute impunity. They walk in and talk to different people in order to dispose of their loot (although perhaps they are unlikely to have presented it as such) and make enquiries as regards the contents of the same. They are not unfamiliar in the city; the inhabitants are used to their presence (one pertinent question here might concern what sort of clothing they were wearing: the answer is probably that they could not be distinguished from Hispano-Romans on grounds of dress), and the ecclesiastical authorities—the bishop—receives them as if this were the most usual and normal event, although in this case he took advantage of them and tricked them. In the same way, the episode is evidence for these barbarians having recognized some ecclesiastical authority.

Nevertheless, Consentius' text is indicative of many other details. It demonstrates that the Roman roads of the region—the road between Osca and Ilerda and that from Ilerda to Tarraco, along which the *cursus publicus* still moved absolutely normally, were still open to traffic.²⁵ It also illustrates the existence of *castella*—such as that belonging to Severus' mother—which cannot be anything other than fortified *villae*.²⁶ Likewise, it is evidence for urban life, in which one could find members of the clergy and bishops, buyers and sellers, who might deal in books or anything else; urban life in places such as

²⁵ Cf. J. Arce, "La Penisola Iberica", *Storia di Roma*, vol. 3,2: *L'età tardoantica. I luoghi e le culture*, ed. A. Momigliano (Turin 1993) pp. 379–404.

²⁶ Palladius describes the *villa* as a *praesidium* (*Op. Agr.* 1,7) in contrast with *Collumella* (*Re Rust.* 5,2).

Osca and Ilerda, cities of ancient origin, the importance and activity of which went back to the Republican period²⁷ and which somewhat misleadingly appear as deserted cities lying in ruins in almost contemporary poetical works of rhetorical nature, as is the case in Ausonius.²⁸ Lastly, it shows that churches and episcopal complexes, with their archives, where Sagittius stored the part of the volumes that he wanted to send to the bishop of Tarraco, existed; it is also indicative of the circulation of manuscripts and books among cultivated and educated individuals, and the persistent deep-rooted presence of Priscillianism, which took root in this region in particular, as is demonstrated by, for example, the Council of Caesaraugusta of 380.²⁹

These facts, and other events described in the correspondence between Consentius and Augustine, are not indicative of anguish and a feeling of impending doom among the communities and societies to be found in 5th century Hispania as result of the barbarian presence but rather, as Frend has pointed out, a way of life whose everyday round of activities was as far as might be imagined from the barbarianism and the apocalyptic destruction described by Hydatius or Orosius himself, a way of life that was concerned with a wide range of subjects, among which were heresy, theological debate and magic.

All this was true at least in Tarraconensis, which was still Roman or under Roman administrative control.

Coexistence

In this overall context it is easier to explain the words of Orosius concerning the fact that this period was short-lived even though there were interludes of raids and devastation (he was referring to the Goths who came to fight against the barbarians in the name of Rome), and that Hispania was treated better by the barbarians than by the Romans during the period of occupation, to the extent that, within a short time, the barbarians started to lay down their weapons

²⁷ On these cities in late Antiquity see Arce, *El último siglo*, pp. 86 ff.

²⁸ Ausonius, *Ep.* 29,50–61 (*Ilerda: delectae ruinae*).

²⁹ *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos*, ed. J. Vives (Barcelona-Madrid 1963).

and to devote themselves to the plough, treating the Hispano-Romans as companions and friends, “so that among them one could find Romans who, living with the barbarians, preferred to live in poverty in freedom to anxiously paying taxation among their own people”.³⁰ This text, despite all its apparent rhetoric by means of which Orosius attempted to endow the barbarians with virtues and qualities preferable to those of the Romans (pagan, of course), is probably a reasonable reflection of the situation that the inhabitants of the provinces of the Iberian Peninsula were in before the barbarians arrived. There were moments of tension, but coexistence soon came to be the norm, as Consentius’ letter shows. The 411 agreement gave the barbarians the opportunity to own lands to settle and work, but in all probability it did not mean, if we follow Orosius’ words, the existence of a tax, a *tertia* that the inhabitants of the Peninsula had to pay the newcomers,³¹ and this was a noteworthy difference between the case of Hispania and the way in which *foederati* were settled in other parts of the Empire. In this respect, facing this state of affairs, it is understandable that many would prefer to live and work alongside the “barbarians” instead of being dependent on the totally suffocating Roman fiscal system. Orosius’ text also implies a consequence: that the Roman tax-collecting administration³² ceased to exist, which does not, however, mean that the administrative system itself had disappeared although it might have had other functions. We do not know how long this situation lasted. However, it is reasonable to state that, provided the *gentes* that settled in a particular region made no use of force and did not resort to destruction and pillaging, coexistence among them all, for the peasant, for the tenant farmer, for the city-dweller, even for the *possessor* of great estates and swathes of land, could not have been particularly difficult. The problems arose for two reasons in particular.

³⁰ Orosius, 7,40,7. This text is echoed in Sidonius Apollinaris.

³¹ See, for the *tertia*, the comments of Goffart and Liebeschuetz in the works quoted in note 1.

³² For the vivid illustration of the system see A. Giardina and F. Grelle, “La tavola di Trinitapoli: una nuova costituzione di Valentiniano I”, *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome* 95 (1983) pp. 249–303.

The unequal division of lands

These *gentes*, who made up different *regna*, continually and repeatedly confronted each other throughout the 5th century and, indirectly at least, the inhabitants suffered the consequences of these confrontations. The second reason is that, in the same way, and also continually and repeatedly, the official Roman army, always making use of the Goths, converted Hispania into the scenario of its harassment of the newcomers. What the chronicles record is precisely and exclusively the story of these punitive measures against Sueves or Vandals or Alans, whether to establish order between these tribal groupings, to settle their differences, or to keep their pretensions under control, and to maintain a certain political and military prestige through a policy of protection and supervision. The account of these interventions is what Hydatius' chronicle has handed down to us (and as a result of a process of simplistic copying is what the subsequent historiography has repeated). However, the most minute detail of the chronicle should be examined in order to reveal something other than battles and war campaigns.

It is not surprising that these *gentes*—the Sueves, Vandals and Alans—should confront each other. This was not due to their bellicose or warlike nature (a feature that is sometimes attributed to them), but was the result of one simple fact: the unfortunate agreement of territorial division that they made with one another. If one takes a look at a map, it can be seen that the division was utterly senseless and unrealistic. They were certainly not to blame, because they were unaware of the geography of the Iberian Peninsula or that part of the Iberian Peninsula that they were going to divide up. They knew the administrative division, but not the territorial extent of it. If the division is considered, now it is easy to see that the Alans received the largest area of all—Lusitania and Carthaginensis (fig. 2), almost double the area received by the other three groups—the Sueves, the Siling Vandals and the Asding Vandals. The Siling Vandals were allotted Baetica, also an extensive area, whereas the Sueves and the Asding Vandals were confined to the relatively limited area of Gallaecia. The central tableland or Meseta and Lusitania constituted an enormous space, full of possibilities and resources, with countless Roman cities and *villae* of widely varying types and agricultural worth. Since the beginnings of Roman settlement under the Republic, Baetica had traditionally been considered the most fertile

region, of great geographical extent, with enormous agricultural resources, so it was intensely exploited. The most outstanding cities in the Peninsula insofar as Roman civilisation was concerned were to be found within its confines, and this had been the case for over four hundred years. The other group of Vandals and the Sueves were awarded Gallaecia. Hydatius' text is not very clear as regards which part was allocated to whom, but Tranoy has shown satisfactorily that the westernmost part was for the Sueves and the easternmost for the Asding Vandals.³³ So, the least extensive lands and perhaps also the least fertile from an agricultural point of view were the lot of these two groups.

The division was carried out *sorte*, by lots. Although it is clear that they had prior knowledge of the territorial limits of the administrative divisions to be allocated (four provinces were available), none of them knew exactly what possibilities the different regions offered or how large they were, even though this distribution took place after they had been living in the Peninsula for two years, presumably following a nomadic existence or inhabiting temporary settlements.

The Sueves and Vandals received an area in which the sea and the Cantabrian and Atlantic sea routes played a fundamental role: the Cantabrian ones because of the contacts they provided with a part of Tarraconensis and with areas in north-western Gaul (*Armorica*, Brittany) and even the British Isles; and the Atlantic ones because of the routes following the coast of modern-day Portugal towards the south and the Straits of Gibraltar. The Alans received the area where the capital of the Diocesis since Diocletian, Emerita, was located. Shortly afterwards, this city was to become a much sought-after point on the part of their neighbours, the Sueves and the Vandals; however, they also had at their disposal, in the easternmost part of the province, the city of Carthago Nova, a Mediterranean port of vital strategic importance in order to control access to both Africa and the Balearic Islands (another of the provinces that had remained outside the regions to be divided among these tribes). The Siling Vandals in Baetica had the possibility of Africa and Mauritania Tingitana within easy reach.

In order to evaluate quite how unequal this division actually was, it is essential to establish the number of individuals there were in

³³ Hydatius, *Chronicon*, ed. A. Tranoy, vol. 2, Sources Chrétiennes 219 (Paris 1974) p. 40.

each of the tribal groupings to be settled, that is to say, how many Alans, how many Sueves or how many Vandals were supposed to occupy or fill the various areas. This is where we are faced with the most uncertainty and are entirely dependent on speculation and the realm of hypothesis.

E.A. Thompson calculated that the Sueves who entered the Iberian Peninsula numbered some 200,000.³⁴ There could not have been more than 300,000 Asding and Siling Vandals (it has been estimated that some 150,000 Siling Vandals later crossed into Africa)³⁵ and it might be speculated that there must have been a very small number of Alans, as they were practically annihilated in a couple of battles against the Vandals, Sueves and Romans.³⁶ Consequently, the Alans, the fewest in numerical terms, received the largest area, and the others did not number enough to occupy or to exploit their own territories completely or even simply to control them.

Superficial contacts and limited cultural interaction

The problem, once again, is to establish how each of these peoples filled or occupied their territories; and also how they adapted to the area, how they communicated in linguistic terms, what sort of control they exercised over the local population (who were far more numerous),³⁷ and also what material remains they might have left, or, to put it in another way, what sort of cultural imprint they bequeathed.

Prima facie, it can be stated that it is very difficult to believe that their presence transformed the countryside or existing Roman structures. Apart from the fact that their numbers were limited, a fundamental fact that justifies this statement must be emphasized: with the exception of the Sueves, these peoples remained in the Iberian

³⁴ Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians*, pp. 158–9, a number considered by Liebeschuetz “several times too high” in his article in this volume, p. 64 n. 39.

³⁵ Victor of Vita, *Historia persecutionis Africanae provinciae* 1,2, ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 7 (Bonn 1881); cf. Procopius, *Bellum Vandalorum* 3,18, with the numbers discussed by Liebeschuetz in this volume.

³⁶ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 55 (a. 417); 59–60 (a. 418).

³⁷ A. Balil, “Aspectos sociales del Bajo Imperio en Hispania, IV–VI”, *Latomus* 24 (1965) pp. 886–904, estimated the total Hispano-Roman population at ca. 6–7 millions. Cf. also G. Ripoll, “The arrival of the Visigoths in Hispania: Population problems and the process of acculturation”, *Strategies of Distinction*, pp. 153–87.

Peninsula for only a very short time. Reference has already been made to the total annihilation of the Alans by the other tribes. The Asding Vandals were absorbed by the Sueves and the Siling Vandals left the Peninsula in 429 for Africa. Archaeological evidence for the presence of these peoples in the Iberian Peninsula is almost non-existent, even in the case of the Sueves, who were the ones who lasted for the longest period of time.

With this in mind, the question is the following: what sort of material culture can we expect of them, what sort of cultural imprint? Weapons, some items of clothing, not much else. No buildings, no specific objects. One might expect reforms or modifications in such buildings as *villae* and churches. Everyday objects must have been the Roman ones, as well as most items of clothing and adornments. It is very difficult to trace distinctive identifying features. If they had created pottery for usage by a closed group, this cannot be expected to have been anything but an imitation of pre-existing productions.

Hydatius' text concerning the reason behind the division of lands leaves no room for doubt: this was done so that they settle, establish a home, *ad inhabitandum*. It is logical to think that settlement took place in the countryside in a concentrated fashion with relatively small distances between settlements, that they reoccupied *villae* or the various rural sites scattered across their territories—*vici*, *pagi* and various other types of settlement sites.³⁸ This would imply either that the Roman inhabitants accepted the presence of such new tenants in certain parts of their residences and estates, and thus, coexistence, or alternatively that they occupied deserted areas that had already been abandoned, or, as a final option, that they expelled inhabitants so as to occupy their place. However, there is nothing to prevent us from thinking that settlement also took place in the cities. Examples of this can be found in other parts of the Empire (in the *Vita S. Severini*, for example, for *Noricum*), and effectively a passage in Hydatius seems to confirm that settlement also took place in the cities and *villae* alike: *Spani per civitates et castella a plagis barbarorum per provincias dominantium se subiciunt servituti*,³⁹ that is to say, “the *Hispani* in the

³⁸ G. Ripoll and J. Arce, “The Transformation and End of Roman villae in the West (IV–VIIIth centuries): Problems and Perspectives, *Towns and their Territories between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. G.P. Brogliolo, N. Gauthier and N. Christie, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 9 (Leiden 2000) pp. 63–114.

³⁹ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 41.

cities and in the *villae* who survived the disaster were subject to servitude under the barbarians who had spread far and wide throughout the provinces". The text seems to indicate precisely that both in *civitates* and *castella*, the inhabitants submitted to the coexistence imposed by the newcomers. Several passages in Procopius concerning Vandal settlement in Africa are very useful in comparative terms as regards the possible settlement habits of the barbarian peoples in the Iberian Peninsula and show that there was no single pattern of settlement, but rather that settlement could take on different forms.⁴⁰

Can one talk of a total occupation of the territory? It has been seen that this is more than unlikely in view of their limited numbers. It is therefore not unreasonable to think that large tracts of lands or great urban centres or many *villae* continued to remain in the hands of their owners or to have had a largely Hispano-Roman population.

Finally, in view of these circumstances, what sort of supremacy or governing authority did these *gentes* have over the existing Roman administration? There can be no other reply than people collaborated and accepted a *fait accompli*, once the local population realized they were too far away from and had been abandoned by the central administration. In the majority of cases, the upper ranks of the aristocracy, the *potentes* and *possessores*, continued to retain their prestige, authority and influence.⁴¹ Both societies were condemned to understand one another and, for some time at least, the Roman administrative machinery and organization must have continued to operate. The barbarians had weapons and the power to intimidate, but for some time they had recognized the usefulness and the supremacy of the Romans and their laws.⁴²

⁴⁰ Procopius, *Bellum Vandalorum* 1,5,11; 1,17,8; 2,6,9.

⁴¹ This is also the conclusion of Liebeschuetz on the Vandals in Africa: "*Gens into regnum: The Vandals*" (this volume).

⁴² See A. Chastagnol, "Les gouverneurs de la Byzance et de Tripolitaine", *Antiquités africaines* 1 (1967) pp. 119–34, here p. 132, where it is pointed out that this was the case in many African provinces although "only the poverty of our sources for the period is responsible for the vagueness of our knowledge", and see also, once again, the conclusions of Liebeschuetz concerning the situation of Vandals in Africa in this volume.

A century, a historian

As for the year 429, there were no longer any Vandals or Alans in Hispania. There was only a group of Sueves, mixed with a few Asding Vandals, who were isolated in the westernmost part of the Iberian Peninsula, in Gallaecia. It should be borne in mind that the Alans and Vandals therefore only spent 20 years in the Iberian Peninsula. Forty years later, the Bishop of Chaves (in Gallaecia), Hydatius, at the end of his life, and overflowing with instructive and moralizing apocalyptic ideas, decided to write a *Chronicon* of the events that had taken place in his by then long life.⁴³ In general, he selected the events he knew best, that is to say the history and activity of the Sueves. And the history of the 5th century that we know, the only written history of the period that we have, is what Hydatius wrote. It is a factual, specific work, aimed at showing the comings and goings of the Roman army, the rank and file usually consisting of Gothic allies, controlled or commanded by Roman generals or Visigothic kings, against the peoples settled in the Iberian Peninsula. Sometimes these forces confronted the tribes, while at others they sought to make them harass each other, or they aimed to reconquer enclaves that the barbarian forces had taken. Hydatius' account is almost totally limited to such descriptions, with occasional entries concerning the religious situation and associated disputes. Hydatius was not concerned about the administration or the internal situation of the provinces; neither was he interested in the economic system, urban history, relations with other countries, power and ruling élites, or society in general. Moreover, he writes for his monks with moralistic overtones, preparing them for the Last Judgment that he thought was to come in a few years. The history of 5th century Hispania cannot be written on the basis of Hydatius. At the most, what can be described, and even then only somewhat superficially, is the political history of the Sueves, their kings, their struggles for the throne, the royal succession, and their wish to expand their kingdom. For that reason, today we should not repeat Hydatius' work as if it were

⁴³ On Hydatius, see R.W. Burgess, Hydatius, *Chronicon*, pp. 3–11; S. Muhlberger, *The Fifth-century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius and the Gallic Chronicle of 452* (Leeds 1990) and J. Arce, "El catastrofismo de Hydacio y los camellos de la Gallaecia", *Los últimos romanos en Lusitania*, ed. A. Velázquez et al. (Mérida 1995) pp. 219–29.

the history of the Iberian Peninsula in the 5th century (which is what the few historians who have taken an interest in this period have tended to do).

However, a few details that go beyond references to expeditions and sacking can be extracted from Hydatius' text. In the first place, the fact that the communication routes created by the Romans in Hispania were still in use. The Iberian Peninsula seems to have been accessible from Gaul via all possible routes throughout the 5th century: across the Pyrenean passes, along the Via Herculea, which communicated the central provinces transversally, along the Via Augusta, which ran through the Mediterranean region and forked towards Baetica, running as far as Cadiz, and via what subsequently came to be known as the Via de la Plata, which crossed Lusitania from north to south. The Roman armies moved quickly in all directions just as the army of the Sueves did; the points of reference were always the capital cities: Emerita, Barcino, Tarraco, Carthago Nova, Hispalis, Corduba, Caesaraugusta, Pompaelo, Ulixipo, Coninbriga, Bracara, Legio, Lucus, Asturica. These movements were constant, which has its implications. There can be no *cursus publicus* without a maintenance system and a tax system to sustain it.⁴⁴ In spite of the attempts of the Emperor Julian (361–363) to create a *cursus fiscalis*, maintenance was paid for by the inhabitants of the provinces.⁴⁵ This was a harsh burden which is still reflected in the *epistula* of Honorius to the troops of Pompaelo of 422.⁴⁶

Neither was maritime communication interrupted. In 450 the Emperor Majorian prepared an extensive fleet in the region of Carthago Nova to sail to Africa and thus attack the Vandals. The expedition was a failure because the Vandals captured the vessels by surprise.⁴⁷ We do not know how many ships Majorian requisitioned or had built, but in order to carry out a reasonable-sized expedition the number must have been considerable. They were probably not exclusively warships, but he must also have made use

⁴⁴ Legislation on the *cursus publicus* is to be found in *Codex Theodosianus* 8,5 ff.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* 755 (a law of Julian).

⁴⁶ On the subject see now J. Arce, "La epistula de Honorio a las tropas de Pompaelo: comunicaciones, ejército y moneda en Hispania (s. IV–V d.C.)", *Rutas, ciudades y moneda en Hispania*, ed. P. Centeno, M.P. García y Bellido and G. Mora, *Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología* 20 (Madrid 1999) pp. 461–88.

⁴⁷ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 195.

of transport vessels or other similar ships. Thus, the Vandals did not totally destroy or make use of all the coastal fleet of the Spanish provinces in 429 in order to cross to Africa.⁴⁸ Both in 429 and in 460, there was a considerable and large enough fleet of vessels available on the Mediterranean coast of Hispania. Hydatius recounts that in 456 vessels arrived in Hispalis bringing the news of the revolt of the Lazi against Marcian.⁴⁹ The Baetis continued to be navigable and news often arrived by sea.⁵⁰ Hydatius himself was not quite so isolated as he, with false modesty, pretended, since he received and sent pastoral letters and was well informed about events in Rome, Constantinople and Gaul.⁵¹ In the same way, when the king of the Sueves fled to Bracara, chased by Theoderic in 456, he took refuge in Portus Cale, where he had gone to embark on a vessel to escape.⁵² And there is more information of the use of the sea as a means of transport or communication in the course of the 5th century, such as when 400 Heruls landed from seven ships on the coast near Lucus;⁵³ they subsequently moved on, in all probability also by sea, to Hispalis⁵⁴ or when Vandals vessels, which are likely to have sailed from Africa, attacked the place called *Turonio, in litore Gallaeciae*, to take hostages.

One salient aspect throughout the *Chronicon* is the importance of cities. Emerita was a clear objective for the Suevic kings and the impression is given that they wanted to make it the capital of their kingdom as the King not infrequently resided there. Rechila, for example, died in the city, and his successor, Rechiarius, was proclaimed there.⁵⁵ Cities such as Barcino and Tarraco are sometimes a refuge of Roman generals as they withdrew after an expedition and also played a significant role,⁵⁶ as did Hispalis, which started to

⁴⁸ Cf. Courtois, *Les Vandales*, p. 160.

⁴⁹ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 170: *orientalium naves Hispalim venientes per Marciani exercitum caesam nuntiant*. Cf. *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 106 ff. and Priscus of Panium, *Fragmenta* 25, ed. and transl. R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire 2* (Liverpool 1982).

⁵⁰ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 97.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 29; 31; 75; 97; 112 and *passim*.

⁵² *Ibid.* 168.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 189.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 129.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 69; 52; 121.

be seen as a city of strategic importance.⁵⁷ The conquest of these sites by the different armies did not imply their destruction; the opposite is more likely to have been the case, in view of their potential interest as royal capitals, precisely because of their infrastructure and suitable urban features. Bracara Augusta, with its churches and *palatium*, was probably a true *sedes regia*.⁵⁸

In some sporadic cases, Hydatius enables us to infer that local aristocracies, noble families and local Roman authorities—*defensores civitatis*, *duces*—were in existence throughout the period covered by his *Chronicon*.⁵⁹ It is difficult to evaluate the significance of the terms referring to destruction that Hydatius makes use of to describe the Sueves' military activity or that of the Goths in Roman service. In the majority of cases they are generic terms and it is impossible for them to have had the impact that has been attributed to them precisely because of the pessimistic and apocalyptic nature of his narrative style and his moralizing purpose.

Barbarian against barbarian

Hydatius' *Chronicon* always transmits one constant impression: the continued interest on the part of Rome on the Iberian Peninsula, its constant concern for controlling and recovering it, not so much in order to eliminate the tribes that had settled there, but so as to gain peace treaties. This explains why on numerous occasions, the Chronicler refers to embassies, which moved in both directions to achieve agreements and understanding.⁶⁰ However, it is inevitable that Hydatius' text should likewise clearly convey the increasing interest of the Goths, the principal players in expeditions and embassies, in controlling the area themselves, without taking Rome into account, and in settling there.⁶¹ This process culminated when Euric overran the enclaves in Tarraconensis (which had hitherto been under Roman

⁵⁷ Ibid. 115; 116; 170.

⁵⁸ On Bracara, Hydatius, *Chronicon* 167 and *Sedes regiae (ann. 400–800)*, ed. G. Ripoll and J.M. Gurt with A. Chavarría (Barcelona 2000).

⁵⁹ On the subject see Arce, "Los gobernadores", pp. 73–83.

⁶⁰ Hydatius, *Chronicon* passim.

⁶¹ For example Hydatius, *Chronicon* 239.

control)⁶² and finally under his successor, Alaric, when the author of the *Chronica Caesaraugustana* in a concise, but solemn, emphatic style, noted under the year 494: *Gothi in Hispanias ingressi sunt*.⁶³ Throughout the 5th century, the Goths had gradually formed an idea of the territory, its cities and its resources, and little by little, as a result of their disagreements with Rome, they became aware of the possibility of occupying it entirely on their own as a permanent home for settlement purposes. Their coming was a result of a struggle between barbarian peoples. It was a long process because of the alliances with Rome, but it was not difficult since neither the Sueves, nor the Vandals, nor the Alans (with the possible exception of the Sueves) managed to establish a strong, unitary administrative machinery or a capital or definitive control over the territory assigned to them. But not even the Visigothic occupation was definitive: this was only to come about once the *regnum tolosanum* has been annihilated, and after the Ostrogothic interlude. The Visigothic presence in Tarracoenensis—this was the first area occupied by the incoming Visigoths in 494—was not welcomed and met resistance on the part of some individuals faithful to Rome, to which the province still belonged. The successive rebellions of Burdunelus (in 497) and of Petrus (in 506) recorded in the *Chronica Caesaraugustana* can only be understood in terms of resistance against the Visigoths. The former's uprising, once he had been let down by his supporters, was soon crushed and he was taken to Toulouse, where he met a horrible death. The latter's revolt was also soon put down; but on this occasion, his head was exhibited before the population in Caesaraugusta, a clear sign that the city was by then under the control of the Visigoths; this must have been an exemplary punishment for the benefit of those who might still have disagreed with the Visigothic presence.

The number of Goths who arrived in this first phase remains unknown. However, we do know that Roman customs continued to be practised: for in the year 504, the *Chronica Caesaraugustana* records that *Caesaraugustae circus spectatus est*. The 5th century had been one in which Roman traditions were still current in Hispania.

⁶² Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum* 34, ed. C. Rodríguez Alonso [*Las historias de los godos, vándalos y suevos de Isidore de Sevilla. Estudio, edición crítica y traducción*] (León 1975).

⁶³ *Chronica Caesaraugustana* ad a. 494.

Conclusions

To summarize, as regards some of the historical problems dealt with in the preceding pages, one might draw the following conclusions.

The case of Hispania in the 5th century A.D. is unusual and somewhat different as far as the settlements of the barbarian peoples within the Roman Empire is concerned. The initial phase of settlement took place in two stages: first, in 409, as a result of a military agreement between, on the one hand, the Sueves, Vandals and Alans, and, on the other, the usurper Gerontius in the Diocesis. This first episode cannot be interpreted as a true settlement of the different tribes mentioned, but rather as an agreement of collaboration against the aims of the usurper Constantine III. Secondly, in 411, there was a distribution of the territory in order to facilitate definitive settlement. This distribution was carried out by means of a pact with the usurper Maximus. Four provinces were assigned to the various *gentes* by means of a system of *sortes*, while the rest of the Peninsula remained in Roman hands (first Maximus' and subsequently those of Honorius). This distribution was very unequal as regards the extent and resources allocated when considered alongside the number and capacity of the different tribes, which led to disagreements and wars between different groups, which the Roman authorities took advantage of.

These *gentes* would seem to have arrived as cohesive, differentiated groups with their *reges* at their head. The groups that settled were true *regna*, although the evidence of Hydatius allows us to deduce that the king of the Alans seems to have possessed a sort of supremacy and maximum authority over at least the Vandal groupings. After the Alans had been annihilated by the Roman forces, the Vandals and Sueves continued to follow separate processes of settlement although one can detect a certain rivalry and hostility between them to gain control and to maintain their supremacy.

Only the Sueves managed to establish themselves in a stable fashion for a long period of time as, once the Alans has been eliminated, the Vandals soon crossed into Africa, leaving the area of the *Diocesis Hispaniarum* behind. The short period of time (scarcely twenty-five years) that the two main components forming the initial settlements spent in the Peninsula allows us to think that their impact on Roman society and structures was limited and without any visible consequences either for political administration, or for cultural matters, or as regards economic organisation. The presence of the Goths

in the Roman expeditions against the tribes settled in the Peninsula meant that the former gradually prepared themselves for their own process of settlement in the Iberian Peninsula, an event that occurred at the end of the 5th century.

All the available evidence, in spite of the dramatic, doomsday tone of Hydatius' *Chronicon* points to coexistence between the Barbarians and Hispano-Romans during this period and there are no signs of the existence of a strong or centralized or organised state among the *gentes* or the various *regna* during the 5th century.

The various western Roman Emperors constantly tried to regain control of the occupied provinces, although they were more concerned about reaching agreements than about really recovering territory. In addition, throughout the period, the Romans retained the provinces of Tarraconensis, *Insulae Baleares* and Mauritania Tingitana. In brief, all the available evidence would seem to indicate that the 5th century was still a Roman period in the Iberian Peninsula.

[Translated by Philip Banks]

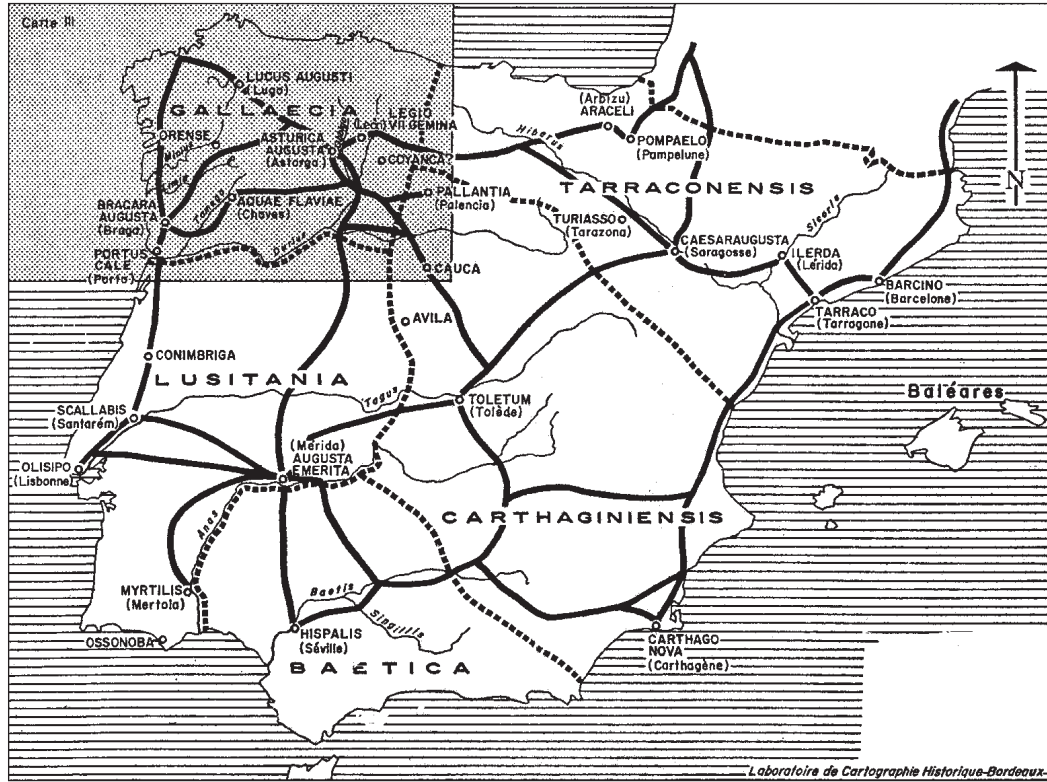


Fig. 1. The Iberian Peninsula in the 5th Century A.D. (from Hydatius, *Chronicon*, ed. A. Tranoy, vol. 2 [Paris 1974] map 2).

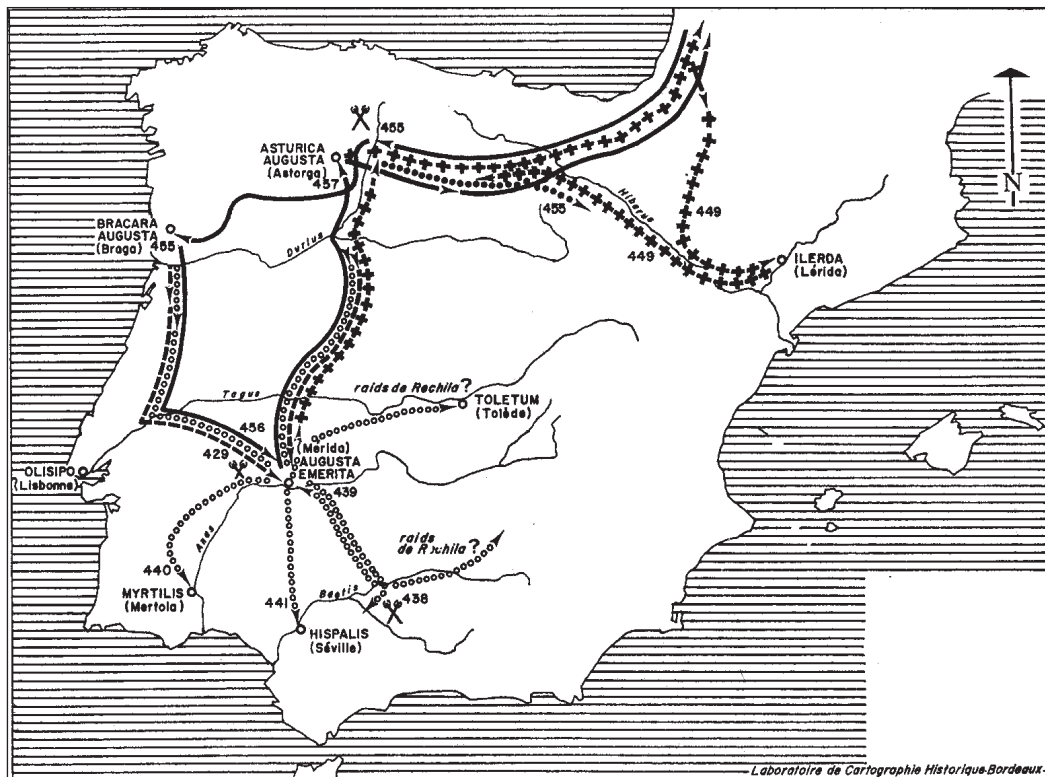


Fig. 2. Military campaigns of Suevi and Visigoths in the 5th Century A.D. in Spain (from Hydatius, *Chronicon*, ed. A. Tranoy, vol. 2 [Paris 1974] map 1).

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PRO PATRIAE GENTISQVE GOTHORVM STATV
(4TH COUNCIL OF TOLEDO, CANON 75, A. 633)¹

Isabel Velázquez

Introduction

The study of the relationship between *gens*, *rex* and *regnum*, the main topic of the Bellagio conference, has so many historical, political, religious, social and cultural implications that it is necessary to acknowledge the fact that the bibliography available can not be encompassed.² The case of *Hispania* and the Visigoths is particularly remarkable due to the interest aroused by the long history of the Visigothic monarchy from its arrival in *Hispania* after the battle of Vouillé (*Vogladum*) in 507. That is why trying to tackle this question, even superficially, sparks a certain degree of caution or apprehension, not only rhetorical. Thus, I am only going to deal with a number of points focusing on the scope of these terms and their possible manifestations in 6th–7th-century *Hispania*, especially in the aftermath of the 3rd Council of Toledo, whose Proceedings are the first to include the expression *gens Gothorum*.

It must be remarked, again on the issue of bibliography, that modern historiography has been conditioned by several ideological assumptions associated with the study of Germanic peoples, as some scholars have pointed out.³ The same constraints, and others, are

¹ This article is part of the research projects CAM 06/0050/00 and TEL 1999–395. I am very grateful to Dr Gisela Ripoll for her comments and suggestions. I also wish to thank Dr Francisco Rodríguez-Manas for translating the text into English and Dr Ann Christys for revising it.

² A large and significant part of this is mentioned in the Introduction to this volume. I refer the reader to it in order not to duplicate the information; this work only includes quotations that are indispensable for its accurate documentation and theoretical apparatus.

³ See some recent references to the development of studies on these topics and various references in the fundamental studies of P.J. Heather, “The Creation of the Visigoths”, *The Visigoths. From the Migration Period to the Seventh Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. id. (San Marino 1999) pp. 1–72, here pp. 43–5; W. Pohl, *Le origine etniche dell’Europa. Barbari e Romani tra antichità e medioevo* (Roma 2000), with a very

also present in Spanish historiography.⁴ In fact, they have generated a long-standing secular tradition that has always approached *Hispania*'s Visigothic period as the genesis of present-day Spain: a tradition worth studying both from the historical-political and from the literary points of view. Together with the survival of classical Roman tradition, since the Middle Ages and with clearly ideological and propagandistic manner since the start of Humanism and during the Spanish Golden Age almost up to the present, there has been a need to value and utilise Visigothic *Hispania* as a historical point of reference. It is well known that on more than one occasion attempts have been made to identify the appearance of Spain as a modern nation with that period. Likewise, Gothic monarchs have been regarded as the first genuine Spanish monarchs in an uninterrupted continuum.⁵ Furthermore, the 3rd Council of Toledo (589) has even been considered as the act of foundation of the nation. This idea of uninterrupted continuity has pervaded literature and historiography for centuries, even giving birth to cycles of medieval romances, such as those that re-create the figures of kings Witiza and Rodrigo from a literary standpoint. It has created a zeal for political and religious continuity in the period of the first monarchs of León and Asturias; it has had a tremendous influence on historians such as Jiménez de Rada in the 13th century or humanists such as Ambrosio de Morales

interesting and insightful analysis of the ideology of the origins and new paradigms in relation also to the situation in modern Europe, in pp. 1–16. For the key bibliography on the development of the studies, see again the Introduction to this volume by H.-W. Goetz.

⁴ As P. Díaz points out in his “Visigothic Political Institutions”, *The Visigoths. From the Migration Period to the Seventh Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. P.J. Heather (San Marino 1999) pp. 321–55, here p. 321: “[...] the historiographic debate over the characterization of the Visigothic Kingdom as a state or as a form of state [...] a topic certainly of interest, but which teaches us more about the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or about the different historiographic currents, than about Visigothic history”.

⁵ For those who are interested, there are several statues of Gothic kings in the gardens of the Plaza de Oriente and in the Parque del Retiro in Madrid, part of a collection of the kings from Athaulf to Ferdinand VI, commissioned by King Charles III in the eighteenth century. Recently, J. Fontaine has published two photographs of the statues of Liuvigild and Swinthila remarking that: “Tous ces rois portent le costume militaire et théâtral de rois de tragédie, le même bouclier, sur le même piédestal, comme si les passions soulevées en leur temps s'étaient apaisées, dans le seule affirmation d'une continuité de la royauté Hispanique, d'Athaulf aux Bourbons” (J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Seville. Genèse et originalité de la culture Hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* [Turnhout 2000] p. 146 and fig. 33b).

and many others including, for instance, a figure such as Saavedra Fajardo in the 17th century, author of a *Corona gótica, castellana y austriaca*.⁶ Another underlying problem of double identification, not just between Visigothic *Hispania* and modern Spain, but also between the latter and the kingdom of Castille, is sometimes apparent. It would be very interesting for studying these issues in depth to analyse, on the one hand, to what degree the Visigothic historical past and its “mythicising” have moulded later periods, to ascertain what ideological, political, literary or even aesthetic purposes the use of sources from the Visigothic era and the constant hankering for its kings, its arts and its writers have had; to try to determine whether that past has had any direct effect on specific events in successive periods. On the other hand, it would also be interesting to analyse the opposite process: how has the Visigothic era been approached and publicised? In what way have later styles, aesthetic and literary canons, historical events and political postulates influenced, conditioned and, finally, shaped whatever real knowledge of Visigothic *Hispania* we could have arrived at?

The question of literary sources

One thing is certain: that there exists a direct relationship between reality and the way in which it is recounted and transmitted and that, on occasions, one exerts a powerful influence on the other and vice versa. That is why the approach I intend to adopt in studying the topic is, in fact, to tackle those written sources—broadly described as literary—that “talk” about Visigothic *Hispania* in the 6th–7th centuries, that deal with the *gens Gothorum* and their kings as well as the *regnum* they established. I do not attempt to cover them all, only those that I consider most relevant, which constitute our main source of information—as far as the texts are concerned—on that period and on how the Visigoths’ presence was then perceived; whether they could be distinguished from other inhabitants of *Hispania*, whether assimilation of one group by the other took place—and to what

⁶ “Gothic, Castilian and Austrian Crown”. See R. Menéndez Pidal, *Los godos y la epopeya española. “Chansons de geste” y baladas nórdicas* (2nd edn., Madrid 1969), here pp. 30–1.

extent and how this was achieved. The crucial issue is, most of all, whether the information those sources supply reflect real events or whether, on the contrary, they convey each chronicler's perception of his or her personal reality. Did their writings exert any influence on political developments or on the denouement of events? Did their particular interpretation of facts, objective or otherwise, serve to alter situations? And, most importantly, can we know with a reasonable degree of certainty what they mean when they employ terms such as *gens*, *regnum*, *patria*, *reges*; is what they describe what really happened or what they wanted to have happened?

From this premise, which stems from a more philological than historical approach but which through reading and interpreting the sources inevitably leads, nonetheless, to tackling the historical and even political issues required by the topic, I believe that I address one of the problems highlighted by H.-W. Goetz in his Introduction. It is an issue that I regard as fundamental, that is the issue of sources, not only because they are written in Latin (and Greek), from the Roman standpoint, but also because "this is not only a question of criticism of our sources", but of the need to take into account contemporary authors' perception of events.

Indeed, it is not simply a question of philological criticism of the sources but of something more fundamental because, without an analysis of both the form and content of the sources, treating each text in relation to others, it is not possible to interpret accurately the reality they convey. Moreover, the literary genres and type of documentation to which they belong must also be taken into consideration. Council Proceedings and legislation, especially the *Liber Iudicum* or *Lex Visigothorum* for the period we are studying, are texts of a legislative nature written in juridical language, in many cases with a long Roman tradition and using technical terms that are already standardised, but showing the evolution of some terms that reflect the contemporary reality about which they are legislating. On occasions, also, some were penned by the author himself, as we will see in the case of the Council of Toledo, or they were written following the models and literary references found in the great Christian authors such as Augustine, Jerome and Gregory the Great and included biblical quotations. These circumstances make these sources unique, both due to the way they were written and the particular language and specific terms used.

Turning to the authors of the chronicles⁷—without doubt the other fundamental evidence for the period—, one must take into account the fact that *Chronicae* such as those by John of Biclar or Isidore of Seville are also part of a long tradition of Christian literature to which they are indebted, a debt that is explicitly acknowledged by John of Biclar. The chroniclers situated themselves within this tradition with the aim of continuing universal history up until their own times, although contemporary reality and their own personal interests and circumstances led to the development of a new type of history which focussed in practice on *Hispania* and her kings and crystallised in works such as Isidore of Seville's *Historia Gothorum* (or *De origine Gothorum*, the title given to it by Braulius of Saragossa) which because of its content and ideology has been categorised as “national (or nationalist) history”.⁸ This work is itself linked to several *Historiae* on the origins and history of the Gothic peoples that appeared in late antiquity which shifted attention, by different means, away from the history of the Roman Empire, starting with the *Getica* of Jordanes, Cassiodorus' *Historia Gothorum* (*De origine actibusque Getarum*), Gregory of Tours' *Historiae* or the later *Historia Langobardorum* of Paul the Deacon. Thus we find a work such as Julian of Toledo's *Liber historiae Wambae* devoted entirely to this king's rule and, in particular, to his victory over the *tyrannus Paulus*, to which was added a *Iudicium* and an *Insultatio in tyrannidem Galliae*, in which the concept of the literary genre has changed significantly. Together with this

⁷ For overviews of the works on *Hispania*: M.C. Díaz y Díaz, “Scrittori della Penisola Iberica”, *Dal Concilio di Calcedonia (451) a Beda. I Padri Latini*, ed. A. Di Berardino, Patrologia 4 (Genova 1996) pp. 61–118, and U. Domínguez del Val, *Historia de la antigua literatura latina hispano-cristiana*, 4 vols. (Madrid 1998); J.N. Hillgarth, “Historiography in Visigothic Spain”, *La storiografia altomedievale*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 17 (Spoleto 1970) pp. 261–311.

⁸ M. Reydellet, “Les intentions idéologiques et politiques dans la Chronique d'Isidore de Seville”, *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* 82 (1970) pp. 363–400, here p. 363; J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Seville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique* (Paris 1959) pp. 816–7 and 867–8; id., “Conversion et culture chez les Wisigoths d'Espagne”, *La conversione al cristianesimo nell'Europa dell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 14 (1967) pp. 87–147, here pp. 117–8; S. Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique. Les origines de l'idée de nation en Occident du V^e au VII^e siècle* (Paris 1984) p. 463. Against, Hillgarth, “Historiography in Visigothic Spain”, pp. 298–9. For the edition of the work cf. C. Rodríguez Alonso in Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum*, ed. C. Rodríguez Alonso [*Las historias de los godos, vándalos y suevos de Isidoro de Sevilla. Estudio, edición crítica y traducción*] (León 1975) [henceforth: *Hist. Goth.*].

type of works, the biographical genre is exemplified by Isidore of Seville's *De viris illustribus* and, later, by a work with the same title by Ildefonsus of Toledo which, emulating Jerome and Gennadius' models, replaced ancient pagan biography with catalogues of men who achieved eminence by virtue of their faith or their role in the history of the Church, to the point where political aims or historical circumstances rather than edifying goals or literary influences dictate the selection criteria of the *virii illustres* included.⁹

In the case of many of these authors, one must also consider the relationship between the persona of the writer and the character of his work. These authors were powerful both culturally and politically, almost all of them members of the highest echelons of the Church hierarchy; bishops and often prior to this abbots of monasteries. They all represent the period's intellectual class; they epitomise cultural circles, at least those of the cultivated minority.¹⁰ They intervene directly as well in politics and many of their names are linked to those of rulers: Leander of Seville to Liuvigild and his sons Hermenegild and Reccared, Isidore of Seville to Gundemar, Sisebut, Swinthila and Sisenand, Eugenius of Toledo and Braulius of Saragossa to Chindaswinth and Recceswinth, Julian of Toledo to Wamba.¹¹ In their capacity as high clergy of the Church, they participate personally in the councils and in the drawing-up of some of the most important canons, where political affairs are settled together with the definition of concepts of growing significance that are gradually acquiring a theoretical formulation, such as *gens*, *patria* and *regnum*. As has

⁹ Among other things, his defence of Toledo's preeminence as metropolitan seat and *urbs regia* and focus of his interest. See J. Fontaine, "El *de viris illustribus* de Ildefonso de Toledo: tradición y originalidad", *Anales Toledanos* 3 (1971) pp. 59–96; Ildefonsus de Toledo, *De viris illustribus*, ed. C. Codoñer [El "*de viris illustribus*" de Ildefonso de Toledo. *Estudio y edición crítica*] (Salamanca 1972). On Toledo, I. Velázquez and G. Ripoll, "Toletum, la construcción de una *urbs regia*", *Sedes regiae (ann. 400–800)*, ed. G. Ripoll and J.M. Gurt with A. Chavarría (Barcelona 2000) pp. 521–78.

¹⁰ See Fontaine, *Isidore de Seville et la culture classique*; id., *Culture et spiritualité en Espagne du VI^e au VII^e siècle* (London 1986); M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *De Isidoro al siglo XI. Ocho estudios sobre la vida literaria peninsular* (Barcelona 1976), here pp. 57–86 and pp. 89–115; C. Codoñer, "Literatura hispano-latina tardía", *Unidad y pluralidad en el mundo antiguo. Actas VI Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos* 1 (Madrid 1983) pp. 435–65; id., "La literatura", *Historia de España de Ramón Menéndez Pidal*, Part 3,2: *España visigoda* (Madrid 1991) pp. 209–67; I. Velázquez, "Ámbitos y ambientes culturales en la Hispania visigoda. De Martín de Braga a Isidoro de Sevilla", *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 46 (1994) pp. 328–51.

¹¹ Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, p. 543.

been pointed out, their influence is felt even in the writing of the 7th century's legislative work, the *Liber Iudicum*, for it is true that there is mutual influence between Church and monarchy; there is a certain degree of coexistence between both, a search for a power balance, sometimes tipping in one or the other's favour. Both powers coexist, however, and they restrain one another; the sources indicate this in different ways and they must be interpreted according to the information that the former provide and the manner in which it is conveyed.¹²

One must take into account, likewise, how the text has been put together¹³ and, when it entails writing about the past, how these authors judge and report the origins of the Goths; how, from their own reality, they create a history of former times for which they do not possess scientific knowledge in disciplines such as anthropology, ethnicity and so on, nor, on occasions, detailed information about historical events or enough knowledge about the history of languages and customs, relying instead on data inherited from Greek and Latin Antiquity, which they garner, interpret and recreate in the light of their religious beliefs both concerning the genesis of the world and its different eras and the evaluation of the canons and cultural models of the past, and in the light of their clear and undisputed pastoral and educational vocation. They aim to write histories of times and places both recent and further away that are expressed in a credible way, that convey in the present a plausible image of what the past must have been like.

Besides, as H.-W. Goetz recalls in his Introduction, it is well known that our vision of that world is the product of authors belonging to the Greek and Roman worlds. It is only from that perspective, therefore, that we can approach the period. Not only from the sources "written in Latin", although the author may have originated from a different milieu as was the case with John of Biclar—of whom Isidore of Seville remarks that he was a Goth¹⁴—, but above all,

¹² Some discussion of this point in I. Velázquez, "Impronta religiosa en el desarrollo jurídico de la *Hispania visigoda*", *Ilu. Revista de ciencias de las religiones* 2 (1999) pp. 97–121.

¹³ For remarks on what follows cf. Pohl, *Origini etniche*, pp. 16–38.

¹⁴ Isidore of Seville, *De viris illustribus* 31, ed. C. Codoñer Merino (Salamanca 1964) [henceforth: Isidore, *De vir. ill.*]; *Iohannes Gerundensis ecclesiae episcopus, natione Gothus, provinciae Lusitaniae Scallabi natus.*

from the perspective of Christian sources, so that the “social memory” of the past, ethnic identity, the categorisation of *gentes* and *populi*, the nomenclature of *duces* and *reges*—especially in the earlier periods—are all formulated in Latin or Greek and from the perspective—and with a deliberate uplifting purpose—that the synthesis of peoples is only possible at a spiritual level¹⁵ and that it is the universal Catholic faith that makes peoples equal.

Last but not least, is the significance of the vocabulary employed by the texts. We must try to determine the scope of those terms whose meaning in one or several contexts can often be ambiguous or different from one author to another, exhibiting some nuances or non-exclusive usages. It is useful to consider the implication of language and reality and how one serves the other or how the one can be shaped by the interests of the other.

The gens Gothorum and the other gentes at the 3rd Council of Toledo

The expression *gens Gothorum* in the 3rd Council of Toledo designates, according to Teillet,¹⁶ a community born out of religious conversion, or in other words, from religious unity and thus refers both to Hispano-Romans and Goths under a single name, *Gothi*. This idea, which Teillet reiterates in her work, seems to me one of the most disputable or susceptible to scrutiny. I believe, on the contrary, that *gens Gothorum* represents here a human group which, led by their king, has converted to Catholicism. The Council is convened by royal mandate so that the bishops under his rule (*regiminis sui*) can express their joy towards their and their people’s conversion.¹⁷ With

¹⁵ Pohl, *Origini etniche*, p. 27.

¹⁶ Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, p. 450. I must point out that I will specifically refer to this book on occasions as it deals in detail with the main topic of the Bellagio meeting and, of course, in particular with that concerning the Goths.

¹⁷ III Toledo, p. 50, 10–11: *Ut tam de eius conversione quam de gentis Gothorum innovatione in Domino exultarent*. Until the 10th Council of Toledo I follow the edition by G. Martínez Díez and F. Rodríguez, *La Colección Canónica Hispana*, 5 vols. (Madrid 1966–92), here vol. 5: *Concilios hispanos: segunda parte* (Madrid 1992). Quotations will be provided with no. of council, canon (= c.) if appropriate, and no. of page and lines. For other councils besides these, the edition by J. Vives, *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* (Barcelona-Madrid 1963). On the history and explanation of contents: J. Orlandis and D. Ramos-Lissón, *Historia de los Concilios de la España romana y visigoda* (Pamplona 1986).

the exception of this and other preliminary remarks¹⁸ reference to a *gens Gothorum* appears only in the king's various interventions. In his words, this expression seems always to refer to his people, who have abjured with him the Arian faith. At the Council, the people are represented by the king, the Gothic church hierarchy, bishops and priests and the nobles among the *gens: primorum Gothicae gentis*, who sign the *fidei professio*. These groups represent the conversion of the entire Gothic people, to whom their king refers to as *gens inclita* (the same expression is used by Leander of Seville in his *homilia*) *et fere omnium gentium genuina virilitate opinata*, that is to say, known among all the other peoples by their courage, a stereotype, found in contemporary literature that traces back the origins of one of their main to time immemorial.¹⁹

The expression *gens Gothorum*, likewise, is emphasised with respect to another specific *gens*: the *gens Suevorum*, that is another human community that inhabits the *Gallaecia* and has been conquered by the Visigoths. Their presence in the *Acta* of the Council is the result of Reccared's belief that the Sueves' conversion to Catholicism is also his accomplishment.²⁰ Perhaps, Reccared intends to highlight here his recent conquest of that territory and the submission of the people who previously ruled them. This was his father's, Liuvigild's, work, however, not his.²¹ Reccared, on the contrary, does refer to

¹⁸ See further on, those introduced by the words of the Catholic or Gothic bishops. And in the "rúbrica" preceding the *professio fidei*, incorporated into the Proceedings at a later stage. On the problematic of the "rúbricas" or summaries heading several parts of the councils and canons, see Martínez Díez and Rodríguez in *La Colección Canónica Hispana*, vol. 1, pp. 249–54; vol. 3, pp. 11–2, and vol. 5, pp. 16–7.

¹⁹ It was still a "cliché" nonetheless, adopted by the sources from Tacitus' *Germania* and later Jordanes' *Getica* and other works, to allude to the strength, vigour, even ferocity of the Germanic peoples. H. Messmer, *Hispania-Idee und Göttermythos* (Zürich 1960). We will see it even more exaggerated in Isidore of Seville's *Historia Gothorum*, in particular in the final *Recapitulatio*.

²⁰ III Toledo, p. 58,98–101: *Nec enim sola Gotorum conversio ad cumulum nostrae mercedis accessit, quin immo et Suevorum gentis infinita multitudo, quam praesidio caelesti nostro regno subiecimus*. When, apparently, it was like that from the time of Teodomir and, according to Isidore of Seville, due to the pastoral work undertaken by Martin of Braga, see *Hist. Goth.* 91 and *De vir. ill.* 22.

²¹ *Hist. Goth.* 49 and 91; John of Biclar, *Chronica* 585,2, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 11 (Berlin 1894). That does not mean that, in this particular case, Reccared did not regard *gens Suevorum* as the native Sueves but, probably, all the inhabitants of the *Gallaecia*. As we will see later, the "ethnic" origin of the peoples, or rather the racial differences and those based on custom, language and other traits giving shape to a *gens*, must have been somewhat ambiguous and vague at the time. For

other *gentes* in the royal *Tomus*: when he points out that God has placed the burden of the kingdom upon him so that he can ensure the welfare and prosperity of the peoples under his rule (III Toledo, p. 54,51–53 and 56–59): *Quamvis Deus omnipotens pro utilitatibus popu-
lorum regni nos culmen sumire tribuerit et moderamen gentium non paucarum
regiae nostrae curae commiserit [. . .].* Reccared is aware that the higher his royal dignity over his “subjects”, the higher his responsibility to safeguard the welfare of the peoples God has entrusted to him: [. . .] *quanto subditorum gloria regali extollimur, tanto providi esse debemus in his
quae ad Deum sunt, vel nostram spem augere vel gentibus a Deo nobis creditis
consulere.*

These words clearly show the king’s political project. The definition of the *regnum Gothorum*²² under his rule does include all the communities and peoples (*populi et gentes*)²³ inhabiting *Hispania* (and *Gallia Narbonensis*). His rule, which Reccared and his predecessors achieved through settlement and conquest, is thus legitimised and turned into a divine mandate by his uprooting of the Arian heresy and conversion to Catholicism. This is his political programme and this is what he intends to achieve. It is also the wish of the Catholic church, as Leander of Seville’s homily shows at the conclusion of the council, when all the royal interventions are over. A vibrant, emotional and perfect piece of oratory that can be described as lyrical meditation, overflowing with joy in face of the people’s faith (*de eorum nunc gaudeamus credulitate*) and referring to the conversion of the new communities as a significant gain (*lucrum*) for the Church.²⁴ The term *gens*

Reccared, who is not the instigator of this conversion, what matters is that this region of *Hispania* is under his control and authority and that her kings, in their case of Suevic extraction, no longer rule there. Both Reccared’s—and earlier his father Liuvigild’s—perception must have been the conquest of an entire territory with all its *gentes* where the *regnum Suevorum* had been previously established.

²² In the restricted sense of the definition found in Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae* 9,3,1, ed. J. Oroz Reta and M.A. Marcos Casquero (Madrid 1982) [henceforth: *Etym.*]: *Regnum a regibus dictum. Nam sicut reges a regendo vocati, ita regnum a regibus.*

²³ Akin also to the classical definitions of *gens* and *populus* later formulated by Isidore, including the difference between this term and *plebs*: *Etym.* 9,2,1: *Gens est multitudo ab uno principio orta, sive ab alia natione secundum propriam collectionem distincta [. . .] Gentes autem appellata propter generationes familiarum, id est a gignendo, sicut natio a nascendo;* *ibid.* 9,4,5: *Populus est humanae multitudinis coetus, iuris consensu et concordia communi-
one sociatus. Populus autem eo distat a plebibus, quod populus universi cives sunt, conu-
meratis senioribus civitatis.*

²⁴ J. Fontaine, “La homilía de San Leandro ante el III Concilio de Toledo: Temática y forma”, *Actas del XIV Centenario del Concilio III de Toledo, 589–1989* (Toledo

appears several times in this Homily, although never associated with the *Gothi*, to refer to the several peoples united in the faith—sometimes also called *populi*—resorting to biblical quotations that do not identify any specific peoples (although they make indirect reference). This is so because the *ordo naturalis* requires all men, who stem from a single creature (*ex uno homine trahunt originem*), to love each other. The whole Council calls for rejoicing because Christ has united all peoples in a single church (*Domus mea domus orationis vocabitur omnibus gentibus*). At the end of the homily Leander expresses a *desideratum*, his own dream of witnessing with his own eyes that spiritual union in the earthly kingdom (III Toledo, p. 159,253–257):

Superest autem ut unanimiter unum omnes regnum effecti tam pro stabilitate regni terreni quam felicitate regni caelestis Deum precibus adeamus, ut regnum et gens, quae Christus glorificavit in terris, glorificetur ab illum non solum in terris, sed etiam in caelis. Amen.

But the king's political project and the Church's desire do not attain unanimity at the Council. It can be said that both Reccared and Leander's interventions are polarised towards their respective interests. The bishop of Seville constantly evokes the unity of the faith and joy at the recent conversion of the peoples whose roughness he had very recently lamented (*quorum asperitate quondam gemebamus*). He expresses, as well, his desire for the union of all peoples on earth, as we have seen. Reccared, on his part, presents himself as a true *imperator*, now, as well as *rex*, he will be known by the imperial title of *princeps* (as will all his successors)²⁵ and will put his signature to the Proceedings of the Council using the name of *Flavius Reccaredus rex*. His own conception of royal power is clearly enunciated. If he is not the author of his own speeches, at least they must have been written by someone very close to him and under his supervision. I do not believe though, as has sometimes been claimed, that they

1991) pp. 249–70. An insightful analysis of Leander's Homily compared to King Reccared's and some bishops' interventions at the 3rd Council, based on study of the different linguistic expressions, can be found in J. Mellado, "Veladas discrepancias y pugna por el poder en el III Concilio de Toledo", *Boletín de la Real Academia de Córdoba* 141 (2001) (forthcoming).

²⁵ During the Council described as *gloriosissimus fidelissimus princeps, piissimus, fidelissimus rex, catholicus, orthodoxus, gloriosissimus dominus noster*, apart from *vestra sanctitas, vestra beatitudo*. See M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "Titulaciones regias en la monarquía visigoda", *Revista Portuguesa de Historia* 16 (1978) pp. 133–41; id., "Más sobre epítetos regios en la Hispania visigótica", *Studi medievali* 19 (1978) pp. 318–33.

were written by Leander.²⁶ Although some of Gregory the Great's ideas about royalty may have reached Reccared via Leander, they had no direct influence on the king nor is Leander behind the monarch's words. He is the *rex Gothorum* who now exerts his rule over *Hispania*, *Gallia* and *Gallaecia* and he makes public profession of faith together with his very noble *gens*,²⁷ represented by the nobility and the bishops and clergy before the hierarchy of the Hispano-Roman Catholic church. He leaves no doubt though that he himself has achieved this religious conversion and that it is he who rules over all the peoples and subjects within his *regnum*. As Díaz y Díaz remarks, the king commands the assembly. With a surprising turn of phrase (*non incognitum reor esse vobis*), he starts by saying that he thinks the bishops are aware that they have been convened by the Council to re-establish ecclesiastical discipline (*ordo canonicus*) and he warns them, albeit curtly, by means of the expression *admoneo pariter et exhorto*, to busy themselves with this task now that his uprooting of heresy has made it possible. "The king seems unwilling to tolerate the idea that the bishops claim as their own achievement the final liquidation of Arianism" among the Goths.

But the *gens Gothorum*, to which the king belongs, does not lump together Goths and Hispano-Romans. In Reccared's words, they are clearly distinguished from each other. In fact two expressions that seem to be set against each other encapsulate the ultimate purpose of the Council. The Goths, protagonists of the conversion, of whom it is said that they are *ex haerese Ariana conversos*, are counterposed to the Catholic bishops (Hispano-Roman on the whole, although there may have been some of Gothic extraction, such as Masona): *Unus episcoporum catholicorum ad episcopos et religiosos vel maiores natu ex haerese Ariana conversos eiusmodi allocutiae exorsus est dicens [. . .]*.

Church and Gothic nobility are explicitly mentioned in relation to their professions of faith:

III Toledo, p. 180,330–331: *Tunc episcopi omnes una cum clericis suis primoresque gentis Goticae pari consensione dixerunt [. . .]*.

²⁶ On the royal interventions, M.C. Díaz y Díaz's analysis is decisive ("Los discursos del rey Recaredo: El *Tomus*", *Actas del XIV Centenario del Concilio III de Toledo, 589–1989* [Toledo 1991] pp. 223–36).

²⁷ To which he adds the Sueses; he uses *has nobilissimas gentes* to refer to both, although the latter will no longer have any kind of specific representation.

III Toledo, p. 202,593–594: *Post confessionem igitur et subscriptionem omnium episcoporum et totius gentis Goticae seniorum [. . .]*.²⁸

One can raise the objection that the *Hispani* or *Romani* are not mentioned, something that might have been expected,²⁹ in contrast with the *Gothi* or *Suevi*, but the context³⁰ is exclusively that of the conversion of the last two peoples, in which the Hispano-Romans played no role and where the opposing terms are *catholicus* and *Arianus*. We have seen, however, that the term *gens Gothorum* is stressed in contrast to other *gentes* in king Reccared's interventions.³¹

Hispania, however, does appear on numerous occasions, mostly in its singular form, rather than the designation inherited from Roman antiquity, *provincia* (later *dioecesis*) *Hispaniarum*. Once again, Teillet emphasises this use of the singular, both in these Council proceedings and in John of Biclar's *Chronica* to refer to the territorial unity of the *regnum*.³² Its use, however, is neither systematic—it appears in the plural three times—nor exclusive. We must recall that at the Council bishops *ab totius Hispaniae vel Gallia* have gathered. It is obvious that *totius Hispaniae* refers to the whole Peninsula. What should it be called, however, if, on the one hand, that was its former name and, on the other, the political and administrative situation that justified its use in the plural had changed? I do not mean that an awareness of territorial unity did not exist, besides being geographically undeniable, but that we must not overstate the use of the singular *Hispania* as indicative of, or as a proof of, such unity.³³ On the

²⁸ The latter are Reccared's own words. *Omnium* refers here to all and each of the members of the Arian Church (as in the above quotation), whereas *totius* implies all the members of the *gens* of the Goths, represented by their *primores*.

²⁹ *Romanus* is the term used to designate the Hispano-Romans and, earlier, the Gallo-Romans, in the *Leges Visigothorum*. On the other hand, this term has undergone a change concerning the reality that designated historically as, in this period, an author such as John of Biclar will use it to name Byzantine soldiers, from the Eastern Roman Empire, enemies at the same time (*militēs, hostes*). Besides, *Hispani* (the ancient *Iberi*, according to Isidore) would not include all the *gentes* of *Hispania*, populated by diverse other *gentes*, as this author indicates: *Etyim.* 9,2,107–114.

³⁰ That is, the verbal context and the extralinguistic context.

³¹ Which remain, on the contrary, deliberately undifferentiated in Leander's homily.

³² Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, p. 451, although drawing attention to the fact that the use was already well known by other authors such as Jordanes, *Getica* 44,229, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 5,1 (Berlin 1882): *universa Hispania*; 44,230: *tota Hispania*; 32,166: *in suis finibus, id est Hispaniae solo*, quoted by Teillet in p. 326.

³³ In fact, this argument concerning the use of the singular, attaching to it more importance than may be justified, is countered by the uses in the plural in later texts, such as the 4th Council of Toledo.

other hand, allusions to *Gallaecia* and *Gallia* as two distinct parts of *Hispania*³⁴ continue to be made; the first had been recently incorporated into the *regnum* whereas the second had been part of that *regnum* since the beginning, although belonging to a somewhat different geographical environment and to a territory with a different history. Nonetheless, it is not clear whether the expression *totius Hispaniae* designates an entity that replaces, or is equivalent to, the plural *Hispaniae*, in the sense of incorporating the diversity of areas, provinces and subdivisions of which the concept already existed, or a usage adopted by earlier literary sources or, even, of an attempt to reaffirm a territorial unity³⁵ that had not in fact been achieved, due to the inconvenient fact of the Byzantine presence on the south-east coast of the peninsula and in some key towns.³⁶

It is obvious—it already seemed so much earlier and it was, furthermore, one of Liuvigild's clear political decisions—that the goal was territorial unity, which would be achieved only after the expulsion of the Byzantines by Swinthila in 625. But the fact that the expression used is *Hispania* (in the singular or the plural) at the 3rd Council of Toledo does not mean that *gens Gothorum* refers to all its inhabitants, that is, to the *Hispani*, as well as the *Gothi*. It also seems clear that it is the *gens Gothorum*, or at least their nobility, who have become the ruling class in *Hispania*. Although the constituent elements of power are not yet clearly defined, as they were to be at the 4th Council of Toledo, as we shall see, these groups take the leading role in the 3rd Council's solemn ceremony: the king, the nobility and the clergy. With “almost complete” territorial unity achieved by Liuvigild, and religious unity secured by Reccared—the

³⁴ And, in my opinion, maintained some idiosyncracies for a long time, especially *Gallaecia*, at least from the ecclesiastical point of view. Also, the feeling of being an “appendix” of *Hispania* experienced by some sectors of *Gallia Narbonensis*, which, as J. Fontaine explains (*Isidore de Seville. Genèse*, p. 371), leads an author like Isidore of Seville not to devote much attention to it and treat it as one of *Hispania*'s borders, always threatened by the Franks, can be behind the frequent revolts and usurpation attempts—even segregation—which broke out in this area from this period, and culminated in Paulus' rebellion against Wamba.

³⁵ See John of Biclar, *Chronica* 372,2 (after Liuva's demise): *Hispania omnis Galliaque Narbonensis in regno et potestate Liuvigildi*.

³⁶ On this see, in general, M. Vallejo Girvés, *Bizancio y la España tardoantigua (ss. V–VIII): Un capítulo de historia mediterránea* (Alcalá de Henares 1993). Specifically, G. Ripoll, “Acerca de la supuesta frontera entre el *regnum Visigothorum* y la *Hispania bizantina*”, *Pyrenae* 27 (1996) pp. 251–67.

latter a precondition for the levelling-out of the differences between the *populi* (and *gentes*) dwelling in the *regnum*—the foundations are being laid of a new society, or, if you wish, of a new *natio*.

A writer's perspective: John of Biclar

It is the writers, in their capacity as intellectuals and leading members of the Church, and of the nobility, who contribute decisively to define and present a new image of that new society and, most probably, also to build it. John of Biclar's *Chronica*—of which Teillet rightly says that it must be read in the light of the Proceedings of the 3rd Council of Toledo—presents an accurate image of that new society and one can detect in the work the basis of the mentality that is being forged. Although I believe that here, as in the aforementioned Council, *gens Gothica* (or *Gothorum*) cannot be identified with the totality of the *Gothi* and *Hispani* or, for that matter, that *provincia Gothorum*³⁷—i.e. the territory under their rule—can be equated with Spain “in the modern and almost national sense of the word”.³⁸

The *Chronica* is written, at first sight, as a sequel to that of Victor of Tunnuna (*Huc usque Victor Tunnunensis [. . .] nos quae consecuta sunt adicere curavimus*) and is characteristic in form and content-based of the genre of universal and Christian history,³⁹ but follows a unique dating system based on the years of emperors' reigns and, starting with the third heading, with the equivalent Gothic regnal year using the formula: *anno IV Iustini Imp. Qui est Liuvigildi regis secundus annus*. The focus of attention is, however, the Goths' conversion to Catholicism

³⁷ This expression is used in John of Biclar, *Chronica* 569,4, when talking for the first time about Liuvigild to highlight that he succeeded in taking it back to its original limits, previously reduced due to revolts: *quae iam pro rebellione diversorum fuerat diminuta, mirabiliter ad pristinos terminos revocat*. The term *provincia* designates some *terrae*, of very different sizes and history in each case: *Hispania, Gallia, Italia*, but also *Sabaria, Cantabria, Orospea*, etc. See J. Campos, *Juan de Biclar. Obispo de Gerona, su vida y su obra* (Madrid 1960) p. 158.

³⁸ Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, p. 440. It seems to me that this sense is a bit “stretched” and, most of all, in contradiction with what is stated immediately after: “On condition of bearing always in mind that the ‘province of the Goths’ is that of the king of the Goths and his *regnum*, the idea of nation is inextricably linked to that of *regnum*”. But that is precisely the question; what prevails is the idea of territory dominated by the *rex* and his *gens*.

³⁹ Hillgarth, “Historiography in Visigothic Spain”; Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, pp. 421–49.

as well as the celebration of the Council. One must bear in mind that it was written shortly afterwards, around 590/91, but at a time when the early effects of such a gathering were already being felt.⁴⁰

The passage *Chron.* 587,5 notes, as can be inferred from Reccared's intervention at the Council, that the process of conversion was already under way or completed, thanks to the king, during his first year on the throne: *sacerdotes sectae Arianae sapienti colloquio aggressus ratione potius quam imperio converti ad catholicam fidem facit gentemque omnium Gothorum et Suevorum ad unitatem et pacem revocat Christianae ecclesiae*. The expressions *sapienti colloquio* and *ratione potius quam imperio* show the phase of deliberation and negotiation and of the theological debates that must have taken place between Arians and Catholics culminating in the official event of 589:⁴¹ debates that were already under way during Liuvigild's rule, such as those described in *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium* between Masona and Sunna, part of a policy of religious unification under the Arian faith carried out, albeit unsuccessfully, by Liuvigild.⁴² Here the achievement of having converted the Sueves to Catholicism is attributed to Reccared.

The long passage devoted to the 3rd Council of Toledo—much longer than would be expected in a work of this kind—and the news about the Visigoths reveal that the author's genuine interest, without neglecting his aim of writing a Christian universal chronicle, is to chronicle the reign of Liuvigild, the monarch who has ensured territorial unity⁴³ or helped the *provincia Gothorum* consolidate its sizeable domains, as well as that of Reccared, whose main accomplishment has been the religious unification of the kingdom that reaches its zenith in the Council. Although the work starts by relating the events of Justin's reign, the amount of information about the Visigoths gradually increases. Moreover, the first time they are mentioned is in the context of Liuvigild's rule, when Athanagild's death in *Hispania* and Liuva's accession to the throne (*Chron.* 568,3) are recorded; the second reference is linked to this; Liuva involves his brother Liuvigild

⁴⁰ Actually, the last point of the chronicle records Argimundo's seditious attempt.

⁴¹ Note, however, the term *revocat* to describe the peoples, led with a clear sense of mandate (*imperium*).

⁴² John of Biclar, *Chronica* 580,2; *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeritensium* 5,5,7–9, ed. A. Maya Sánchez, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 116 (Turnhout 1992).

⁴³ As indicated earlier, not yet achieved due to the Byzantine occupation; but this fact is played down or, rather, avoided because the work states that Liuvigild completely defeats them.

in the running of the kingdom and the latter, on his part, marries Athanagild's widow and undertakes his first conquests, re-establishing the original boundaries of the vanquished territory. The work is, therefore, the product of his period and his personal circumstances. The author intends to pursue the literary model set by the chronicles, but his work resembles a *Historia Gothorum*, in this case of these two kings. It is not simply a matter of the Empire's no longer being the centre of the world, nor that it is considered a *regnum* along with other *regna*⁴⁴—in fact an enemy due to its presence in the Peninsula—but that now the local, living history that the author wishes to recount is that of the Hispanic community, of the *regnum Gothorum* to which the author belongs, not just as a mere native but also as a member of the Gothic nobility and prominent member of the Catholic church.

It seems likely to me that this work could have been written at the request, explicit or otherwise, of Reccared himself. Who was in a better position than the author from Biclár to relate the deeds of his king and his father? In fact, his vision of Liuvigild is so positive that not even the terms in which he describes Liuvigild's attempt to convert Catholics to Arianism are excessively harsh: *novello errore, seductionem*, a seduction to which many Catholics (*plurimi nostrorum*, the only personal reference) succumb. Nothing is said, however, on his personal exile or that suffered by others who, like him, refused to become Arians.

John of Biclár shows Reccared as a new Constantine or Marcianus, whose merits he surpasses in achieving the uprooting of heresy, and he compares the Council of Toledo to those of Nicae and Chalcedon; he even places it before them. It is this religious unity that underlies the definition of the *gens Gothorum*, but it runs in parallel with a designation that stresses ethnic origin, linked to the past and the origins of that people which expresses, in my view, an awareness of belonging to the same group and of being part of the ruling class. One might think that the author—let us not forget his Gothic

⁴⁴ Perhaps, the dating system maintains the subordination of dates through *quid est* just to record the initial aim of writing a universal history with such subordination not being actually conceptual. Note the strange formulation of 583: *anno ergo I Mauricii imperatoris, Liuvigildi regis XV annus*, and in particular of 587, with a restriction to the *princeps* and the mention of *feliciter* in the second sentence: *anno V Mauricii principis Romanorum qui est Reccaredi regis primus feliciter annus*.

origins—when speaking about *gens Gothica*, is referring to all the inhabitants of *Hispania* (more properly, of the areas under the rule of the Goths: *Hispania, Gallia et Gallaecia*), basically *Gothi* and *Hispani*, as Teillet claims. It seems to me, however, that, as in the *Acta* of the Council, it refers only to the group that was under consideration at that moment, in contradistinction to the *Hispani*. Only secondarily and in their capacity as inhabitants and subjects of the territories and of the king could they be thought of as such. Perhaps the expression *gentemque omnium Gothorum et Suevorum ad unitatem et pacem revocat christianae ecclesiae* suggests indirectly that the union of all the community is in the mind—and the wishes—of John of Bictar.⁴⁵ Comparisons with other usages of *gens* or with other expressions found in the work do not make it possible, however, to state this categorically. The same happens in the case of the singular use of *Hispania* as I have previously argued.

On one hand, the *gens Gothorum* (or *Gothica*) is mentioned, as in the Council, as the people who, together with the *gens Suevorum*, leads Reccared to Catholicism. This excludes the *Hispani*.⁴⁶ On the other, many other communities are mentioned which could comprise population groups, such as the Langobards or Franks, but the passages where the latter are referred to appear in a context of war. This involves talking about armies made up of, or at least led by, members of those *gentes*; on occasions, even troops belonging to the imperial army with no identification whatsoever with elements of the latter, as in *Chron.* 575: *Iustinianus [. . .] habens secum gentes fortissimas quae barbaro sermone Herinan nuncupatur*. Or, as in the case of the *gens Suanorum*, reference is made to their *rex*, captured alive by the Romans, together with his treasure and children and taken to Constantinople, thus turning this province (with all its inhabitants, of course) into a Roman dominion; the *Suevi* are shown in a similar light when Liuvigild subdues them.

But it is actually this passage dealing with the Sueves where we can find one of the key elements of the work, which anticipates the

⁴⁵ As I have previously commented, I also regard it as artificial to draw from *omnium* an attempt to reflect the entire population, as well as *tota Hispania*. In the first case, note also the use of *omnis* with *sacerdotes* in the passage of John of Bictar, *Chronica* 590,1: *Reccaredum ordinem conversionis suae et omnium sacerdotum vel gentis Gothicae professionem tomo scriptam manu sua episcopis corrigens [. . .] decrevit*.

⁴⁶ Consider, though, the various nuances I have used in the discussion.

formulation of the 4th Council of Toledo that we will study later: *Audeca regno privat Suevorum gentem, thesaurum et patriam in suam redigit potestatem et Gothorum provinciam facit*. The bases of the power of the new state are established here: *rex, gens et patria*.⁴⁷ Here *patria* seems to refer to the territory where one dwells, where one comes from, but also to all the territory, which is ruled and constitutes the *regnum*. When Liuvigild establishes his authority over this territory, it includes all its inhabitants, but I do not believe that the *gens Suevorum* deliberately includes the *Gallaeci*, except as a consequence of the mere and indisputable presence of this group within the area the king now turns into the *Gothorum provincia*. We can not dispute the fact, nonetheless, that this formulation can lead to identifying the population as a whole as *Gothi*, as Teillet claims,⁴⁸ however inchoate this process might be. There are some indirect references in the work, however, to these population groups from *Hispania*, always linked to the resistance and struggle against Liuvigild's conquest, a fact that must be borne in mind. Thus, when speaking about Cordoba (*Chron.* 572,2), he indicates that, once the enemies (*caesis hostibus*), that is the Byzantines, have been vanquished, *multasque urbes et castella interfecta rusticorum multitudine in Gothorum dominium revocat*. Of the "province" of Orospeida and its *civitates* and *castella*, he comments (*Chron.* 577,2) that: *non multo post inibi rustici rebellantes a Gothis opprimuntur*. And when he points out that Liuvigild has managed to quell all the attempted usurpations of his throne and to defeat Spain's enemies (*Chron.* 578,4: *pervasoribus Hispaniae superatis*), I do not think that this refers exclusively to the Byzantines (= *Romani*), but non-specifically to any group that has rebelled against him such as for instance in *Chron.* 574,2: *Cantabria provinciae pervasores interfecit*. It is even said that Liuvigild seeks tranquillity among the people and founds Reccopolis, a town to whose inhabitants he grants special privileges (*Chron.* 578,4): *requiem propriam cum plebe resedit, civitatem [. . .] condidit quae Recopolis nuncupatur [. . .] privilegia populo novae urbis instituit*. These uses, scarce and unclear, of

⁴⁷ And also the treasure, clear symbol of the monarchy which has also been mentioned when tackling the Sueves.

⁴⁸ Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, p. 436, by virtue of a process according to which in all the countries the new nation is made up mostly of natives but, politically, the state is assimilated into the invaders so that it loses its own name, following F. Lot, "La formation de la nation française", *Revue des deux mondes* 15 mai et 1er juin (1950) pp. 256-78; 418-35, here p. 260.

rusticus, *populus* and *plebs* in different contexts, indicate the presence of the common people, possibly both Goths and Hispano-Romans (and perhaps other minorities), but still beyond the concept and definition of *gens Gothorum*.

On the other hand, the opposition between *Gothi* and *Romani* (= Byzantine troops) is usually associated with warfare, which I believe has a different connotation susceptible to nuance. As I have remarked, according to Teillet, the Hispano-Romans are never mentioned, but subsumed, “for lack of a better description” under the generic term *Gothi*; the author also claims, however, that the *Romani* are the Byzantines and their Catholic supporters in Spain, tacitly branded as “rebels”, in the expression *pro rebellione diversorum*. These *diversi* could be the Byzantines and Hispano-Romans. There is some truth in this. It is reasonable to think that the army had military contingents made up of Hispano-Romans and not just common soldiers, but we also know of military chiefs, in particular the *dux Claudius*, of Roman extraction; he is much commended in the sources as the man who put down the revolts of Mérida and Septimania. It seems, however, that the army was mainly controlled by people of Gothic extraction; military force was, in particular, one of the Visigothic monarchs’ most effective means of exercising power. Once again, it is the *Gothi* who are the dominant group, the present rulers of Spain.

In my view, the issue is that Hispano-Romans “do not count” in this history—nor did they in Reccared’s mind during his speeches at the 3rd Council of Toledo—except, perhaps in a secondary role. At the very least, they are not considered to be protagonists in the events related in the *Chronica*, that is the power (*imperium*) gained and exerted by the Visigothic monarchy over their subject territories (*provincia Gothorum* = *omnis Hispania, Gallaecia, Gallia*) and, above all, the emergence of a renewed, Catholic, *gens Gothorum*.

One of the work’s most significant political and ideological elements is that these conquests and rule over the territories of *Hispania* are implicitly shown as legitimate events, using a vocabulary reminiscent of juridical language. For example:

Chron. 571,3: *Liuvigildus rex Asidoniam [. . .] ad Gothorum revocat iura.*

Chron. 572,3: (on Cordoba and other towns) *in Gothorum dominium revocat.*⁴⁹

⁴⁹ In similar terms to speak about the conquest of the *gens Suanorum* by the Romans. John of Biclar, *Chronica* 576,2: *et provinciam eius in Romanorum dominium redigit*. See, in

Chron. 573,3: *Sabariam [. . .] provinciam ipsam in suam redigit dicionem.*

Chron. 574,2: *Cantabriam [. . .] Amaiam et provinciam in suam revocat dicionem.*

Chron. 572,2: (on the Aregenses mountains) *et loca ipsam in suam redigit potestatem.*

The monarchy and the Goths (perhaps, most of all, their nobility) are clearly shown as the ruling forces in the kingdom. But they are not the only ones; the Church plays a decisive role. Religious unity brings with it Visigothic access to the Church hierarchy⁵⁰ and, as we have seen at the Council, the important participation of the Catholic church in the apparatus of power. It can be stated that one of the most obvious preconditions for the union and levelling-out of differences between Goths and Hispano-Romans, vis a vis the ruling class, is with the institutionalisation of a single ecclesiastical community.

Population mix

At the end of the sixth century, when John of Biclar writes his work, society had already experienced a certain degree of assimilation and balance. They had been co-existing for more than eighty years and the prohibition on mixed marriages had been lifted (*Lex Visigothorum* 3,1,1); this contributed to population mixing, as well as highlighting a situation that had existed, in fact, much earlier and had affected even the kings, as in the case of Theudis, an Ostrogoth married to a Hispanic woman (Procopius, *De bello Gothorum* 1,12,50).

The available documentary sources, especially the slate tablets written in the Castilian meseta,⁵¹ show onomastically (although not conclusively), a mix of population among the peasants, *rustici*. The Hispano-Roman aristocracy gradually started to mix with the Gothic nobility, in addition to the crucial role played by ecclesiastical unity, which we have already mentioned. Other distinguishing elements,

general, E.A. Thompson, *Los godos en España* (3rd edn., Madrid 1990); L.A. García Moreno, *Historia de España visigoda* (Madrid 1989); G. Ripoll and I. Velázquez, *La Hispania visigoda. Del rey Ataulfo a Don Rodrigo* (Madrid 1995).

⁵⁰ The canons show that the re-consecration of Arian churches will not be necessary and that the bishops will retain their posts and seats, now as Catholics.

⁵¹ *Documentos de época visigoda escritos en pizarra*, ed. I. Velázquez, 2 vols. (Turnhout 2000).

such as land tenure, that granted a number of privileges to the Goths as the law shows, would not have affected the entire population, nor have been implemented in a systematic way.⁵² It is clear that, for some time, differences in customs, fashion and social organisation, must have existed, as is shown by the remains of material culture that have been preserved. They also prove, however, that those differences soon began progressively to fade,⁵³ because of the intense process of acculturation and Romanisation, already long-established, of the Goths, which started before their arrival in Spain and during the period of the *regnum Tolosanum*.

Moreover, there are no data suggesting that, from the settlement of *Hispania* and, most likely before, a “Gothic” language was used. This would have been a clearly segregating element. Latin was used to legislate—both for Goths and Romans, as well as for other minority groups dwelling in *Hispania*⁵⁴—and, if the Goths gradually began to have access to schools (a very rare phenomenon at the beginning, most likely) and culture, it was no doubt to Latin culture and literature; this was true of John of Bicular (although he also studied Greek), Masona, bishop of Mérida and his rival Sunna and the judges and magistrates of the *officium palatinum*.⁵⁵ The reference in Leander of

⁵² I will only recall some questions, extensively covered by modern bibliography, without dealing with them in depth but, rather, as a backdrop to the argumentation.

⁵³ I refer here, in general, to some of the key studies by G. Ripoll, with earlier bibliography: *La necrópolis visigoda de El Carpio del Tajo (Toledo)* (Madrid 1985); *La ocupación visigoda a través de sus necrópolis (Hispania)*, Thesis Microfiche 912 (Barcelona 1991); “The arrival of the Visigoths in Hispania: Population problems and the process of Acculturation, *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 2 (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998) pp. 153–87; *Toréutica de la Bética (siglos VI–VII d.C.)* (Barcelona 1998); “Symbolic Life and Signs of Identity in Visigothic Times”, *The Visigoths. From the Migration Period to the Seventh Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. P.J. Heather (San Marino 1999) pp. 403–31.

⁵⁴ Without going into the issue of the personality or territoriality of the first legal Codes. On this, with previous bibliography, J. Alvarado Planas, *El problema del germanismo en el derecho español* (Madrid 1997). Some remarks in I. Velázquez, “Jural relations as an indicator of Syncretism from the Law of Inheritance to the *Dum ilícita* of Chindaswinth”, *The Visigoths. From the Migration Period to the Seventh Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. P.J. Heather (San Marino 1999) pp. 225–58.

⁵⁵ On all these issues, with some nuanced points of view, somewhat different with regard to the level of assimilation and levelling-out of differences between Goths and Hispano-Romans in *Hispania*, see in particular the introduction of M.C. Díaz y Díaz to Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. J. Oroz Reta and M.A. Marcos Casquero, 2 vols. (Madrid 1982) pp. 7–257, here pp. 41–3 and 50–94 [henceforth: Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”].

Seville's Homily at the 3rd Council of Toledo to the *linguarum diversitas* as the cause, together with *superbia*, of the emergence of heresies, was an evocation of the biblical story of the Tower of Babel, much used by Christian authors,⁵⁶ rather than to contemporary linguistic reality. It is possible that some groups still spoke a tongue of Gothic origin,⁵⁷ alongside Latin, but the truth is that they must have been quite fluent in the language then spoken by Hispano-Roman society. It is more likely that some lexical elements were preserved and incorporated into Latin as neologisms, exerting influence on it as parts of a linguistic superstratum, as a result not only of the natural expansion of onomastics, but also as terms in a common lexicon. Germanic loanwords adopted by Latin, however, can also have penetrated—that is actually what happened—by different means and during long periods of time, from the early contacts between communities. It is therefore very difficult to assess each loanword accurately. Military or judicial terms, such as *saiio*, *thiufadus*, *gardingus* and others used in legislative and documentary Latin texts, are extremely well known, as are many terms derived from Germanic languages that have been preserved in Romance languages. They cannot be used, however, to show clearly the degree of dynamism and productivity of a less specific lexical corpus, that may have penetrated Latin during the 6th and 7th centuries, without having been previously incorporated into the Latin language in earlier periods.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, a few terms may serve as points of reference, some of them first documented and explained by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae*. Quite apart from their specific origin, the fact that Isidore

⁵⁶ A. Ferreiro, "*Linguarum diversitate*: Babel and Pentecost in Leander's Homily at the third Council of Toledo", *Actas del XIV Centenario del Concilio de Toledo, 589–1989* (Toledo 1991) pp. 237–48. And by Leander's brother, *Etym.* 9,1,1: *Linguarum diversitas exorta est in aedificatione turris post diluuium. Nam priusquam superbia turris ilius in diversos signorum sonos humanam divideret societatem, una omnium nationum lingua fuit, quae Hebraea vocatur [. . .] Initio autem quot gentes, tot linguae fuerunt, deinde plures gentes quam linguae; quia ex una lingua multae gentes exortae* (see Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 16,4, ed. J. Divjack, CSEL 98 [Augustinus, *Opera*] [Vienna 1981] and *Genesis* 11,1–9).

⁵⁷ Or several non-Latin languages, for as has comprehensively been studied, the make-up of what can be understood as *gens Gothica* had a very variegated formation process and it was not homogeneous.

⁵⁸ For a synthesis of the numerous studies on the lexicography of Germanic origin in Spanish, see R. Lapesa, *Historia de la Lengua española* (8th edn., Madrid 1985) pp. 118–28. As for proper names, above all, J. Piel and D. Kremer, *Hispanogotisches Namenbuch* (Heidelberg 1976).

was the first author to provide documentary evidence for them may indicate that certain words penetrated *Hispania* (or earlier *Gallia*, even in the Ostrogothic period of the *regnum*) through the Visigoths and were incorporated into Latin during this period. We could mention,⁵⁹ for instance: *blavum*, as a colour for a costume (*Etym.* 19,28,8); *guaranen*, as a “bronze”-coloured horse, also known as *aeranen*. According to Isidore, it is the *cervinus* (the colour of a lion) to which the common people give this name (Spanish “garaanón”). *Flasca* (*Etym.* 20,6,2),⁶⁰ in spite of the fact that the author believes that it is a Greek word, meaning “covering for goblets” and also “carafe or bottle”, related to *flasco*, documented in Gregory the Great, *Dial.* 2,18,2, is still used in Spanish with the form “frasca” alongside “frasco” (flask, bottle). Perhaps *scaptos*, as a name for a weapon (*Etym.* 18,8,2). On the subject of clothing, he explains that *renones* are typical of the *Germanos* (historically accurate), but he adds that common people also call them *reptus* (derived from the false etymology *reptare*), the latter being a lexical innovation also of Germanic origin and first documented here (*Etym.* 19,23,4). Also when referring to clothing, he mentions, together with the already known Germanic loanword *bracae*, *tubrucus* (*Etym.* 19,22,30), a kind of “leggings”.⁶¹ To those we could add other like *gannatio*, found in a 7th-century tablet,⁶² related to words of mod-

⁵⁹ Terms taken from our own unpublished study on *Innovaciones léxico-semánticas en las Etimologías de Isidoro de Sevilla* (Madrid 1981). Some aspects published in I. Velázquez, “Vigencia y alcance de los términos innovados en las Etimologías de Isidoro de Sevilla” *Actas del I Congreso Andaluz de Estudios Clásicos* (Jaén 1982) pp. 461–5; ead., “Formación de neologismos en las Etimologías de Isidoro de Sevilla”, *Actas del II Congreso Andaluz de Estudios Clásicos* (Málaga 1987) pp. 167–72; ead., “Léxico isidoriano en las Etimologías. Problemas para su estudio”, *Euphrosyne* 22 (1994) pp. 235–43.

⁶⁰ On the origins of this and other words, see J. Sofer, *Lateinisches und Romanisches aus den Etymologiae des Isidorus von Sevilla* (Göttingen 1930) p. 132.

⁶¹ Later mentioned by Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 124,10, ed. L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, MGH SSrL (Hannover 1878): *super quas equitantes tubrugos*. On this item of clothing, medieval iconographic documentation has been preserved, such as the wall paintings of the church of Santa Maria de Tarrasa or a relief on a tomb in Briviesca (presently at the Museo de Burgos), see. C. Bernis Madrazo, *Indumentaria medieval española* (Madrid 1959). Another word first documented is (*h)osa*. It is the first Latin word that documents the Germanic “hosa”, but its introduction into Latin must have taken place earlier in spite of not having been documented earlier as it has undergone the evolution, typical in Spanish, to *uesa*, an ancient word that designated a type of boot.

⁶² *Documentos de época visigoda escritos en pizarra* 102. It reads: *grande gannatione*.

ern Spanish such as “gana, ganar, ganancia” (= gain/profit, to earn, earnings), derived from the Gothic *waithanjan and *ganan.

But, apart from these examples and similar words and proper names, it seems that there was no surviving Germanic (Gothic) or other language among the population of *Hispania* during the period under consideration. The chapter in Isidore’s *Etymologies* does not shed any light on the diversity of languages used at the time. There is no mention of a different language being spoken by the Goths. If that had been the case, he would have perhaps remarked on it.⁶³ He merely explains, when dealing with the “Roman” language, that it is a “mixed” tongue, the one that took over in Rome. Once the Empire had reached its apogee, the number of new customs and men increased, thus corrupting the language with *soloecismi* and *barbarismi*. The issue here is the evolution of Latin as it was spoken at a time when lexical elements derived from Germanic languages may have penetrated it. These elements contributed—together with many other factors—to the language spoken in late Antiquity.⁶⁴

In any case, returning to the degrees of assimilation and levelling-out previously discussed, although I believe, nonetheless, that the mixing of the two populations and the “Romanisation” of the Visigoths was pronounced—even before their arrival in *Hispania*—, this does not imply the existence of a total identification, which, if it occurred at all, did not do so until a later date. It seems, for instance, that judges were of Gothic extraction, as was most of the army;⁶⁵ the Visigoths possibly retained certain privileges, especially those related to paying taxes, and real power was always in Visigothic hands, a point we shall discuss again later. Despite the growing equality, therefore, reflected in the laws—mainly due to the scarcity of differing evidence or suggesting the existence of different treatments accorded, for example, to the Jewish minority—and also notwithstanding the

⁶³ In spite of the almost systematic lack of specific references to his period, it is possible to track down contemporary data through his “linguistic material”.

⁶⁴ See in particular, M. Banniard, *Viva voce. Communication écrite et communication orale du IV^e au IX^e siècle en Occident latin* (Paris 1992).

⁶⁵ I refer to these periods around the 3rd Council of Toledo. For instance, a slate including some *condiciones sacramentorum*, probably from 589, mentions judges and vicars, all bearing Gothic names (and I believe that they are of personal origin here), see *Documentos de época visigoda escritos en pizarra* 39. A number of scholars consider that the percentage of Hispano-Roman elements in the army at the time was approximately 10% or 20%.

fact that the former was bolstered by religious unification, actual conditions did not show a uniform, united and monolithic society with a clear awareness that *Hispania* was the *natio* of the *gens Gothorum*, the latter including *Gothi* and *Hispani* (or *Romani*).

Fleeting joys

In fact, the joy expressed by the 3rd Council and the desire for religious unity need not have been received well by everyone, nor was the resulting political unity, as is shown by the immediate outbreak of attempted sedition by several members of the Gothic nobility and clergy, following on from earlier traditions, when there was a constant struggle for power by individuals and *factiones*; now it was led by *Argimundus* (John of Biclar, *Chron.* 590,3) or by the bishop *Athalocus* and the noblemen *Granista* and *Wildigernus* in Septimania, supported by the Franks;⁶⁶ earlier, around 587, by the bishop *Sunna*, enemy of the Catholic Mazona, and *Sega* in which, apparently, the future king *Witeric* was involved.⁶⁷ The latter usurped the throne of *Liuva II*, *Reccared's* son, who succeeded his father in 601, in an attempt to make the monarchy hereditary, but was deposed and murdered by *Witeric* in 603. Further turmoil occurred a few years later when *Swinthila*⁶⁸ was faced with a revolt in the province of Narbonne,⁶⁹ fomented by the Merovingian *Dagobert*, that ended with the ruling king surrendering himself and his family in *Saragossa* and *Sisenand's* proclamation as king around March 26th 631. *Sisenand* postponed the celebration of a new general council until December 5th 633,

⁶⁶ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 1, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SSrM 1,1 (2nd edn., Hannover 1951) p. 430; John of Biclar, *Chronica* 589; *Hist. Goth.* 54; Fredegar, *Chronicon* 10, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 2 (Hannover 1888); *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium* 5,10–11.

⁶⁷ John of Biclar, *Chronica* 588,1; *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium* 5,10–11.

⁶⁸ We might think as well that his rise to the throne took place after a new revolt, perhaps stirred by some sector of the Gothic nobility unwilling, once again, to accept a hereditary monarchy. *Sisebut* died, probably poisoned, and he is succeeded by his son *Reccared II*, himself dead a few days later; this is clearly suspicious. For a description of the historical and governmental events concerning these kings, see *García Moreno, Historia*, pp. 143–58. This author also considers likely that an attempt to topple him from the throne lies behind the news of *Reccared II's* death.

⁶⁹ Other reasons for associating his son *Ricimir* to the throne, Fredegar, *Chronicon* 73; *Hist. Goth.* 65.

when the 4th Council of Toledo took place, in the course of which the king sought to obtain the Church's consensus to legitimise his power.⁷⁰

In opposition to the levelling and unifying tendency, supported by the Church and promoted by the monarchy, there was a clear tendency towards disintegration—in existence up to the end of the *regnum*—within the nobility who were either envious of the royal family or tried to prevent it from becoming hereditary, thus depriving other groups of access to power. This political situation would ultimately lead to the failure of Visigothic *Hispania* as a nation, although the 3rd Council of Toledo had laid the bases for this, and there was a clear political will to make it a reality; useful and necessary measures to enable this process, such as the introduction of a new legislative corpus under Recceswinth, had been adopted. The strength of the other forces in the *regnum*, the nobility (*primati gentis Gothorum*) and the Church, would constrain, however, the scope of that unity; the first group did so in a negative way whereas the second (albeit not always) had a positive effect. It seems obvious, despite all my remarks, that from 589 onwards there exists a political project to create a state (even better, a *regnum Visigothorum*), with its base in *Hispania* (including the *Gallia Narbonensis*), that would become the nation ruled by a *rex* from the *gens Gothorum*. That *gens* would later tend to define the *populus*, subject to the king, inhabiting the territory and the texts themselves would give an account of this process, above all the laws. But for a long time, and occasionally in later periods, a clear distinction would still be made between *gens Gothorum*, as a community of Gothic origin, to designate the ruling class with a “nominally” ethnic connotation, in contrast to the rest of the groups, *populi* (and of the individuals) living in *Hispania* or the *provincia Gothorum*.

From ethnic identity to the “discourse” on ethnicity

But who constitutes this *gens Gothorum*? Ethnic identity was not uniform and, in the course of the 6th century, it was not possible to define it in a precise manner and in the 7th century it was

⁷⁰ On all this period, see García Moreno, *Historia*, pp. 143–58.

completely diluted by the mixing of populations, faster in some social strata than in others. Nevertheless, a nominal awareness of being from or belonging to a *gens* (equated to *natio*) that differed from others persisted, although external characteristics, which allowed for distinction, were few. In fact—and this is of no less importance—Isidore of Seville points out John of Biclar's Gothic origins (see note 14) as well as those of the bishop of Constantinople, *Iohannes, natione Cappadox* (*De vir. ill.* 26), in contradistinction to the rest, Roman or Hispano-Roman,⁷¹ with the exception of his brother Leander, whose origins are also explicitly revealed: *genitus patre Severianus, Carthaginensis provincia Hispaniae*. It is remarkable, even contradictory, that in a society where those differences would be bound to be erased in theory, an expression is repeatedly mentioned in the texts that can be interpreted as stressing opposing traits: *gens Gothorum*.

From a possible ethnic identity, based on remote origins and differences stemming from languages, customs, races, social organisation, and clothing that are gradually becoming less noticeable, we arrive at a formulation of an ethnic “intellectual discourse”, to the elaboration of the origin legends of the group, their bravery, military feats, conquests and legitimate dominion over new lands. The fact that religious differences (that characterised and separated two “ethnic” groups) no longer exist is greatly stressed. I believe that the key to the elaboration of this “discourse” is Díaz y Díaz's statement:⁷²

The identification of Visigoth with Arian and Hispano-Roman with Catholic would have been transformed into a new formula: for the Visigoths, power (exclusively royal; with an absolute majority in the case of the high administration and with effective groups among bishops and the clergy) and, from a religious point of view, Catholicism as the national faith.

This formula of Visigothic power will be clearly stated during the 4th Council of Toledo, as we shall see later. But between the 3rd Council of Toledo, organised by Leander of Seville and Eutropius of Valencia,⁷³ and the 4th, headed by Isidore of Seville, this writer's

⁷¹ It can be added, however, that Martin of Braga says: *ex Orientis partibus navigans Gallaciam venit*, referring to their origins (*De vir. ill.* 22).

⁷² Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”, p. 23.

⁷³ See John of Biclar, *Chronica* 580,1. He must have played a leading role. According to Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”, pp. 21 and 24, he could have been behind Reccared's

exceptional prestige has come to take centre stage and he has become the leading figure of the period. Despite not being bishop of Toledo, metropolitan capital and *sedes regia*, his relationship with Visigothic monarchs is well known; his descriptions of the kings in the *Historia Gothorum* reveal his personal contacts with them and, with the exception of Witeric, the good treatment accorded to him.⁷⁴ His pastoral—and political—and literary activities, as well as his work as a bishop, led to his becoming a “tutor” to society and its monarchs, as Braulius of Saragossa claimed.⁷⁵ This author provides us with a synthetic overview of everything Isidore has done for his compatriots in which he refers to his works as a coherent whole.⁷⁶ This vision must underline the assessment of his writings and the life of the bishop of Seville, in spite of the fact that the two both elements differ, sometimes, in their approach: admiration for classical Antiquity and a negative evaluation of the Roman Empire, constrained as he was by the political situation, his attitude of praising and extolling the new people now ruling *Hispania*—the *gens Gothorum*—and his *rex* and by his personal animosity towards the Byzantines.⁷⁷ His works display, however, a brilliant synthesis between past and present. Thanks to him, classical culture survived in a society where, had it not been through his mediation,⁷⁸ it might have been shipwrecked. It is thanks to him that we can approach the notion of culture, the daily reality of his time, the knowledge of aspects of the spoken language and, most of all, the political and religious situation, the historical and cultural awareness of the past, trends in religious, spiritual, legal and political thought.

conversion; he was then abbot of the Servitano monastery, when Reccared, as coregent, ruled southeastern Spain. It is possible that his rise to the position of bishop was a royal reward.

⁷⁴ Also through the correspondence with Braulius of Saragossa (Isidore of Seville, *Epp.* 4 and 6). See Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”, p. 108; Fontaine, *Isidore de Seville. Genèse*, pp. 129–43.

⁷⁵ *Quem Deus post tot defectus Hispaniae novissimis temporibus suscitans, credo ad restauranda antiquorum monumenta, ne usquequaque rusticitate veterasceremus quasi quandam opposuit destinam.* See C.H. Lynch, *San Braulio* (Madrid 1950) pp. 356–60; Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”, pp. 95–162 and 215–23.

⁷⁶ According to Augustine’s version, *De civitate Dei* 6,2 includes Cicero’s eulogy of Varro (Cicero, *Academicorum reliquiae cum Lucullo* 1,3,9, ed. O. Plasberg [Leipzig 1969, repr. 1996]), see Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”, p. 216.

⁷⁷ See J. Fontaine, “Théorie et pratique du style chez Isidore de Seville”, *Vigiliae Christianae* 14,2 (1960) pp. 65–101.

⁷⁸ And without any other, of course: Velázquez, “Ámbitos y ambientes culturales en la Hispania visigoda”, here pp. 328–30.

In this context we must also include his role as historian, as it is crucial to teach past and contemporary history in order to make sense of the period when one lives.⁷⁹ But his writings also have a political value and far-reaching significance. Taking over from his brother Leander, he toiled for many years from his episcopal see to consolidate the difficult balance between Church, Visigothic monarchy and nobility and contribute—under the premise of unity of the faith—to the unification of the *regnum*. At the same time, he contributed unequivocally towards strengthening the image of the *reges* and the *gens Gothorum*. His historical works, the *Chronica* and the *Historia Gothorum*, have a clear purpose: to recount and praise the antiquity and courage of the people, to write the history of their kings, both their merits and blemishes, from a Christian perspective and to foster the union of that *gens* with *Hispania*, Isidore's *patria*.

The *Chronica* shows a lineal succession of the earth's kingdoms—as opposed to the usual synchronicity of data—through the six ages in which the world is divided, with an approach not only religious but also political.⁸⁰ The Roman Empire has a “finite” history like others, and as a counterweight to this the Goths have managed to play a decisive role, carrying out the *translatio regni* from Byzantium to Toledo. However, there is no contradiction between this *Chronica*, or the *Historia Gothorum*, and the *Etymologiae* in the author's representation of Rome.⁸¹ The writings convey an ideal of *Romanitas*, or even better of the old eternal Rome—not the Roman Empire, but Byzantium—, of whose Roman character the Goths are now heirs.

Teillet's remark⁸² is accurate: that the first ruler to be accorded the title *rex Gothorum* in the Chronicle is Theoderic II, thus equating the *regnum Gothorum* with the arrival of the Visigoths in Spain.⁸³ I

⁷⁹ On the educational value of history, Fontaine, *Isidore de Seville, Genèse*, pp. 217–8.

⁸⁰ However, the religious view guides the work and a certain sense of optimism because the unity of the Catholic church will lead to the plenitude of time. For the manifestation of certain anti-Jewish views and the opposition to heresies, including the millenarian views prevalent at the time, see Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”, pp. 137–9.

⁸¹ Against, Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, p. 464. There are, nonetheless, some religious tensions, as I have previously indicated.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 471.

⁸³ It is surprising that Athanaric and the battle of Adrianopolis are not mentioned, when all contemporary sources record it: Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*,

believe that it is possible to detect in this work an interest, although not as clearly stated as in John of Biclar, in recording the history of the Visigothic monarchs in *Hispania*, albeit here “disguised” in the shape of an universal and Christian chronicle. The simultaneity of a *rex Gothorum* and *regnum Gothorum*, on one hand, and the latter’s arrival in *Hispania*, highlighted by Teillet, evolves in the *Historia Gothorum* in which the expressions *regnum* and *reges Gothorum* are mentioned, the verb *regnare* is used, applied to the earliest known monarchs, from Athanaric’s rule and even to the very ancient mythical periods of these people (and kingdom) which Isidore incorporates into his work.⁸⁴ It is obvious that this work has been written *ad maiorem gloriam Gothorum*. It has been designed to commend the origins of these people as well as their accomplishments so that they can be opposed to Rome, whose mythical and epic origins are more recent in time, for the Goths are descendants of Magog, son of Japhet. The *gens Gothorum*, defined in *Etym.* 9,2,89, as *gens fortis et potentissima*, is singled out in history because of its bravery and courage, considered as a *virtus*, as well as its love of freedom.⁸⁵ The ancient *gens barbara* has become civilised, as opposed to other *gentes* which are still shown as barbarian; it has replaced its customary laws with laws written in Latin (*Hist. Goth.* 35). Once again, it cannot be claimed that when Isidore refers to this *gens* he is including the *Hispani*. It would be contradictory in a work conceived to deal with the origin of the Goths, to designate all of them as *Gothi*, with no terminological difference, despite the existence of a conceptual development in relation to the Goths of Athanaric and Reccared. They are no longer the old *gens barbara*, by virtue of their conversion to Catholicism (and their coexistence with Roman culture, although this idea is not clearly stated in the work, but is evident in Isidore’s thought).⁸⁶

p. 471 n. 58. Isidore devotes a long passage to it, however, in *Hist. Goth.* 6–11. In the long version it is said that, for centuries, they were ruled by *duces* and later by *reges*. In the short one, only kings and kingdoms are referred to: *per multa quippe saecula et regno et regibus usi sunt*.

⁸⁴ There is, furthermore, a clear interest in linking them as soon as possible to the history of *Hispania*. That justifies the introduction of the passage in which the Goths lend their support to Pompeius in the civil war opposing him and Caesar, which occurred “twelve years before the Hispanic age” (*Hist. Goth.* 13).

⁸⁵ A custom for them, whose repression by the Romans justifies their uprising against Valente: *Hist. Goth.* 8: *Sed ubi viderunt se opprimi a Romanis contra consuetudinem propriae libertatis ad rebellandum coacti sunt*. See note 19.

⁸⁶ There is only one passage where the formulation might prove ambiguous. The

Isidore will justify the Goths' victories over the Romans, and give them legitimacy, by means of the same procedure used by John of Biclar, namely the use of a juridical terminology that evokes the *ius Gothorum* in contradistinction to the *ius Romanorum*.⁸⁷ These magnificent people have glorified themselves because their kings have subdued (legitimately) all the territories of the old Roman province of *Hispania*;⁸⁸ they have established their mandate there. A people whose greatness has reached its zenith in the conversion to the Catholic religion, understood—and this is fundamental—as the unity of God's church, since it is through this religious unity that peoples can be united and this is precisely the key to the unifying conception of the peoples of *Hispania* advocated and worked towards by the Church in this period. That is why Isidore, in the midst of this process of extolling the *gens Gothorum*, can afford to criticise the role of some “non-Catholic” kings. He refines and rectifies the positive view towards Liuvigild in John of Biclar's writings,⁸⁹ but underlines Theudis' toler-

reason is, perhaps, that Isidore seeks, obviously, the union of the peoples dwelling in *Hispania* (*Hist. Goth.* 52): *In ipsis enim regni sui exordiis catholicam fidem adeptus totius Gothicae gentis populos inoliti erroris labe deteresa ad cultum rectae fidei revocat*. It can be assumed that, once the heresy has been stamped out (from their own *gens*), it leads the peoples making up (or belonging to) the *gens Gothica* to practise the true faith; this entails all of them together, the Goths themselves and all those ruled by them; however, *totius*, in this occasion, could have been better connected to *populus* rather than to *gens*.

⁸⁷ *Hist. Goth.* 36: *Theudericus Italiae rex [...] partem regni quam manus hostium occupaverat recepit, Gothorumque iuri restituit*.

⁸⁸ It must be stressed that, contrary to what we might think, alongside the use of *Hispania* (= *Spania*) in singular as a territorial unit, the Roman conception of the *provinciae* (according to *Etym.* 14,4–5) remains very much present in Isidore's works, besides the mention of the *Gallia*. There are also equivalences with *regiones*. As I have mentioned already apropos John of Biclar's *Chronica*, the word *provincia* retains its use, not applied to the permanence of the Roman administrative divisions—although the Church based its organization of the *diocesis* on them and some overlapping must have still existed in some aspects—, but rather because the “reality” of the territorial diversity, the differences not so much among peoples—or perhaps customs—, but even their gradual incorporation into the *imperium* or *dominium* of the Visigoths (that is, the formation of that *provincia Gothorum*) and, probably, their differing types of integration and incorporation and the ecclesiastical organization itself, must be behind those designations of *regiones*, *provinciae* or the plural uses of *Hispania*.

⁸⁹ In spite of the recognition of Liuvigild's conquests, amounting to almost all the territory of *Hispania*, the negative vision resulting from their lack of piety exerts a greater influence on him (*Hist. Goth.* 49): *Spania magna ex parte potitus, nam antea gens Gothorum angustis finibus artabatur. Sed offuscavit in eo error impietatis gloriam tantae virtutis*; the same happens in *De vir. ill.* 31 where, when speaking about John of Biclar,

ance towards the Catholic faith. This monarch even allowed the celebration of a Council in Toledo (*Hist. Goth.* 41). He also stresses the kings' moral conduct and the way he acceded to the throne. Thus, he "almost" justifies Thorismund's violent death (*Hist. Goth.* 51), or that of Theudis (*Hist. Goth.* 44) and, most importantly, Witeric's, employing the biblical quotation "he who lives by the sword, dies by the sword" (*quia gladio operatus fuerat, gladio perit*) (*Hist. Goth.* 58) to describe the latter: Witeric usurped the throne (*sumpta tyrannide*) and murdered Liuva II, Reccared's son.

The focus of the work is the unity of the Catholic church, which unites and gives cohesion to the *regnum* of *Hispania*, and the ruling power, namely the *reges* of the *gens Gothorum*. As we know, the work's long version⁹⁰ begins with the *Laus Spaniae* and concludes with a *Recapitulatio*, an emotional encomium of the *gens Gothorum*. Both can be considered as a reflection of Isidore's "optimism" which has sometimes been drawn to our attention. The *Laus Spaniae* is Isidore's emotional ode to his land (*patria*). Represented as a fecund mother, it is the most beautiful of all lands (*omnium terrarum pulcherrima*). He uses for this eulogy the panegyric literary tradition, both in verse and prose, exemplified by the encomium of provinces.⁹¹ Rome, chief of all the peoples, longed for and owned (*concupivit et [...] desponderit*) this land, magnificent and fertile, "sacred and always content, mother of princes and peoples" (*sacra semper felix principum gentiumque*) and,

he recounts that which the latter author had omitted in his own *Chronica*, namely that he had suffered exile and persecution on the part of Liuvigild, for refusing to abjure the Catholic faith: *Hunc supradictus rex [Liuvigildus], cum ad nefandae haeresis credulitatem compelleret, et hic omnino resisteret, exilio trusus, Barcelona relegatus, per decem annos multas insidias et persecutiones ab Arianis perpressus est.*

⁹⁰ It is common belief that the short version was written at the end of Sisebut's rule, around 619, whereas the long one was compiled under Swinthila, around 625, when the latter had already installed his son as co-regent to the throne. However, the first editors, Grial, Flórez and Arévalo, considered the longer version to be the first one whereas the second had been mutilated (apart from undergoing addenda), as a result of a sort of *damnatio memoriae* by Swinthila, discredited from the 4th Council of Toledo onwards (see the discussion by C. Rodríguez Alonso in the edition of *Hist. Goth.*, pp. 26–49). However, I think that these aspects should be re-examined as there are still some surprising points to discover in the differences between both versions not sufficiently elucidated. A revision of the problem in R. Collins, "Isidore, Maximus and the Historia Gothorum", *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (Vienna-Munich 1994) pp. 345–58.

⁹¹ See Fontaine's analysis, *Isidore de Seville. Genèse*, pp. 361–77.

likewise, it is the “prosperous Gothic nation” who has conquered it and enjoys it safely until now: *denuo tamen Gothorum florentissima gens [. . .] certatim rapit et amavit fruiturque hactenus [. . .] securas*).

I believe that Isidore shows two distinct realities here, now drawn together: *Spania* and the *gens Gothorum*. Spain as a marvellous land that has always existed and has bestowed so much wealth and men on the world. A land conquered by Rome and then by the Goths. One cannot fail to observe the choice of vocabulary: *concupivit et desponderit* for Rome and *rapit et amavit fruiturque* for the *gens Gothorum*, more passionate in the second case but with a certain legitimate resonance in the *desponderit* of the first, nor the complacency towards the new situation suggested by the terms *amavit* and *fruitur* and *securas* which end this eulogy. Nevertheless, the expression *hactenus*, “until now”, is disturbing. Is there any evidence of millenarian foresight or is it his conviction that *Spania*, Isidore’s beloved motherland, will exist forever, before, during and after her rulers? Let us recall that, in his chronicle, the author conceives of the kingdoms as being subject to the beginning and end of time. For Isidore, Spain is now (happily) ruled by the Goths, this *gens florentissima*.

I do not believe that the placing of this encomium of Spain at the beginning of the work is arbitrary, nor that after describing the origins, military feats and history of the Gothic kings and people, it ends with a *recapitulatio* praising them. This consists of a synthesis of their origins, where mention is again made of the etymology of their name, their pilgrimage from their native lands—Western Europe’s glacial mountains—up to their arrival in Spain where they would settle and establish their empire. Their natural virtues are extolled, as well as their physical traits and external characteristics: they are quick, ingenious, confident in their strength, tall, distinguished in their demeanour, resilient, courageous (so much so that they have defeated Rome, the grande dame of all nations, and all the other groups they have faced in battle); they are freedom-loving, noble in the art of war, skilful in handling weapons, and have mastered the art of sailing of which they had no previous experience, having been recently acquired during Sisebut’s rule, so that the “Roman soldier” (here again we can see Isidore’s anti-Byzantine bias) has become their servant, seeing how they are served by all peoples, including Spain herself: *servit illis Romanus miles quibus servire tot gentes et ipsam Spaniam videt*. Fontaine emphasises the role of the *Laus Spaniae* in the synthesis of Roman and Hispanic traditions and there is, indeed, a pro-

nounced “Roman and Hispanic patriotism” at the same time.⁹² A political mentality, detectable in the rest of the work, in which the “ancient loyalty to the Roman tradition does not exclude the integration of all those who were previously barbarian”. Isidore helps to foster the great hope of “co-operation between Goths and Hispano-Romans in a unified Spain after more than a century of hostility and destruction”.

In my view, however, the *Recapitulatio* is the counterpoint to reality. Isidore tries to join the two realities, *Spania* and the *gens Gothorum*, but it is clear that they are not the same and that the latter does not include the *Hispani*, nor any other group. The author has created an “ethnic” myth; he has not stinted in his praise and offers an image that helps to consolidate the prestige of this *gens*. The last sentence uttered is crucial and clear. Just as so many other peoples, Spain also serves them. He has not only elaborated an “ethnic” discourse (mythical, stereotypical and without a demonstrable ethnic basis at that moment), conveying an image of who the Goths are and what they look like—basically, perfect and excellent—, but he also describes and accepts compliantly those ruling his land and holding power over it. This exaltation and the joy manifested years before at the 3rd Council of Toledo by the Catholic bishops probably sought with determination to achieve the total unity of the peoples of *Hispania*; but not everyone would have seen it in the same way. Reference has already been made to the revolts that broke out immediately against the monarchy; one must also take into account the fact that among the Hispano-Romans there was neither unanimity nor general satisfaction with the new status quo. It is even possible that an attitude such as that of the extremely important bishop of Seville was not rightly understood at the time, giving the impression of an inconstant and “collaborationist” attitude, as is demonstrated by the marked contrast between the flattering passage on Swinthila in the *Historia Gothorum* (long version) and the condemnation of the same king at the 4th Council of Toledo, over which he presided.⁹³

⁹² As I have indicated earlier, I see no contradiction between the “Roman” approach of the *Etymologiae* and this, as Teillet states.

⁹³ This would justify perhaps the absence of a more detailed biography written by his contemporaries, considering the prestige and admiration he enjoyed due to his literary and encyclopaedic endeavours. Perhaps his functions as a bishop were not always regarded in a positive way, see Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”, p. 95.

The 4th Council of Toledo: The definition of power

This Council has been described as constitutional⁹⁴ because it formulated for the first time a clear definition of what could be understood politically as Visigothic power, based on the interrelationship between *gens*, *patria* and *rex*, and what a king's qualities and duties ought to be. Teillet is right⁹⁵ when she states that this theoretical formulation is probably attributable to Isidore of Seville. The writer presents the relationship between *gens*, *patria* and *regnum* by means of loyalty to the king, which is his political ideology formulated throughout his historical works and in his *Sententiae*, a work that can be considered as an authentic "spiritual testament".⁹⁶ The Council was the climax of his pastoral work, of his attempts to forge unity, already sought by his brother Leander, his last task as "tutor" of the monarchy based in Toledo.⁹⁷

The Council comprises seventy-four canons devoted to ecclesiastical matters, many of them aimed at achieving the unification of the Hispanic rite in the churches of Spain and *Gallia*. I think that it is worth highlighting here the almost systematic way in which *Spania* and *Gallia* are treated as the two components of the *regnum* now led by Sisenand;⁹⁸ a *regnum* whose territorial unity had been achieved under his predecessor Swinthila. This question does not seem negligible to me, considering the weight of Teillet's arguments,

⁹⁴ Orlandis and Ramos-Lissón, *Historia de los Concilios*, pp. 261–98.

⁹⁵ The analysis of this Council and its connection with Isidore of Seville in ead., *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, pp. 503–36.

⁹⁶ Fontaine, *Isidore de Seville. Genèse*, pp. 235–50.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 129–43.

⁹⁸ IV Toledo, c. 2: *per omnem Spaniam atque Galliam*; c. 3: *totius Spaniae et Galliae synodus* (is there an acknowledgement that *Hispania* is made up of several areas and now its entire territory is comprised?); c. 13: *sed pari modo Gallia Spaniaque celebret*; c. 14: *ut per omnes ecclesias Spaniae vel Galliae*. When reference is made to *Hispania*, without mentioning *Gallia*, this is seemingly due to the description of aspects only pertaining to the first one, where certain conditions apply. Here, however, the use is usually in the plural, or in the singular if it is determining another word: c. 5: *in Spaniis*; c. 6: *in Spaniis*, but also: *de hac Spaniae diversitate*; c. 9: *per multarum loca terrarum regionesque Spaniae*; c. 10: *per Spanias*, or even plural in c. 12: *in quibus quoque Spaniarum ecclesiis laudes*. Besides, in c. 41, apropos the type of tonsure required of clergymen and lectors, there is an explicit reference to different uses in *Gallaecia* and formerly common among heretics in *Hispania*; now it is time to change because both the tonsure and the cloak must be the same there: *non sicut hucusque in Gallaeciae partibus [...] ritus enim iste in Spanias haeticorum fuit [...] et una sit tonsura vel habitus sicut totius Spaniae est unus*.

as I have indicated above, on the use of the term *Spania* in the singular to denote the concept of Spain and the abandonment of the Roman concept of *provincia Hispaniarum*. In my view, the reiteration of *Spania* and *Gallia* at this Council has a notable ecclesiastical purpose given that its context is the need to unify the ecclesiastical rites of both areas, and, on the other hand, a political interest, in that it corresponds exactly to the territories ruled by the Visigothic *regnum*.⁹⁹ Besides, in later conciliar texts, alongside the single designation of *Hispania*, the duality *Hispania* (and its provinces) and *Gallia*, or even *Gallaecia* as part of the *regnum* is still maintained, especially when reference is made to bishops, their presence at councils or the general scope of prescriptions set in them.¹⁰⁰ It is common to find that *Hispania* is preceded by the adjective *totus* or *omnis*, alongside *Gallia* and, as I remarked earlier, possibly reflecting the plurality of provinces into which Roman *Hispania* had been divided which still retained some validity for the distribution of power and the apportioning of ecclesiastical territories. Furthermore, doubtless due to the weight of literary tradition, the term is still occasionally used in the plural, with a lexical distribution as synonym for *tota Spania*, as one can see at the 18th Council of Toledo, the last council whose proceedings have been preserved.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, although this is basically a question of lexical (and morphological) uses, it does not lack a certain degree of complexity, along the line of the argument employed by Teillet that I have

⁹⁹ In fact, the beginning of the text shows a certain syntactic ambiguity that could be deliberate: *Dum studio amoris Christi ac diligentia religiosissimi Sisenandi regis Spaniae atque Galliae sacerdotes apud Toletanam urbem in nomine Domini convenissemus*. The placing of the determining expression *Spaniae atque Galliae* between *Sisenandi regis* and *sacerdotes* is significant, although it is rightly qualifying *sacerdotes*. To the extreme that J. Vives' Spanish translation, *Concilios*, p. 186, reads thus: "Sisenand, king of Spain and the Gaul".

¹⁰⁰ XII Toledo, p. 383: *per totos Hispaniae fines [...] totius Hispaniae duces*; c. 6, p. 394: *placuit omnibus pontificis Spaniae et Galliae*; XIV Toledo, c. 1, p. 442: *cunctorum Spanorum praesulum totam Hispaniam vel Galliam synodale edictum*; c. 2, p. 442: *clara omnis populos Hispaniae implet*; c. 4, p. 433: *provincias regni and legatos Hispaniae*; c. 5, p. 444: *omnes Hispaniae adgregati*; and especially at the 13th Council of Toledo, apropos the taxes levied from the peoples of the kingdom in Erwig's *Lex in confirmatione concilii*, p. 436: *in provinciam Galliae vel Galliciae atque in omnes provincias Hispaniae*.

¹⁰¹ XVII Toledo, p. 522: *plerique Spaniarum Galliarum pontifices convenissem*; c. 2: *decernimus ut ita a totius Spaniae et Galliarum pontificibus custodiatur*; c. 3: *per totius Spaniae et Galliarum ecclesias eadem sollemnitas celebretur*; c. 6: *per universas Spaniae et Galliarum provincias*.

partly discussed. I am referring to the fact that, alongside a clear identification between *Hispania* and the *regnum Gothorum* and the Iberian Peninsula as a whole (including *Gallia*, although I think that the latter was always considered as an additional inheritance; see note 34), the different uses in the texts suggest that we are not facing a single and monolithic reality. Especially because what is indisputable, I believe, is the deliberate use of *Spania* or *Hispania* in the singular as a unity on a number of occasions and, most of all, by certain authors. Such is the case in Isidore of Seville and later undoubtedly in Julian of Toledo's *Historia Wambae*, where *Hispania* is the *regnum* and the unified motherland (or, as Teillet claims, the official name of the Visigothic nation, that is the Spanish nation),¹⁰² in marked contradistinction to *Francia* and, even, to *Gallia*, against which an *Insultatio* is directed. Moreover, the use—very rare in the texts we have seen so far—of *Hispani* (three times) as opposed to *Gothi* (once).¹⁰³ The author refers to an *exercitus Hispaniae*, *Hispanorum*, rather than *Gothorum*. But it is precisely this deliberate and propagandistic use, clearly perceived in the work, which reveals, perhaps, a determined attempt to stress unity around the king in the face of the grave tensions at this period between the Toledo monarchy's centralising policy and the segregationist (and secessionist in this case)¹⁰⁴ tendencies of many regions of the kingdom, spurred by the latter's internal fragmentation, infighting and ambitions, if not in favour of independence at least with the intention of controlling their territories directly, on the part of the powerful nobility.¹⁰⁵

Returning to the 4th Council, it is the last canon, canon 75, which is most important from a political point of view and justifies the convening of the Council.¹⁰⁶ In it, we read that they have been sum-

¹⁰² Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, pp. 628–32. In the modern sense of nation. Notice the different assessment made by the author with regard to the texts of the work and the councils mentioned immediately before it.

¹⁰³ I will deal with this work later.

¹⁰⁴ I. Velázquez, "Wamba y Paulo: dos personalidades enfrentadas y una rebelión", *Espacio, tiempo y forma, Serie II, Historia Antigua* 2 (1989) pp. 213–22.

¹⁰⁵ L.A. García Moreno, *El fin del reino visigodo de Toledo* (Madrid 1975); id., *Historia*, pp. 170–90; Ripoll and Velázquez, *La Hispania visigoda*, pp. 37–41.

¹⁰⁶ I do not think it fortuitous that this Council, convened by Sisenand to legitimise his coup d'état against Swinthila, tackles religious issues, with the exception of this canon 75, which mainly addresses the religious unity. The Church, and perhaps Isidore of Seville himself, was used, or manipulated, by the king who needed a religious legitimation for his actions as a *tyrannus*, in spite of the fact that the

moned by the king to draw up the *pontificale decretum* (*domno nostro Sisenando regi, cuius devotio nos ad hoc decretum salutiferum convocavit*). This passage, together with the opening words of the Council, set out the key issue to be considered: the need to legitimise the monarchy by religious means and its institutionalisation as an elective monarchy linked to the Church. Thus, from the outset Sisenand is described as *religiosissimus rex* and this juxtaposed to the gathering of *sacerdotes* (an increasingly frequent label applied to bishops, with doubtless non-clerical resonance) motivated by the *studio amoris Christi* and the *diligentia religiosissimi Sisenandi*. In this passage in canon 75 a *Gloria* in honour of God is pronounced and prayers are said for the *piissimo et amatori Christi regi* whose *devotio* has brought them together.

Canon 75 is written (perhaps with Isidore of Seville as main instigator?) *pro robore nostrorum regum et stabilitate gentis Gothorum*, that is “for the strengthening of the kings and the stability of the *gens Gothorum*”. To attain this double and inseparable security they begin by showing that reneging on the oath of fealty to the king is an impious act, characteristic of people who do not fear God’s judgement. This oath is regarded as sacred: *fidem sacramento promissam regibus suis*; they do not hesitate to include phrases such as *Nolite tangere christos meos* (*Psalm.* 104,15; *II Reg.* 1,4) or *Quis inquit extendit manum suam in Christum Domini et innocens erit?* (*I Reg.* 26,9). Phrases that, were it not because of the lack of clear evidence that the royal unction took place before that of Wamba, would lead us to think that it was already current, or was about to be introduced at the time of the Council.¹⁰⁷ Those attending the Council have no qualms about branding as a *sacri-legium* renouncing the oath of fealty, as the transgression is not only against kings but also against God, in whose name the oath was sworn (*pollicetur ipsa promissio*).¹⁰⁸ Thus, to avoid divine wrath worship

image projected by the *Acta* is that of an imploring and humiliated king: *ingressus primum coram sacerdotibus Dei humo prostratus cum lacrymis et gemitibus pro se interueniendum Deo postulavit*. For its part, the Church cashed in on the moment to legislate on the religious unity, true bastion of the unity and peace of the kingdom, and sought to reconcile spirits in a veritable attempt to instil some stability into the state of affairs.

¹⁰⁷ A. Barbero, “El pensamiento político visigodo y las primeras uncciones regias en la Europa medieval”, *La sociedad visigoda y su entorno histórico*, ed. J. Faci (Barcelona 1992) pp. 1–77, here pp. 25–7; Orlandis and Ramos-Lissón, *Historia de los Concilios*, pp. 293–4.

¹⁰⁸ This explains the fact that divine wrath has destroyed many earthly kingdoms, *per impietatem fidei*; this is still, perhaps, a tacit justification of how the Goths have been able to vanquish Rome.

of God and loyalty to the king must be steadfast during one's lifetime. Next comes an enumeration of forbidden acts, a slippery slope of mental attitudes, words and deeds that lead to treason: [. . .] *infidelitatis subtilitas impia, subodola mentis perfidia, periurii nefas, coniurationum nefanda molimina; nullus apud nos praesumptione regnum arripiat; nullus excitet mutuas seditiones civium; nemo meditetur interitus regum*. Such attitudes could well be applied to the *gens Gothorum* themselves, given the situation they have just experienced, namely the usurpation of Sisenand's power and, very possibly, other attempts directed against him by nobles still supporting Swinthila; this fact could explain the delay in convening the Council.¹⁰⁹ One of the key formulations, the elective nature of the monarchy, follows immediately:

sed defuncto in pace principe primatus totius gentis cum sacerdotibus successorem regni concilio communi constituent, ut unitatis concordia a nobis retinetur, nullum patriae gentisque discidium per vim atque ambitum oriatur.

The elements that shape and sustain power are being defined here: *rex*, the nobility of the *gens* and the Church. The aristocracy and the bishops choose the king. This system will ensure social harmony and will prevent disunity of *patria* and *gens* as a result of ambition and violence. This unity between *patria* and *gens* is first mentioned here in a clear manner; their unity will be sealed henceforwards, although with several changes. Their mutual association is reminiscent, especially in its full formulation *patriae gentisque Gothorum*, of the *senatus populusque Romanus*. This written formulation, now binding by virtue of its inclusion in the Council Proceedings, fills a legal vacuum around monarchy and the structure of government with the consensus of the three active forces at the time:

- The king and the monarchy retained their power over all the others and their rule over the *regnum* by means of the oath of fealty sworn by the others. But there was a legal caveat: he must be chosen and could not, therefore, try to make the monarchy hereditary, ignoring the nobility's interests. His royal nature was not based on nobility of blood (or not on blood alone) but on his deeds as a monarch worthy of that name, endowed with the main

¹⁰⁹ Orlandis and Ramos-Lissón, *Historia de los Concilios*, pp. 293–4; Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”, pp. 35–6. Specifically, Iudila's uprising in the Baetica and part of the Lusitania. Thompson, *Los godos en España*, pp. 201–3.

virtues: *pietas* and *iustitia*. These legal constraints reveal Isidore of Seville's ideological stand, enunciated in his works:

*Recte igitur faciendo regis nomen tenetur, peccando amittitur. Vnde et apud veteres tale erat proverbium: "Rex eris, si recte facias; si non facias, non eris". Regiae virtutes praecipuae duae: iustitia et pietas. Plus autem in regibus laudatur pietas; nam iustitia per se severa est (Etym. 9,3,4–5).*¹¹⁰

Moreover, what is tacitly being justified here, with specific reference to recent events concerning Swinthila and Sisenand (and possibly Iudila) is the alternative to the sacred and inviolable nature of the monarchy and the oath of fealty, namely tyranny, usurpation of royal power by a monarch who is not worthy of that title; that is why Swinthila is expressly condemned, although it is alleged that he himself abdicated through horror at his own crimes and renounced his royal privileges: *qui scelera propria metuens se ipsum regno privavit et potestatis fascibus exiit*.

- One of the main aspirations of the nobility is gradually being accommodated while, at the same time, recognising its prominent role within the kingdom. Against the reiterated attempts to make the monarchy hereditary and thus allowing a single noble family exclusive access to power, election from among the *primati*—so that any of them could be selected, thus legitimising once again Sisenand's rise to power—is unequivocally stated. Elements of Hispano-Roman society, possibly stemming from the late-Roman aristocracy itself, in possession of land and wealth, would by now have joined this nobility, although their origins would be diluted and no reference to the name *Hispani* or *Romani* would be made.
- The Church takes on a decisive and determined role in the selection of the monarch. Thus, the Catholic church, whose main representatives are both Hispano-Roman and Visigothic,¹¹¹ becomes

¹¹⁰ The title of king is deserved when one's conduct is right and no evil deed is ever committed, hence the ancient proverb: "You shall become king if your conduct is right, otherwise you shall not". Royal virtues are mainly two: justice and piety. Piety in kings, however, is praised more strongly, as justice is inherently severe, cf. Barbero, "El pensamiento", p. 23. See *Sentent.* 3,48,7: *Reges a recte agendo vocati sunt, ideoque recte faciendo regis nomen tenetur peccando amittitur*. See M. Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Roma 1981) pp. 515–9.

¹¹¹ The proper names used in the *Acta*, reveal the gradual increase of bishops of Gothic extraction. As Díaz y Díaz recalls, "Introducción", pp. 41 and 60, although

the third element of power. Although, at first, it must have advocated a hereditary monarchy, rather than an elective one, in an attempt to achieve stability, here it sidles with the latter, in this consensus of all the parties in search of equilibrium and peace. By contrast, kings will intervene more and more in the appointment of bishops.¹¹²

To achieve social harmony and the unity of the *regnum*, in my view clearly defined here as *patriae gentisque*, the well-known *sententia* is drawn up; it is to be pronounced three times, with significant changes according to the religious occasion, of mentioning each member of the Holy Trinity, to prevent any “among us” or “among the peoples of Spain” from betraying the motherland, the Goths or the king; those who make such an attempt, and their accomplices, will be guilty of anathema and expelled from the Church:

Quicumque igitur a nobis uel totius Spaniae populis qualibet coniu-
ratione vel studio *sacramentum fidei suae, quod pro patriae gentisque*
Gothorum statu vel conservatione regiae salutis pollicitus est, temeraverint,

names do not infallibly identify the origins, in *Hispania* a phenomenon occurred that was different from other places: the prestige of Roman names compelled some Goths to adopt them, in particular those of *Iohannes* and *Stephanus*; see G. Kampers, *Personengeschichtliche Studien zum Westgotenreich in Spanien* (Münster 1979) pp. 160–1. However, it is possible that “the ethnic prestige” could have led to the opposite case (D. Claude, *Adel, Kirche und Königtum im Westgotenreich* [Sigmaringen 1971] pp. 111 ff.; García Moreno, *Historia*, p. 228). But I believe one must proceed with extreme caution on this issue because, simultaneously, the opposite case also took place. Perhaps this increase of Gothic names had a higher incidence from the second third of the seventh century, when sources start to drop, as we will see later, the mention of the *gens* from the determining name *Gothorum* and, in particular, since the transformation of the palace nobility under Chindaswinth. Nonetheless—and with all due reservation—I think that it is indispensable to carry out not only a prosopographic study, but also a comparative one that analyses the use of proper names also in other locations.

¹¹² Already under Reccared. The royal election is presented as one of the possible means to gain a bishopric at the 2nd Council of Barcelona in 599: *aut per sacra regalia aut per consensionem cleri vel plebis* (the latter to a lesser extent) *vel per electionem assensionemque pontificum*, see Díaz y Díaz, “Introducción”, pp. 38–9. Isidore himself considered the royal appointment as normal when speaking about a bishop’s appointment for the Tarraconense, around 632 (see Braulius, *Epp.* 6 and 5), in spite of the formulation of canon 19 at this 4th Council of Toledo favouring the imposition of the traditional rules: *sed nec ille deinceps sacerdos erit, quem nec clerus nec populus propriae civitatis elegit, vel auctoritas metropolitani vel provincialium sacerdotum assensio exquisivit*. The most frequent royal election during the seventh century can be behind the increase in the number of Gothic bishops.

*aut regum nece attractaverit aut potestate regni exuerit, aut praesumptione tyrannica regni fastigium usurpaverit, anathema sit in conspectu Dei Patris et angelorum atque ab ecclesia catholica, quam periurio profanaverit, efficiatur extraneus et ab omni coetu*¹¹³ *Christianorum alienus*¹¹⁴ *cum omnibus impietatis suae sociis, quia oportet ut una poena teneat obnoxios quo similis error invenerit implicatos.*

- In the second case the reason for breaking the oath will be uttered: *tractatu vel studio sacramentum fidei suae [. . .] violaverit*, and the anathema will be: *in conspectu Christi et apostolorum eius*.
- In the third, the main variation is: *meditatione vel studio sacramentum fidei suae pro patria salute gentisque Gothorum statu vel incolomitate regie potestatis pollicitus est violaverit*, and the anathema will be: *sit in conspectu Spiritus Sancti et martyrum Christi*.

I believe that the distinction between *nobis* and *totius* (or *cunctis* in the second and third *formulae*) *Spaniae populis* sheds light on the reality of the situation. On the one hand are the “peoples” (= *populi*) of *Hispania* and on the other is the *regnum* of *Hispania* herself, ruled by a king (*rex*), constituting the common *patria*, but also regarded as the motherland of the *gens Gothorum*, that is, the human group to which the king belongs and whose ruling class exercises power, although it is nowadays made up of an aristocracy that includes Gothic and Hispano-Roman elements.¹¹⁵ The thin line separating the notion of a motherland common to all from a “patrimonialist” interpretation of a motherland that a people, or human group, has taken over—to whom it belongs by law and which is ruled by them—is evident in this formulation. In contrast to the first two expressions *pro patriae gentisque Gothorum statu*, which show a unity of concept and refer to the “stability of the motherland and the Gothic people”, the third

¹¹³ *Consortio* is the second formula and *communione* the third.

¹¹⁴ Henceforth the text varies significantly, although all convey the same sense. In the second formula: *et damnatus in futuro dei iudicio habeatur cum comparticibus suis, quia dignum est qui talibus sociantur, ipsi eius damnationis eorum participatione obnoxii teneantur*. In the third: *neque partem iustorum habeat sed cum diabolo et angelis eius aeternis suppliciis condemnetur una cum eis qui eadem coniuratione nituntur, ut par poena perditionis constringat quos in pernicie societas copulat*.

¹¹⁵ García Moreno, *Historia*, pp. 223–8; 317–9. It is obvious that, as the sources show, there already were mixed marriages from Theudis’ rule onwards, as we remarked, and, most especially, since Liuvigild’s law. But that does not mean that the *gens Gothorum* was identified with a **gens hispanorum*, giving up their prestige of birth and the “ethnic” model advocated as a power group or ruling group.

shows this subtle distinction of ideas: “for the wellbeing of the motherland and the stability of the Goths” already inseparable as elements shaping the state, but two independent realities. It is this “motherland” which is thus presented as differentiated by means of a simple syntactic procedure, identifying *Hispania* with *patria*, understood as an ideological and territorial unity, and *gens Gothorum* with her rulers; it is this separation, which, as I remarked, is not fortuitous, that can be seen in the layout of the *Laus Spaniae* and the *Recapitulatio* (a *Laus Gothorum* as it is entitled in some manuscripts) at the beginning and the end respectively of the *Historia Gothorum* by Isidore of Seville.

What, in my view, is defined at the 4th Council of Toledo is power, rather than the nation. “Ethnic discourse” reaches its zenith here. It is not a question of an ethnic group, of an ancient race, but of a group that retains the prestige of its origins and its virtues as a group, mythologised through literature and re-created using clichés that glorify their magnificence; although this group has gradually incorporated members of the other majority group in the land where they live, the Hispano-Romans. The Goths as a group preserve the distinctiveness of their origins, even after generations on Spanish soil,—now definitely in their hands—as a mark of superiority and their leading freemen, the nobility with its *factiones*, the high functionaries of the state, in sum the most “distinguished” men in this society, exercise power, control the king and exert the weight of their *gens* (now practically a class) at this and other councils.

I believe that the political formulation of the 4th Council is motivated, even forced, by the contemporary situation, that is the political disgrace of Swinthila and the rise to power of Sisenand, as well as by the pressure exerted by the *factiones* of the nobility. It also highlights what will be even more noticeable from now on: the tension between monarchy and nobility (and the Church) and between the different factions of this nobility. Royal families will measure their strength to use against that of the other powers of the *regnum*, and the *Acta* of the Council and legislation will be a good reflection of the balance of power at any one time. But it is obvious that such formulation is the crucial step to achieve the much-longed-for unity of all of Spain’s peoples. Isidore, who certainly considered it very difficult to achieve and has worked towards this end, as we have seen, succeeds only partially in fulfilling his ambitions although his contribution to this unity has been decisive. The impact of events,

the evolution of society and political circumstances will combine in successive years to highlight the increasing existence of forces in favour of integration that would effectively lead to an identification of *Hispania* (Spain) with the *regnum* and of the *gens* and all her inhabitants, overcoming that division between *Gothi* and *Hispani*, under the rule of a single *rex*. But there are also forces that favour segregation, and tend to split that unity, to a great extent due to personal and collective ambitions to seize the throne and control the *regnum*.

Patria et gens: Attempts of unification

This threat of fragmentation and the tensions between the different noble groups to which I have referred compel us to insist upon and define with greater precision in successive councils those who are eligible to accede to the throne, seek the protection of the families and the *fideles regis*, secure awards and honours for the latter, the ones who protect the king. At the 5th and 6th Councils of Toledo, celebrated under Chintila's rule, attention is again drawn to these issues; seditious attempts are condemned and the question of who can accede to the throne is settled: those who have been elected and are of Gothic extraction. At the 6th, other requirements are added: they must be of honourable conduct and it is explicitly stated that no one who has been tonsured or whose scalp has been shaved can become king, nor those of lowly or foreign origin, doubtless indicating fears that could be regarded as well-founded and genuine restrictions on gaining power:¹¹⁶

V Toledo, c. 3, p. 282,81–4: [. . .] *quem nec electio omnium provehit nec Goticae gentis nobilitas ad hunc honoris apicem trahit* [. . .].

VI Toledo, c. 17, pp. 326–7,341–345: [. . .] *Rege vero defunctus nullo tyrannica praesumptione regnum assumat, nullus sub religionis habitus detonsus aut*

¹¹⁶ Higher and perhaps more controlled than that of the Gothic origin as such. Perhaps here the *Goticae gentis nobilitas* refers to the “nobility” of status or class, characteristic of the *gens Gothica* (= ruling class of Gothic extraction, but also already very mixed). It seems that the emphasis is more on a class nobility, of righteous customs, superior to all other persons, only nominally identified as Gothic, as opposed, for example, to foreigners, Franks, Byzantines, etc. See M. de Jong, “Adding insult to injury: Julian of Toledo and his *Historiae Wambae*”, *The Visigoths. From the Migration Period to the Seventh Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. P.J. Heather (San Marino 1999) pp. 373–89, esp. p. 383.

turpiter decalvatus aut servilem originem trahens vel extraneae gentis homo, nisi genere Gothus et moribus dignus, provehatur ad apicem regni.

However, it must be pointed out that at the 5th Council reference is made to the *gens* and the *patria* in a generic way, without specifying the Goths. I believe that it indicates, for the first time, the fact that the sources are beginning to show that this *gens* lack a distinct ethnic origin but, rather, that it comprises the people (= human group) dwelling in the *regnum*. It is a ruling¹¹⁷ issued by the king enjoining all provinces to celebrate the practices of the new litanies. The beginning of the text is revealing: “As it is the duty of every good prince to safeguard the welfare of the motherland and his people [. . .]” (*Quum boni principis cura omni nitantur vigilantia providere patriae gentisque suae comoda*). The expression *patriae gentisque*, inherited from the previous Council, appears now without the appellation *Gothorum*.¹¹⁸ It is clear that Chintila is not only legislating, or better sanctioning, a proposal issued by the Church, for all the population but, rather, that he means all of them. He commands all the provinces in his kingdom (*per omnes regni nostri provincias*) to celebrate the litanies and rules that all the prominent men in the kingdom (*tam optimatum quam comitum, iudicum etiam ceterorumque ordinum praecipua*), are obliged to defend the motherland (*patriae nostrae*), and to ensure that everyone, without distinction based on class, sex or age, can fulfil them. The *patria* clearly reveals, on its part, the two facets of the Roman concept, the concrete territorial aspect, and the abstract notion of political unity. At the 6th Council, canon 14, when dealing with the commendations for the *fideles regis*, the king’s obligation to protect those loyal to his predecessor, without depriving them of their privileges and possessions, so that they can be treated according to their individual value and in a way deemed necessary for the motherland (p. 320,227) is acknowledged: *sicut eos prospexerit necessarios esse patriae*.

As is well-known, the threats and fears of sedition culminate in the elderly Chindaswinth’s coup against the young Tulga and the

¹¹⁷ Although not explicitly formulated, I think that, rather than a sentence, it takes the form of a *lex in confirmatione concilii*, see Velázquez, “Impronta religiosa”, pp. 109–11. Not included in the edition by G. Martínez Díez and F. Rodríguez, as it was not transmitted by the *Hispana*. Text in *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos*, pp. 231–2.

¹¹⁸ The possessive *suae* is, nonetheless, symptomatic.

extremely harsh law (*Lex Visigothorum* 2,1,8) against those who, having conspired against the king, have gone into exile, within or outside Spain (*ad adversam gentem vel extraneam partem*). The punishment is the death penalty or, at the very least, blinding, and all the magnates, and bishops and the entire people are made to swear allegiance to the king. The so-called “purges” of Chindaswinth during which, according to some historians, the number of Visigothic aristocratic families could have been halved, led to the replacement of the nobility of aristocratic origin by the *primati palatii*, that is a new political and administrative oligarchy, based on loyalty to the king, the power of the army and the establishment of the state administration. That does not mean that the new mighty men were not overwhelmingly noble, many of Gothic extraction but, rather, that the concept of new power class is a response to other premises. The new situation also has an effect on the king’s interventionism in the Church, now undergoing a period of some weakness. The 7th Council of Toledo takes place almost nine years after the previous one (in 646), with few bishops and with one fundamental purpose, to sanction the aforementioned law. It is clear that the *morbus Gothorum* is a widespread affliction. The poor attendance of bishops at the Council, especially from Tarraconense and Septimania, evinces those areas’ reluctance to participate and the opposition of considerable segments within the nobility and the Church to the measures against the nobility adopted by Chindaswinth.

At this Council, again apropos the attempts to usurp the throne and assassinate the king, the already customary formula that defines the shape of the kingdom’s power—against whose security no action must be taken—is repeated. Expressions such as the following include the formula of canon 75 from the 4th Council of Toledo and, more precisely, the third proviso which, as we showed, highlighted the subtle difference in the co-ordination of elements, linking, on the one hand, *patria* and *gens* and, on the other, both and *rex*:

VII Toledo, c. 1, p. 341,46–47: *quod gentem Gothorum vel patriam aut regem.*

VII Toledo, c. 1, p. 341,52: *genti Gothorum vel patriae aut principi.*

VII Toledo, c. 1, p. 343,72–73: *contra gentem Gothorum vel patriam seu regem.*

A different syntactic combination that, in spite of appearing to be a simple stylistic variation at the aforementioned 4th Council vis a vis *patriae gentisque Gothorum* of the first two formulas used, may imply a different political concept, given that *patria* takes on a more generic

sense; we could say that the latter involves the motherland common to all, whereas *gens Gothorum* refers to the ruling class, still using the “ethnic” description as a symbol of prestige, albeit deprived of that sense of exclusive (and patrimonialist) identification of *patria Gothorum* with *Hispania*, complemented by other uses of *patria*, not linked to *gens*. And both—and that was the case already at the 4th Council—were distinct from the king. A similar formulation, with a different use and syntactic arrangement but of the same type, appears again at the 8th Council of Toledo, convened by Recceswinth in 653, two months after the death of his father Chindaswinth,¹¹⁹ when the collective oath to the king is evoked in the royal *Tomus* (p. 375,112–116): *ut cuiusquumque ordinis vel honoris persona in necem regiam excidiumque Gothorum gentis ad patriae detecta fuisset [. . .]*. The Council takes up this issue without using the exact wording, referring to *gens* without the adjective *Gothorum*. It mentions, in a positive sense if you wish, the oaths of allegiance to the king, and the obligation to fulfil them but ignoring the magnitude of the penalty imposed (c. 2, p. 403,418–423): *pro regiae potestatis salute vel contutatione gentis et patriae [. . .]*.

As is well known, Recceswinth has convened this Council to submit to the bishops’ consideration the possibility of annulling or allaying the terrible effects of his father’s law. In addition, succession to the throne, albeit peaceful and preceded by a protracted period of co-regency,¹²⁰ has been hereditary and this mode of succession clashed with the interests and wishes of the nobility and, possibly, with those of large sectors within the Church—to the extent that the procedure governing succession to the throne, based on selection by consensus among the leading men of the palace and the bishops, either in the *urbs regia* or wherever the predecessor has died to preclude secessionist moves, is reiterated (c. 10, pp. 428–9,689–692): *in urbe regia aut in loco ubi princeps decesserit cum pontificum maiorumque palatii omnimodo eligantur adsensu, non forinsecus aut conspiratione paucorum aut rusticorum plebium seditioso tumultu*. The delicate issue is also mooted of the king’s

¹¹⁹ Celebrated at the praetorian Church of the Saint Apostles, a definite symbol of the aulic power and the close relationship between monarchy and Church, under the leadership of Eugenius II of Toledo. On the seats of the councils, see Velázquez and Ripoll, “*Toletum: la construcción de una urbs regia*”.

¹²⁰ And instigated by the Church itself, in particular by Braulius of Saragossa and Eutropius who, together with Celsus, a high dignitary from the Tarraconense, sent a petition (*suggerendum*) to Chindaswinth himself so that he, given his advanced age, could tie his son to the throne, Braulius, *Ep.* 37.

ownership of the patrimony acquired by his father through violent and unjust methods, which ought to be restored. Although a compromise solution is reached, a difference between the patrimony of the crown and the personal patrimony of the monarch is established.

The Council's crucial decisions are a reflection of the tense situation generated by his father's policies. It is likely that pressure from the aristocracy, Froia's attempt to usurp the throne, and even the actions of individuals such as Fructuosus of Braga, still abbot of Dumio, who sends a missive to the king and the bishops calling for clemency),¹²¹ force Recceswinth to address the assembly in a manner far removed from his father's authoritarianism, theoretically endorsing the Council's measures. He is keen to re-establish certain links with the nobility, punished by his father, and reconcile the different sectors, which are gradually becoming more powerful and now not only attending the Council but also signing the proceedings as fully lawful members of the Council. The king presents a *Tomus* in which he presents an image of himself as a Christian prince (an image also endorsed by the assembly itself), copying imperial models; his speech can be considered as a short treatise on the monarchy. The latter takes on juridical legitimacy through deeds, by law rather than through the person of the king. The king must be obeyed by virtue of his role, not his person: *non personae sed potentiae suae haec deberi non ambigit. Regem etenim iura faciunt non persona*. These words are redolent of Isidore's doctrines, as we have already seen.¹²²

The *Tomus* also shows the role as legislative chamber and judicial tribunal that Recceswinth envisages for the Council assembly, which he requests to amend the legal texts as they deem appropriate. This and the references by Braulius of Saragossa (*Epist.* 39–41) reveal the close links between the creation of the *Liber* and the Council's

¹²¹ *Epistulae Wisigothicae* 19, ed. J. Gil, *Miscellanea Wisigothica*, Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla (Sevilla 1972). I believe that this occurred on the occasion of the announcement of the Council's celebration, see Velázquez, "Impronta religiosa", p. 112. Doubtless, during Recceswinth's rule a number of ecclesiastical figures and writers had a crucial role in the political scene; they shaped, in my view, the political views of the king in some measure.

¹²² And which are complementary to those regarding the laws (*Etym.* 2,10,3) and would crystallise in the *Titulus* 2 of book 1 of the *Liber Iudicum*, ed. K. Zeumer, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 1 (Hannover 1902) [henceforth: *Lex Visigothorum*], see Velázquez, "Impronta religiosa", pp. 104–5. On the king's speech, based on that of Emperor Justinian (Corippus, *Eloge de l'empereur Justin II* 2,2, ed. S. Antès [Paris 1981]), see the elucidating analysis by Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, pp. 537–71.

prescriptions and the central role played by some members of the Church hierarchy. The promulgation of the *Liber Iudicum*, begun under Chindaswinth and completed under Recceswinth, constitutes not only the complete renovation and strengthening of one of the main instruments of power, the legislative body, but also the most effective means and the most far-reaching political gamble undertaken by the monarchy of Toledo in an effort to achieve the complete unification of the *regnum* under royal auspices. This instrument would be renovated and widened by successive kings, in particular by Erwig and Egica, who would also utilise several councils to procure the Church's intervention in the drafting or supervision of laws and the promulgation of their *leges in confirmatione concilii*. The legislative role played by the assembly will be maintained at later councils. Thus, Erwig asks those gathered at the 12th Council of Toledo (681) to correct unfair laws and beseeches the bishops and Spain's higher dignitaries (*religiosi provinciarum rectores et clarissimorum ordinis totius Spaniae duces*)¹²³ to draft the new laws clearly (*evidentium sententiarum titulis [. . .] conscribite*).

At the 8th Council, the tension between the king's interests, on the one hand, and those of the nobility and the Church on the other, is palpable, although the Church does not abandon its role as mediator. Recceswinth's apparent respect for conciliar norms is less noticeable when it comes to promulgating the law *Lex Visigothorum* 2,1,6, which he alters in his favour and traces the issue of acquisition of the royal patrimony back to Chintila's rule, as well as sidestepping the grave allegations against his father. What is more, he does not convene any new councils. Only three sparsely-attended provincial assemblies would take place, although these return insistently to the issues pertaining to the usurpation of the throne, the safety of the *fideles regis* and the *patria*, specifically on military matters. The 10th Council of Toledo (656) refers to the decrees and

¹²³ Erwig sanctions a group of twenty-eight laws against Jews, replaces Wamba's military law (*Lex Visigothorum* 4,2,8) with another (*Lex Visigothorum* 9,2,9). At the 13th Council (a. 683) he issues a *lex in confirmatione concilii*, incorporated into the *Liber* (*Lex Visigothorum* 12,1,1). Egica, to a lesser extent, will use the 16th Council (a. 693) to undertake his legal reforms, sanctioning the *Lex Visigothorum* 12,2,18 against the Jews and ratifying the *Lex Visigothorum* 2,5,19 on the bad use of the so-called *habeas corpus*, issued at the 13th Council. See Velázquez, "Impronta religiosa", pp. 117–21; Orlandis and Ramos-Lissón, *Historia de los Concilios*, pp. 415–29; 494–6.

laws issued to preclude anyone from acting “against the princes’ welfare, and that of the people and the motherland”.¹²⁴ At the Council of Mérida (666), in canon 3, it is stated that everyone must contribute to the “king’s prosperity and that of his loyal men from among the *gens*, and of the motherland! [. . .] *rege fideliumque suorum gentis aut patriae debeant prosperitatem*,¹²⁵ so that it stipulates (*instituit*) that one must pray every time the king goes with his army on campaign against the enemies, “for his wellbeing, that of his supporters and of the army”: *pro eius suorumque fidelium atque exercitus sui salute*.

At the councils celebrated under Recceswinth, as before during the 5th and 6th, references to *patria* and *gens*, without mentioning *Gothorum*, which are also found in later councils, with a few exceptions and the kind of formulations used, following the trilogy *regnum, gens, patria*, albeit with slight alterations, reveal, I believe, that awareness of a new political order is taking shape. In fact, the role of *rex* has been exemplified most of all at this Council by the king and the assembly. The *gens* is no longer defined by virtue of their ethnicity but by their political adherence and seems to encompass the entire population in most of the phraseology, although its main use in contexts dealing with the usurpation of power (where, on occasions, reference is also made to *plebs* or *rustici*) suggests that they actually have in mind the higher classes of that *gens* (= *natio*), that is the old and new aristocracies of the *officium palatinum* as well as the ecclesiastical hierarchies, the only groups that, whether or not they drag the *populi* or the *rustici* with them, can jeopardise the stability of the motherland, the *gens* and the life of the king himself. The *patria*, on its part, retains its territorial sense but is formally linked—although with shades of meaning, as I have pointed out—to the *gens* in a juridical conceptual unity.

¹²⁴ With a variation: *principum gentisque aut patriam* that could be compared to the option of *gens sua* adopted before the aforementioned 5th Council (see note 118). Does that non-explicit consciousness of the *rex* and his *gens*, apart from the motherland, still exist?

¹²⁵ I think these *fideles regis* are the entourage of *primati* who have sworn loyalty to the king, not the subjects in general, as Vives interprets it, cf. *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos*, p. 327.

Illusions and disillusion of the Church

The disillusion that the Church must have experienced when faced with the loss of vitality and frequency of councils, due to Recceswinth's action perhaps because of the suspect result of the 8th Council of Toledo, and also of the tense situation at the time can be perceived at the 9th Council of Toledo, led by Wamba, where it is stated that the "light of the councils has been extinguished" by circumstances and the passage of time. The new king is presented as the *religiosus princeps*. For posterity, the image of this king would always be that drawn by Julian of Toledo in his *Historia Wambae*, a work conceived as an *exemplum*, almost a *vita*, belonging to the genre of biblical evocation and of a panegyric nature, as Teillet has accurately analysed.¹²⁶ This *religiosus princeps* has all the Christian virtues and is in opposition, like are the absolutes good and evil, to the *tyrannus Paulus* who has tried to take the throne, or perhaps even to secede from it and has proclaimed himself *rex* of the *Pars Orientalis*.¹²⁷ Above all, Wamba is the king anointed by God. He has been sacrally anointed by the bishop Quiricus in Toledo and has refused to become king until being designated by this ritual. Now the monarchy has acquired a sacral nature, its power emanates from God, the king is chosen by divine will, as shown by the unction, although he has also been chosen by all the nation (*gens et patria*, following the model of an imperial monarchy and by law, such as that of Recceswinth), and his rule is sought by the people, even foreseen in prophecy:

Hist. Wamb. 2: Adfuit enim in diebus nostris clarissimus Wamba princeps, quem digne principari Dominus voluit, quem sacerdotalis unctio declaravit, quem totius gentis et patriae communitio elegit, quem populorum amabilitas exquisivit, qui ante regni fastigium multorum revelationibus celeberrime praedicaturus.

Julian of Toledo's work is a passionate hymn not just to the king but, I believe, most of all to the *exercitus Hispaniae*, and the motherland herself, *Hispania*, as opposed to the *gentes externae*, *Francia*, even *Gallia* (the old *Narbonensis*) which, albeit part of the *regnum*, is here denigrated and insulted by the author. It can be said that it is a "nationalist" work, or that it exhibits a pronounced adherence to

¹²⁶ Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique*, pp. 585–636. But see also the extremely interesting contributions of De Jong, "Adding insult to injury".

¹²⁷ Velázquez, "Wamba y Paulo".

“Hispanic nationalism”. It seems clear that here the concept of *gens et patria* already comprises all the population; in fact, as I have remarked, it deals mainly with *Hispani* and the *exercitus Hispaniae* as opposed to *Francia*. Now, references to *Gothi* and *gens Gothorum* are few and quite symptomatic. In chapter 2 he claims that all voices, united, want Wamba, and no-one else from the *gens Gothorum*, to become king,¹²⁸ when all acclaim Wamba. The other context is that of the struggle between armies (*Hist. Wamb.* 9; 10; 12; 13), where *Gothi* appear opposed to *Franci* or to *Vascones*, and identification with which the author is in complete accord when referring to the army as “our men”, it is the army of the Goths, the army of Spain who are “our men” (*Hist. Wamb.* 9; 10; 12; 13; 18). The third context is the emphatic and literary evocation of the “ethnic myth”: the allusion to the *gens* and their courage, to the *famosissima virtus* of the Goths, remarked upon by the *tyrannus Paulus* himself (*Hist. Wamb.* 16; 17). In fact, the work is an ode to the *gens* and the *patria* against the enemy. God leads *Hispania*’s armies to victory, with their anointed king at their head. The entire work is a model of contrasts between a “good and bad ritual” of royal anointing and, in particular, a display of the *gens* of *Hispania* as a new biblical Israel, as a people chosen by God.¹²⁹

However, we must stress that the initial enthusiasm of the Church manifested both by the 11th Council and the *Historia Wambae*, must have given way to disillusion as the king tried to control the clergy and prevent the accumulation of property in ecclesiastical hands. In a parallel development, the “protofeudalisation” of the state and the weakness of the central monarchy must have been evident. Wamba’s loss of power can hardly be more suspicious: his grave illness, the public penitence that made his return to power impossible and the accession of Erwig to the throne constitute the “most convincing proof of the failure of Wamba’s centralist and, to a certain extent,

¹²⁸ This may be related to the restriction that always prevailed whereby kings could only be Gothic, apart from some partial exceptions such as Theudis (Ostrogothic), or Erwig (Byzantine), see Díaz, “Visigothic Political Institutions”, pp. 339–40.

¹²⁹ De Jong, “Adding insult to injury”, p. 378. A ritual conceived by the great expert on liturgical rites. And a “good ritual” that will occur later with Wamba’s public penance that forced him to abdicate. Barbero, “El pensamiento”. On the possible dating of Julian’s work, in relation to the *Insultatio* and the *Iudicium*, besides De Jong, see Y. García López, “La cronología de la Historia Wambae”, *Anuario de Estudios medievales* 23 (1993) pp. 121–39.

anti-noble policies".¹³⁰ Growing disillusionment is already reflected by the 12th Council of Toledo (681) under Erwig, presided over by Julian, the friend of the king and perhaps an accomplice in his conspiracy, who, to put it no stronger than this, did not see the influence he had enjoyed under Wamba curtailed during the new king's rule. I have signalled this Council's importance apropos legislative activity and the consultative nature and power enjoyed by the Council Assembly. It is obvious that Erwig seeks to confirm the legitimacy of his accession to the throne and tries to secure the support of the Church while simultaneously granting privileges to the nobility to ensure the stability of the kingdom. Now, and increasingly under later kings, we see the need to gain the support of the *fideles regis* and the Church in the face of the growing feudalisation of the State and aristocratic power over groups and military *clientelae* in a pseudo-lord-vassal system. It is significant that, in an almost inversely proportional way, as the state is gradually more fragmented and the monarchy weakened, the texts of the councils reveal an ever more refined notion of *gens et patria* allied to the king.

Erwig addresses the 12th Council in his *Tomus* saying that the acceptance of the Council decree provides "enormous health to the peoples and the kingdom of the *gens*": *magna salus populis gentisque nostrae regno conquiritur*.¹³¹ In canon 1 (p. 387), the assembly stresses the need to obey Erwig and do whatever is necessary to ensure his safety and that of the nation and that renders benefit to the motherland: *enitendum quidquid eius saluti proficit quidquid genti vel utilitatibus patriae suae consuleat*. And it is the *populi* who, at the 13th Council of Toledo (683), seem to pay taxes (*populis fiscalibus*), taxes that must be neither too onerous nor suspended arbitrarily so as not to damage the *status* of the *gens*: *iudicium est quippe salutare in populis quando sic commissa reguntur, ut nec incauta exactio populus gravet nec indiscreta remissio statum gentis faciat deperire*. The term *gens* is difficult to define at this point as it can refer to the *populi* as a whole, understood as a political and juridical entity, rather than to specific groups, but always bearing in

¹³⁰ García Moreno, *Historia*, p. 176; Díaz, "Visigothic Political Institutions", pp. 338–47; A. Barbero and M. Vigil, *La formación del feudalismo en la Península Ibérica* (Barcelona 1978).

¹³¹ These *populi* and the *habitatores* of *villulis vel territoris sive vicis* are part of those drafted for the army who have been jeopardised by Wamba's "military law"; Erwig himself is also compelled to draft them (see note 123).

mind that *gens* means the free people (and not the foreigner) and is not independent of the nobility—based on class, not ethnicity—but with the idea, however, that this entails adherence to a certain lineage, based on social status. Thus, Erwig regards as “horrible and despicable” (*notis nostris horribile et animis execrabile*) the idea that freed men and serfs and those of noble status can be equated as this would demean the *status* of the *gens*: [. . .] *quum nobilitate conditio libertorum vel servorum etiam adaequata gentis nostrae statum degenerat*. For this reason and with the exception of the *servi fiscales*, serfs and freed men are banned from holding an *officium palatinum*. This ban is further elaborated in canon 6 (p. 482).

Obviously, this has nothing to do with a Gothic ancestry¹³² but, rather, with the differences between freemen, serfs and freedmen. In fact, Erwig puts more emphasis on *populus* than on *gens*. Thus, he notes (p. 450) that before accepting the crown, he sought to bind himself by means of an oath not to deny justice to the peoples entrusted to him: *ut iustitiam commissis populis non negarem*. When he submits to the Council the choice between obeying Wamba’s oath (that is to protect the royal family) or safeguarding his people’s welfare, the dichotomy is set between the *proles regia* and the *populus* and its interests (*negotia*); between the *fides unius domus regum* and the promises made to the *plebs*; between the *amor privatus* and the *generalis patriae et gentis affectio*, in an exact equivalence between *gens (et patria)* and *populus*. It is the same *populus* for whom his successor, Egica, implores God’s assistance, as well as for himself, at the 14th Council of Toledo (693): *et mihi [. . .] et cuncto populo regiminis mei respectio divina semper opituletur*. And, although at this Council, because of the dismal situation, sentences of anathema are repeated once again against the man who tries to harm the *rex*, the *gens Gothorum* and the *patria*—the same formulas uttered at the 4th Council of Toledo, and first repeated at the end of Julian of Toledo’s *Iudicium*—, Egica invokes it, however, in a *lex in confirmatione concilii*, without mentioning the Goths: *ut quisque contra regiam potestatem gentem ac patriam nostram agere conatus extiterit [. . .]*, with a *nostram* qualifying *patriam*, rather than *gentem*, which must not be overlooked.

¹³² Also, Erwig is the only king, as far as we know, with a different ethnic origin (apart from the Ostrogoth Theudis [see note 128]); he was a Byzantine, Ardabasto’s nephew, expelled from Constantinople and a refugee in Spain. Erwig became “an adopted Goth” by marrying one of Chindaswinth’s nieces.

Conclusion: The Spanish nation, a still unfulfilled dream

Almost sixty years have elapsed since the theoretical formulation of the 4th Council of Toledo. It is likely that now, all the monarchs of Toledo have a clearer notion that the *regnum Gothorum* is *Hispania* and the latter is the nation they rule, with all her peoples. The *gens* that constitutes these peoples is far removed from the *gens* denoting a lineage or an origin. And the equivalence *gens* = *populus* is manifest, although those who still count and hold power are the nobles and the Church, that is the prominent men of the kingdom. But it is their power, or that of some of them, that endangers the unity of the motherland and the stability of the whole nation (= *gens*), hence the obsessive use of that formula *rex et patria ac gens*. An idea of unity and nation championed by Toledo's centralist monarchy that failed to prosper because the fragmenting forces of sectors of the nobility and dissident groups, sometimes enjoying more popular support than others, regularly strove to overturn it.

This conception of a *Hispania* as the motherland of a new *gens Gothorum* (= Catholic people, governed by their new lords, the Goths) and ruled by a *rex* from that *gens*, would gradually be interpreted as the motherland of a *gens Gothorum* retaining the prestige of a lineage and maintaining a "social memory", but absorbing the clergy and the Hispano-Roman nobility from amongst the ruling class, whilst the population will remain indifferenced (apart from serfs, freedmen and minorities like the Jews). A *gens* that intellectuals, writers (and at the same time clerics) present as the heir of Roman culture after having made the *mater Spania* their *regnum*, an ancient, courageous and strong *gens*, superior to Rome and no longer *barbara* because they have embraced the Catholic faith and have become the new people of the Bible, united in the faith to the other *gentes*.

That creation of a new *Hispania* (= *regnum Gothorum*), the secular motherland of the natives of the Iberian Peninsula, where a *gens* already made up of *gothi et hispani populi*¹³³ live, under the single and centralised rule of a powerful *rex*, a *religiosus princeps*, blessed by God and the Church, was a dream that Leander of Seville timidly dared

¹³³ Where the Jews constitute a minority increasingly subject to persecution, a number of kings excepted, and where *Gallia* is an annexed province, an area of conflicts which will end up being denigrated.

to formulate at the 3rd Council of Toledo and his brother Isidore thought capable of being realised, joining their praises of Spain and her rulers. A dream that royal power tried to define and put within political boundaries in the Council regulations and in legislation, gradually abandoning the “ethnic discourse”, increasingly emptier of content, although at the same time formulating the genuine identity of the *gens* and the motherland through its ruling class.

Hispania (or if one prefers, Spain as a nation) was Chindaswinth’s true political project and, most of all, Recceswinth’s; both tried to issue laws for the new society of the period. A dream that could have become true had it not been for the tensions among nobles, the lust for independence of local aristocracies, the increasingly ambitious aspirations of very powerful figures with clienteles and “almost” their own subjects and the gradual weakness of a monarchy with its seat in Toledo.

A dream eagerly pursued, with ever more zeal as it grew increasingly impossible to fulfil, by the latter kings, from Wamba and Toledo’s Church itself with Julian at its head. And a dream, to sum up, that failed despite having preoccupied many minds. The concept of Spain as a nation was born, but this was not the time to make the dream come true.

[Translated by Francisca Rodríguez-Manas]

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THE TRANSFORMATION OF HISPANIA AFTER 711

Ann Christys

At first sight, it seems rather eccentric to include a study of the Arab conquest of Hispania in a discussion of the relationship between *gens* and *regnum* in the development of the Germanic states that succeeded the Roman Empire. After all, Hispania had emerged from the upheavals of the Migration period as a Visigothic kingdom. Surely the conquest of 711 was something completely different? In his recent account of *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, Hugh Kennedy described it as “the logical and necessary extension of the conquest of North Africa” which “had been achieved by an alliance of Arabs and Berbers in the name of Islam”.¹ Thus the peninsula was transformed almost overnight—or so it seems—from the Visigothic successor state to the Roman empire into part of a new, Islamic empire. The conquest of 711 was indeed the start of a new era in the peninsula. For the centuries to come, most of her history would be written in Arabic. It is not surprising that al-Andalus looks very different from the world of the Visigoths. Yet the Arabic histories are not our sole source for the conquest. Roger Collins based his account of *The Arab Conquest of Spain*² on a Latin chronicle, known as the *Chronica Muzarabica*, or the “Chronicle of 754”, because it ends in that year,³ rejecting the Arabic evidence as fiction. The “Chronicle of 754” should not be read merely as a narrative of the conquest period untainted by later legends. It lends itself to the methodological approach that has been adopted by historians of the Transformation of the Roman World. Indeed the chronicler uses the very same vocabulary of *gens* and *regna*. Such a reading can be extended to the Arabic histories, which are also concerned, in their very different way, with the ethnogenesis of the people of al-Andalus. My aim in this paper is to present

¹ H. Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal* (London 1996) p. 5.

² R. Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain, 710–797* (Oxford 1989).

³ *Chronica Muzarabica*, ed. J. Gil, *Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum* 1 (Madrid 1973) pp. 15–54; transl. K.B. Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain* (Liverpool 1990) pp. 111–58 [henceforth: transl. Wolf].

both the “Chronicle of 754” and a ninth-century Arabic history of al-Andalus, by ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb,⁴ from this perspective. I hope to bring the conquest back into the mainstream of early medieval European history and to throw some light on the view of the conquest which historians continue to draw from the Arabic sources.⁵

Both the Latin and Arabic sources agree that the invaders came from North Africa and were Berbers and Arabs. The conquest began with a raid or a series of raids across the straits of Gibraltar. The most significant of these was led by Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād, who was shortly afterwards followed by Mūsā ibn Nusayr, the governor of North Africa appointed by the caliph in Damascus. Within four years, the new arrivals seem to have controlled the southeast of the peninsula, advanced as far north as Zaragoza and the Picos de Europa and pushed on over the Pyrenees. They took Narbonne, and raided Aquitaine and Provence until—at least according to the Frankish histories—Charles Martel brought this expansion to an end with his victory between Tours and Poitiers, in 733 or 734—the battle which Gibbon represented as the decisive clash of the two empires of Christendom and Islam.

This much is fairly uncontroversial, but the details are obscure and open to debate. Historians writing in Arabic, often many centuries after the event, gave an implausibly elaborate account of the period. They attributed the conquest of the peninsula to the actions of a certain count Julian, who betrayed Hispania to the Arabs because the last Visigothic king, Rodrigo, had raped Julian’s daughter, entrusted to his care. Conquered Hispania yielded fabulous treasures. In Toledo, Mūsā found “gold and silver and emeralds and rubies and other things God alone knows”, and the crowns of his Visigothic predecessors.⁶ Here Mūsā opened the miraculous House of the Bolts. The story goes that each Visigothic ruler had to add another bolt to the door of this house, but he was forbidden to see what was inside. When Rodrigo entered the chamber against the advice of his ministers, his downfall was inevitable. Intense rivalry developed between Ṭāriq and Mūsā, as each sought recognition from the caliph in Damascus as the conqueror of al-Andalus. Central to this claim

⁴ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Ta’rikh*, ed. J. Aguadé (Madrid 1991).

⁵ See e.g. Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal*, pp. 10–3 and 18–29.

⁶ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Ta’rikh*, p. 140.

was that both men said they had discovered the Table of Solomon in Toledo. In a story with many parallels, Mūsā presented the Table to the caliph, but one of its legs was missing. Ṭāriq's triumphant production of the missing leg contributed to Mūsā's disgrace. Some of these stories made their way into Latin histories, although probably not until the eleventh century or later. They are not in the "Chronicle of 754", and attempts to substantiate the legends from the chronicle, for instance by linking Julian with a North African bishop Urbanus who accompanied Mūsā to Spain, are unconvincing.⁷ These stories are usually left out of the narrative of the conquest in favour of episodes which are more plausible, although equally unsubstantiated, but they are part of the history of al-Andalus; the origins and possible meaning of some of them will be considered later. First, though, I will introduce the relatively sober account of the "Chronicle of 754".

The "Chronicle of 754", which ends in that year, covers almost the whole of the period which modern historians have labelled "the period of the governors", from 711 to the establishment of 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the first Umayyad ruler of al-Andalus c. 756. This is probably a coincidence, as this periodisation is to some extent an artifact of the creation by later Umayyad propagandists of foundation myths about 'Abd al-Raḥmān's arrival in the peninsula. The names of the governors are preserved in three slightly different versions in the "Chronicle of 754", the "History" of Ibn Ḥabīb and the "Prophetic Chronicle", written in the Asturias in the 880s.⁸ The concordance between these three apparently independent sources suggests a certain core of fact, although the chronology of the conquest remains imprecise.

The "Chronicle of 754" survives in two versions. The earliest is incomplete and consists of six folia, now divided between Madrid and London,⁹ which may date from the middle of the ninth century.¹⁰

⁷ *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 35; Collins, *The Arab Conquest*, p. 36.

⁸ See the Appendix; I have not been able to consult G.V. Sumner, "The chronology of the governors of al-Andalus to the accession of 'Abd al-Raḥmān I", *Medieval Studies* 48 (1986) pp. 422-69.

⁹ B.M. Egerton 1934; Biblioteca de la Academia de la Historia 81.

¹⁰ M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "La transmisión textual del Biclarense", *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia* 35 (1962) pp. 57-78, here p. 71.

Another version was copied into a thirteenth-century codex now in Madrid.¹¹ This codex is a compendium of histories which stretch from Eusebius to the chronicle of Ricardo Pictaviense continued to 1244 and includes the sixth-century “Chronicle” of John of Bictar, and Isidore’s “Chronicle” and “History of the Goths, Sueves and Vandals”. The “Chronicle of 754” was also copied into at least two other codices of histories. One, from Alcobaça, disappeared sometime after 1622,¹² but a fourteenth-century manuscript from Navarre survives in Paris.¹³ The vagaries of manuscript survival have left only one apparently complete version of the “Chronicle of 754”, which make the value of the chronicle as evidence for the first half of the eighth century difficult to interpret. But the surviving version concludes with a paragraph in which the chronicler calculated the age of the world to the point where his history stops, in “the tenth year of the emperor Constantine, the fourth year of ‘Abd Allah the *Amiralmuminim*, the seventh year of Yusuf in the land of Spain and the one hundred and thirty-sixth of the Arabs”. This allows us to read the “Chronicle of 754” as being based on an eighth-century original, although both the language and content of that original may have been altered in transmission.

The “Chronicle of 754” begins with the accession of Heraclius in Era 649 (611; the accepted date is 610). It is structured by Byzantine imperial accessions and the author included material on the Byzantines, the Islamic conquest of Syria and the early caliphs. In general, the chronicler’s concern was not with these events as such. He used them to establish a chronological framework, on which he hung a history of the Visigothic kings, using his eastern material to turn the history of Hispania into a universal chronicle. Apart from a few discrepancies, he was successful in tying in Byzantine imperial regnal years with Hispanic Era dates, the regnal years of the caliphs, the years of the Hegira, and an *annus mundi* dating which began with the creation of the world in 5200 B.C.¹⁴ For the period up to 711,

¹¹ Biblioteca de la Universidad Complutense 116-Z-46 (Villa-Amil catalogue no. 134).

¹² C. Cardelle de Hartmann, “The textual transmission of the Mozarabic chronicle of 754”, *Early Medieval Europe* 8 (1999) pp. 13–29; J.E. López Pereira, *Estudio Crítico sobre la Crónica Mozárabe de 754* (Zaragoza 1980) p. 8.

¹³ Library of the Arsenal 982.

¹⁴ *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 35.

the Byzantine, Visigothic and Islamic histories run in parallel, with one chapter given to each in turn. After this date, the chronicler concentrated exclusively on the history of the peninsula, although the framework of Byzantine, *hegira* and *annus mundi* dates was maintained.

The “Chronicle of 754” was written in the tradition of providential history, which the author had inherited from Eusebius.¹⁵ This was history with a message, the triumph of the empire of God, which for Eusebius was co-extensive with the Roman empire. After the fall of Rome, western historians preferred to give the role previously played by the empire to the empire’s barbarian successors. At first, it was not easy to envisage the Visigothic kingdom of Hispania as God’s chosen instrument, since the persistence of the Arian heresy made the Visigothic kings suspect in the eyes of the catholic clerics who wrote the chronicles. It was only after the conversion of Reccared to Catholicism in 589 that John of Biclar and Isidore were able to write convincing providential history in the peninsula. One version of Isidore’s “History of the Goths, Sueves and Vandals”, which ends in the reign of Suithila,¹⁶ climaxed with the triumph of the Gothic monarchy, the expulsion of the Byzantines, and Reccared as the new Constantine. Hispania was firmly integrated into a universal history of the Christian empire.

The dramatic events of 711 could be envisaged as part of the same story. The “Chronicle of 754” was written as a continuation of the “Chronicle of John of Biclar” and included excerpts from Isidore’s “History of the Goths”. The chronicler showed how the peninsula flourished under a succession of Visigothic kings, starting with the pious and victorious Sisenand (612–621), until the kingdom was destroyed by the ambition of the usurper Rodrigo, who “rebelliously seized the kingdom at the instigation of the senate”. At the Transductine mountains, Rodrigo faced the invading armies of “Arabs and Moors [. . .] and in that battle the entire army of the Goths, which had come to him fraudulently and in rivalry out of ambition for the kingship, fled and he was slain. Thus Roderic [Rodrigo] wretchedly lost not only his rule but his homeland, his rivals also

¹⁵ J.N. Hillgarth, “Historiography in Visigothic Spain”, *La storiografia altomedievale*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo (Spoleto 1970) pp. 261–311.

¹⁶ R. Collins, “Isidore, Maximus and the *Historia Gothorum*”, *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (Munich 1994) pp. 345–58.

being killed [. . .],”¹⁷ and—lamented the chronicler—Hispania was ruined:

Who can recount such perils? Who can enumerate such grievous disaster? Even if every limb were transformed into a tongue, it would be beyond human nature to express the ruin of Hispania and its many and great evils. But let me summarize everything on one brief page. Leaving aside all of the innumerable disasters from the time of Adam up to the present which this cruel, unclean world has brought to countless regions and cities—that which, historically, the city of Troy sustained when it fell; that which Jerusalem suffered, as foretold by the eloquence of the prophets; that which Babylon bore, according to the eloquence of the scriptures; that which Rome went through, martyrially graced with the nobility of the apostles—all this and more Hispania, once so delightful and now rendered so miserable, endured as much to its honour as to its disgrace.¹⁸

The new masters of Hispania were clearly recognized as a *gens*, labelled at different points in the chronicle either as Arabs or as Saracens. They were usually, but not always, distinguished from the *Mauri*, the Moors [or Berbers] of North Africa, who took part in the conquest, but not in the formation of the *regnum*, as we shall see. According to the “Chronicle of 754”, these same Arabs and Saracens had brought about the downfall of Heraclius as a punishment for his hubris after defeating the Persians.¹⁹ The chronicler dated the first “year of the Arabs” from the date of their rebellion against Byzantium “through the trickery of Muḥammad”,²⁰ which he gave as Spanish Era 656 (618), well before the date traditionally accepted as the start of Muḥammad’s rise to power. The chronicler underlined that this was the beginning of a new kingdom by also dating the foundation of their capital in Damascus to the same year.²¹ Yet the chronicler did not link the conquest of Hispania with Muḥammad, whose name is not mentioned in this section of the chronicle. There is no sense of the arrival of a new religion. The chronicler probably knew something about Islam. A second eighth-century Hispanic chronicle survives, probably written from the same eastern sources

¹⁷ *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 31; transl. Wolf, p. 131.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33; transl. Wolf, pp. 132–3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17; transl. Wolf, p. 113.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18; transl. Wolf, pp. 113–4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

as the “Chronicle of 754”,²² although it includes only one brief passage on Hispania after 711. In this chronicle, Muḥammad is described as a prince “whom they honour and reverence to such an extent that in all their sacraments and letters they affirm him to be an apostle of their god”.²³ Yet anti-Muslim polemic does not seem to have been written in the peninsula until the middle of the ninth century, when Eulogius characterized Islam as a heretical Christian sect.²⁴ The lament for the destruction of Hispania reads like a much shorter version of Gildas’ “Ruin of Britain”, written two centuries earlier—a diatribe in which the failings of the conquered were of far greater significance to the author than the nature of the scourge sent to punish them.²⁵ For the author of the “Chronicle of 754”, it was Visigothic disunity which had occasioned the ruin of Spain, and which would be the main reason why the invaders were able to establish themselves. For Spain, said the chronicler, “was greatly afflicted not only by the enemy but by domestic strife”.²⁶ Rodrigo’s enemies defected to the incomers. The chronicler described how “after forcing his way up to Toledo, [Mūsā] imposed on the adjacent regions an evil and fraudulent peace. He decapitated on a scaffold those noble lords who still remained, arresting them in their flight from Toledo with the help of Oppa, king Egica’s son. With Oppa’s support, he killed them all with the sword”.²⁷ The treachery of the Visigothic royal house was a recurring theme in both the Latin and the Arabic accounts of the ruin of Spain. There is no suggestion that apostasy to Islam played any part in this. Mūsā was accompanied throughout Spain by Urbanus “that most noble man of the African region, reared under the doctrine of the Catholic faith”.²⁸

²² *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica*, ed. J. Gil, Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabiorum 1 (Madrid 1973) pp. 7–14; for a comparison between the two chronicles see A. Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus 711–c. 1000* (Richmond, Surrey 2002) pp. 28–51.

²³ *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica*, p. 9.

²⁴ Eulogius, *Apologeticus martyrurum*, ed. J. Gil, Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabiorum 2 (Madrid 1973) pp. 475–95, here p. 487; K.B. Wolf, “Christian views of Islam in early medieval Spain”, *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, ed. J.V. Tolan (New York-London 1996) pp. 85–108.

²⁵ Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and other works*, ed. and transl. M. Winterbottom (London-Chichester 1978).

²⁶ *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 31; transl. Wolf, p. 132.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 31–2; transl. Wolf, pp. 132–3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35; transl. Wolf, p. 134.

The Arabs, or Saracens, and Berbers seemed merely to be moving into a vacuum created by internal disorder.

The compiler of the “Chronicle of 754” used exactly the same terms *gens* and *regnum* to describe the new *regnum* of the Arabs/Saracens as he used for the *regna* of Byzantium and Visigothic Hispania. This will be clearer from the following quotations from the chronicler’s brief accounts of the Islamic conquests of Byzantium and Hispania. Thus, in the fourteenth “year of the Arabs”, *Amer* [‘Umar, 634–44] *gubernacula prioris suscipiens omnia populo decem per annos rigidus mansit in regno*.²⁹ His successor ‘Uthman [644–652/3] *sue gentis administrationem suscepit annos XII*.³⁰ During the reign of ‘Uthman, the Arabs extended their rule to North Africa, where *Sarracenorum sociabit regimini et dicioni subiecit*. Here they faced a new enemy, but “the battle line of the Moors [*Maurorum*] immediately turned in flight and all the nobility of Africa [. . .] was wiped out entirely”.³¹ When Walīd (705–15) took up the *sceptra regni Sarracenorum* he ordered Mūsā ibn Nusayr, the governor of North Africa, to attack the *regnum Gothorum*.³² Mūsā in turn delegated the attack to Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād, who was described in some of the Arabic histories as a Berber, although the “Chronicle of 754” made no reference to his origins. Hearing of the invasion, Rodrigo, “directed armies against the Arabs and the Moors sent by Mūsā, that is against Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād and the others”.³³ After Rodrigo’s defeat, Mūsā himself arrived in the peninsula, imposed a “fraudulent peace” and established a *regnum efferum* based on Cordoba.³⁴ As we shall see, the chronicler makes several references to the taxation and redistribution of land by the conquerors, to whom he attaches ethnic labels. One of the governors, al-Samḥ (c. 718–21) “divided by lot among his allies the booty, arms and whatever else in the way of plunder the *gens Arabica* in Spain had not yet divided”.³⁵

There are few if any references to “strategies of distinction”³⁶ between the inhabitants of the peninsula and the incomers. The

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24–5.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³³ *Ibid.*; transl. Wolf, p. 131.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37; transl. Wolf, p. 138.

³⁶ W. Pohl, “Telling the difference: Signs of ethnic identity”, *Strategies of Distinction. The construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. id. and H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-Boston-Köln 1998) pp. 17–70.

chronicler did not think it worth mentioning whether the Arabs and Saracens spoke a different language from the inhabitants of the peninsula, or whether they knew Arabic. The references to interpreters, found in later accounts of embassies between al-Andalus and Latin and Greek-speaking rulers, are totally lacking from the “Chronicle of 754” (and indeed from the Arabic accounts). As we have seen, the religion of the conquerors is not mentioned. Similarly, the chronicler showed a total lack of interest in vestimentary markers.³⁷ The notion that the inhabitants of the peninsula would have instantly recognized the Arabs as different first appeared in the “History” of Ibn Ḥabīb.³⁸ It came in one of the most famous stories of the conquest—the story of the House of Bolts in Toledo, which we have already met. This may originally have been an Egyptian folk tale, and was transmitted to Ibn Ḥabīb by the Egyptian scholar al-Layth ibn Sa’d (d. 791).³⁹ The following, shorter version was included in the “History of the Conquest” by Ibn al-Qūṭīya (d. 977):

It is said that the Visigoth kings had a palace at Tulaytula [Toledo] in which was a sepulchre containing the Four Evangelists, on which they swore their oaths. The palace was revered and never opened. When a king died his name was inscribed there. When Roderick [Rodrigo] came to the throne, he put the crown on his head himself, which gave great offence to the Christians; then he opened the palace and the sepulchre, despite the attempts of the Christians to prevent him. Inside they found effigies of the Arabs, bows slung over their shoulders and turbans on their heads. At the bottom of the plinths it was written: ‘When this palace is opened and these images are brought out, a people in their likeness will come to al-Andalus and conquer it.’¹⁴⁰

Although the conquerors were portrayed as a scourge sent by God to punish the sinners of Hispania, a careful reading of the “Chronicle of 754” undermines the chronicler’s message. The identity of the

³⁷ Pohl, “Telling the difference”, p. 42.

³⁸ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Ta’rīkh*, p. 140.

³⁹ M.A. Makki, “Egipto y los orígenes de la historiografía árabe-española”, *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos* 5 (1957) pp. 157–248, here pp. 178–9; translated by M. Kennedy in *The Formation of al-Andalus*, vol. 2: *Language, Religion, Culture and Sciences*, ed. M. Fierro and J. Samsó (Aldershot 1998) pp. 173–234.

⁴⁰ Ibn al-Qūṭīya, *Historia de la conquista de España de Abenalcotía de Córdoba*, ed. P. Gayangos, E. Saavedra and F. Codera (Madrid 1868); repr. with Spanish transl. by J. Ribera y Tarragó (Madrid 1926) p. 92; this passage transl. in *Christians and Moors in Spain* 3, ed. C.P. Melville and A. Ubaydli (Warminster 1992) p. 3.

conquerors had little impact on the form taken by their *regnum*, which was constituted on the outlines of the Visigothic kingdom. Administrative and military boundaries may have been preserved and tax-collecting mechanisms utilized, although the evidence is slight.⁴¹ Mūsā made directly for Toledo, and if Cordoba, rather than Toledo soon became the Islamic capital, it may have been a response to the difficulty in ensuring the loyalty of the former Visigothic capital, which is reflected in repeated accounts of revolts in later Arabic histories, rather than an indication that the new regime was deliberately reshaping Hispania. After the brief period of turmoil brought by Ṭāriq and Mūsā, the chronicler implies that, for a time at least, the stability of the kingdom was restored. There is no hint of the rivalry between Ṭāriq and Mūsā which was one of the main themes of the conquest stories in Arabic, although the “Chronicle of 754” described how Mūsā was recalled to Damascus by al-Walīd, who was angry with Mūsā in spite of the prisoners and the vast quantities of booty he brought with him, and ordered his public humiliation.⁴² Indeed, the chronicler shows one of the early governors identifying with his Visigothic predecessors in the most extreme way possible. Mūsā’s son ‘Abd al-Aziz married Rodrigo’s widow, Egilona and “tried to throw off the Arab yoke from his neck and retain the conquered kingdom of Iberia for himself”.⁴³ ‘Abd al-Aziz was murdered by a rival Arab faction; the chronicler represented the succession of al-Ḥurr as legitimate: *in regno Esperie per principalia iussa succedit*. Al-Ḥurr also pursued a conciliatory line towards the indigenous population. He “restored to the Christians the small estates that had originally been confiscated for the sake of peace” and “punished the Moors [. . .] on account of the treasure they had hidden”.⁴⁴ A decade later, Yahya (c. 727–30) risked antagonizing the Islamic regime’s supporters even further when “with bitter deceit [. . .] [he] stirred up the Saracens and Moors of Spain by confiscating property that they were holding for the sake of peace and restoring many things to the Christians”.⁴⁵ It is perhaps surprising to read that in references to

⁴¹ J. Vallvé Bermejo, “España en el siglo VIII: ejército y sociedad”, *Al-Andalus* 43 (1978) pp. 51–112.

⁴² *Chronica Muzarabica*, pp. 33–5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 37; transl. Wolf, p. 136.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36; transl. Wolf, p. 137.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39; transl. Wolf, p. 141.

conflict between the rulers of Hispania and Francia, the chronicler took a pro-Hispanic rather than a pro-Christian line. Eudo's defeat of the governor al-Samḥ at Toulouse c. 721 was reported as only a temporary setback rather than a cause for Christian rejoicing. The defeat did not hinder the peaceful succession of Muslim governors and the "Chronicle of 754" reported that Eudo was himself later defeated.⁴⁶ Al-Samḥ's successor, Ambasa, was shown defending the old Visigothic borders against the Franks, and although he imposed heavy taxation on the Christians "he triumphed in Spain with the highest honour".⁴⁷ The impression given by the chronicler, despite his laments, is one of continuity rather than collapse.

Yet there was one obvious difference between Visigothic and Islamic Hispania. In the Arabic tradition, the new regime established by Mūsā may have begun as a part of an Islamic empire based on Damascus. The Arabic histories make repeated reference to voyages to Damascus to seek authorization and arbitration at the caliphal court. Even Hispanic Christians might resort to Damascus. Ibn al-Qūṭīya told how one of his ancestors, Sara, the granddaughter of Witiza, the penultimate Visigothic ruler, appealed to Hishām (724–43) against her uncle, who had stolen land belonging to her young brothers, in contravention of the treaty which Sara's father had made with al-Walīd at the time of the conquest.⁴⁸ Many of these stories are late and implausible. The survival of the "Chronicle of 754" means that the picture in Hispania seems clearer than that for the Islamic conquests in the east, where the long period between the events and their recording means that the degree of central control of events may be a literary creation and can be disputed.⁴⁹ The "Chronicle of 754" also sees the new conquest as sponsored by Damascus. Yet the Chronicle's account of the relationship between Cordoba and Damascus is both equivocal and changing. The chronicler notes that the early governors were appointed "by order of the prince"⁵⁰ (presumably the caliph in Damascus) or by the governor

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 41–3.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 39; transl. Wolf, p. 140.

⁴⁸ Ibn al-Qūṭīya, *Historia de la conquista*, pp. 4–6.

⁴⁹ F.M. Donner, "Centralised authority and military autonomy in the early Islamic conquests", *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. 3: *States, Resources and Armies*, ed. A. Cameron (Princeton NJ 1995) pp. 337–60.

⁵⁰ *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 37.

of Africa “whose privilege it was to confer power in Spain with the consent of the prince”.⁵¹ After the defeat of al-Samḥ at Toulouse, a temporary commander was elected until “Anbasah, by order of the prince, came to serve as governor”.⁵² The last of the governors whose appointment was reported in this way was Hudjifah, who governed briefly and unsuccessfully c. 728. Later rulers of Hispania seem to have been independent of Damascus. ‘Abd al-Malik, who in 734 “was sent by the order of the prince to be governor of Spain” was replaced by ‘Uqbah three years later, but returned to power without the intervention of Damascus c. 740: *consensu omnium* [. . .]. *eligitur Arabum in regno*.⁵³ ‘Abd al-Malik acted on his own authority in attempting, without success, to deny access to Spain to the armies of Balj whom the caliph had sent to suppress a Berber revolt in North Africa. This precipitated a civil war between the *orientalia* under Balj and the *occidentalia*, the Arabs already established in the peninsula. This period was the subject of a separate *epitoma* written by the author of the “Chronicle of 754” but now unfortunately lost. As the peninsula emerged from chaos, Thalaba was “appointed with unanimous support” and his successor Yusuf “was wonderfully acclaimed by all the senate of the palace as king of the land”. This was how the Visigothic succession had been determined, at least in theory. The list of the governors in the “Prophetic Chronicle”⁵⁴ suggests that the caliph’s control lasted a little longer. It names Tawaba as the last of the governors appointed by the caliph, and describes his successor Yusuf, who was overthrown by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I, as an independent king (and also, incidentally, as an Umayyad). The list of the rulers of al-Andalus in Ibn Ḥabīb’s list, entitled “On the governors of al-Andalus from the day of the conquest to the year 265 after the Hegira” (878–9) makes little distinction between the Umayyads and their predecessors.⁵⁵ All three sources suggest that within a few years of the conquest, Islamic Hispania may have been in effect independent from Damascus, rather than the farthest outpost of empire. Islamic scholars from al-Dawūdi (d. 1011) onwards were to argue about the legal basis of the conquest and whether the caliph

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40; transl. Wolf, p. 142.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁵⁴ *Chroniques Asturiennes (fin IX^e siècle)*, ed. and transl. Y. Bonnaz (Paris 1987) p. 8.

⁵⁵ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kūāb al-Ta’rīkh*, p. 434.

had ever received the fifth of the booty to which he was entitled.⁵⁶ The scanty surviving coinage may bear this out, although it is difficult to interpret. Coins in the form of Byzantine *solidi* were struck with the letters SPN as the place of minting and no reference to Damascus. After 716, coins with bilingual Latin and Arabic inscriptions and the name al-Andalus appeared. This independence may find an echo in the story preserved in the Arabic tradition that al-Walīd had considered abandoning Hispania.

Wolf has already shown how literary models influenced the way in which the “Chronicle of 754” “reported the Muslim invasion and settlement more or less matter-of-factly as a change of regime in Spain”. This was a consequence of “the way in which the chroniclers tapped into earlier works of Iberian history”.⁵⁷ Above all, it was the influence of Isidore that determined how the new *gens* and *regnum* would be described. Isidore was a protagonist of the “Chronicle of 754” as well as providing the material for the period to 621 and a powerful literary model. One strand of the chronicle is an account of the Visigothic church councils, listing one council for each reign. The chronicler noted that Isidore defeated a heretical “Acephalite” bishop at the council of Seville of 619,⁵⁸ and was present at the fourth council of Toledo in 633.⁵⁹ The language of the chronicle is characterized by Isidore’s *brevitas*.⁶⁰ Wolf argued that this allowed the chronicler to skirt round the problems caused to a writer of providential Christian history by the continuing existence of the Arab kingdom and the cooperation between the native population and the conquerors: “by describing the Muslim caliphs as *reges* and their generals as *duces*, he dresses a foreign people in terms familiar to a reader well versed in the language of Latin history”.⁶¹ But Isidore’s influence went much further than providing the tools to allow the chronicler to skate over the facts. Isidore, working from classical

⁵⁶ H. Abdul Wahab and F. Dachraoui, “Le régime foncier en Sicile aux IX^{ème}–X^{ème} siècles: édition et traduction d’un chapitre du ‘Kitab al-amwal’ de al-Dawudi”, *Etudes d’orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal* 2 (Paris 1962) pp. 401–55, here p. 428.

⁵⁷ K.B. Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain* (Liverpool 1990) p. xvi.

⁵⁸ *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Collins, *The Arab Conquest*, pp. 38–9.

⁶¹ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, p. 41.

models, had created the template from which the description of a new *gens* and *regnum* could be created.

The author of the “Chronicle of 754” held preconceived ideas about the ethnicity of the conquerors of 711. The origins of the newcomers were far away and long ago. Thus it is not surprising that the chronicler gives no indication that the new rulers of Hispania were involved in any process of ethnogenesis, in the moulding of natives and conquerors into a new *gens*, such as had taken place in the Migration period. Hispanic scholars were aware of the existence of Arabs and Saracens even before they began to have an impact on the Byzantine empire. In Book IX of the “Etymologies”, Isidore identified the Saracens as the descendants of Ishmael; they were called Saracens either because they claimed descent from Sara, Abraham’s wife, or because of their Syrian origin.⁶² The *Sarraceni* were the Arabs of Syria and the north of the Arabian peninsula. Arab is given as an alternative name for the Sabaeans from Arabia, whose genealogy stretched back to Noah’s son Ham.⁶³ Isidore placed them in the south of the Arabian peninsula, in Yemen. Disputes between the Arabs of North and South Arabia were a constant feature of Islamic history, including the conquest period in Hispania, although the way these groups identified themselves depended on the current circumstances. As Collins noted,⁶⁴ the civil strife between the different groups of the conquerors in Hispania in the 740s ought to have made the chronicler more attentive to Isidore’s distinction between Arab and Saracen, although in fact he ignored it. It is possible that the chronicler had dealt with this question in his *epitoma* on the civil wars, but it is equally likely that this was a tacit recognition that the etymology and genealogy of the conquerors were of little importance.

This may be because characterizing the *regnum* was more important than identifying the new *gens*. In the *Laus Spaniae—o sacra semperque felix principium gentiumque mater*—which begins the “History of the Goths”, adapted from two works of Cyprian in praise of virginity, Isidore had raised up Spain as “the pride and ornament of

⁶² Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX* 9,2,6; 2,57, ed. W.M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford 1911).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 9,2,2; 9,2,14; 9,2,18.

⁶⁴ Collins, *The Arab Conquest*, p. 62.

the world, the most illustrious part of the earth, in which the Getic people are gloriously prolific, rejoicing much and flourishing greatly".⁶⁵ The glories of Spain, entrusted once to the Romans, were now the property of the Goths: "although this same Romulean power, initially victorious, betrothed you to itself, now it is the most flourishing people of the Goths, who in their turn, after many victories, have eagerly seized you and loved you; they enjoy you up to the present time amidst royal emblems and great wealth, secure in the good fortune of empire". Isidore provided a genealogy and history for the Goths that made them worthy of this great prize, culminating in Suithila, "the first to obtain the monarchy of the entire kingdom of Spain".⁶⁶ Isidore's focus was geographical, and he was able to talk about Hispania and "the peoples of Hispania" without meaning any particular ethnic group.⁶⁷ Goths and Romans were equal citizens of the *regnum Gothorum*. The *regnum* was under the control of elected, not hereditary rulers, whose origin, as in the case of Erwig, could be outside the peninsula. Both John of Biclar and Isidore saw Franks as enemies and exaggerated Gothic victories over them, not because of ethnic differences, but because Hispania was under threat. This was the line that the author of the "Chronicle of 754" took on the relationship between Hispania and Francia after 711. After the conquest, the term Goth disappeared from the chronicler's vocabulary, and the natives of Hispania were distinguished only as Christians from the incoming Arabs, Saracens and Moors, whose rulers took over from the Visigoths, upholding the glory of Hispania.

In contrast, the chronicler's treatment of the Moors (or Berbers, although the chronicler never used this term) showed them as a separate *gens* who had little or no role to play in the continuity of the Hispanic *regnum*. The ethnic identity of these invaders was well known in Hispania. John of Biclar had identified them as the opponents of

⁶⁵ Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum, Wandalorum, Sueborum*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 11 (Berlin 1894) pp. 241–303, here p. 267; transl. Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, p. 80.

⁶⁶ Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum*, p. 292.

⁶⁷ Id., *Etymologiarum* 9,2,110; D. Claude, "Remarks about relations between Visigoths and Hispano-Romans in the seventh century", *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998) pp. 117–30.

the Byzantines in North Africa.⁶⁸ There was a long history of these peoples from across the straits of Gibraltar raiding the peninsula, going back to the Roman period. The “Chronicle of 754” implied that Ṭāriq’s arrival was the culmination of a process of constant harassment of Hispania from North Africa, for the Moors “had long been devastating the province assigned to them”.⁶⁹ Recent scholarship on the army of the conquest characterizes it as consisting largely of Berbers. They were almost certainly a mixture of converts to Islam, pagans practicing their own local religions and even Christians.⁷⁰ An eleventh-century source mentions a group called the *afāriqa* among the conquerors, and this may be a reference to the Romanised indigenous population of North Africa.⁷¹ With the possible exception of Ṭāriq, none of these men achieved prominence in the government of Islamic Hispania. Yet neither was the identity of the Moors subsumed into that of the successors of the Visigoths. Individual *Mauri* continued to play a role. The chronicler gave a detailed account of the rebellion of “one of the people of the Moors named Munnuza”⁷² against the governor ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ghafiḳī c. 731, linking this with the oppression of the Berbers of North Africa by their Arab rulers. When, in the 740s, the Berbers revolted, the *Mauri* of al-Andalus “gathered for war, wanting to subject ‘Abd al-Malik to themselves, cross over the sea in ships, and offer his conquered kingdom (*regnum eius adsumptum*) to their allies on the other side of the sea (*transmarinis sodalibus*)”.⁷³ There was no suggestion that this *gens* was to be identified with the people of Hispania.

The establishment of the Arabs in Hispania was of course more than a literary construct, a reworking of Isidore’s “History of the Goths”. There are enough similarities between the “Chronicle of 754” and the Arabic histories of al-Andalus to confirm the outline of the chronicler’s account. It is true that the Arabic chronicles were all written at least a century after the event, and survive in manu-

⁶⁸ John of Biclar, *Chronica* 569; 570; 571; 578, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 11 (Berlin 1894) pp. 207–20.

⁶⁹ *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 31.

⁷⁰ M. Brett and E. Fentress, *The Berbers* (Oxford 1996; repr. 1998) p. 92.

⁷¹ J. Hopkins, *Medieval Government in Barbary* (London 1958) pp. 62–6; E. Savage, *A Gateway to Hell, A Gateway to Paradise: the North African Response to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton NJ 1997) p. 102.

⁷² *Chronica Muzarabica*, p. 41.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 46; transl. Wolf, p. 149.

scripts which are later still. The quotations which later historians make of earlier sources, now lost, resemble a game of Chinese whispers, in which some members in the chain may have transmitted their version of the message accurately (although some did not), but the original message has been lost and cannot be reconstructed. Collins' reliance on the "Chronicle of 754" as his principal source for the history of the conquest seems justified. But his sweeping dismissal of the Arabic histories should be overturned in favour of a critical reading of this evidence. In the concluding section of this paper I will use the "History" of Ibn Ḥabīb to make connections between the Arabic traditions of the conquest into the account provided by the "Chronicle of 754".

The "History" of Ibn Ḥabīb is a universal history from the Creation. It contains the earliest surviving account of the conquest in Arabic written in al-Andalus, which is, however, little more than a list of governors and few anecdotes. It survives in one manuscript dated 1295–6, which seems to be a copy of a version of the work compiled by Yusuf ibn Yahya al-Maghami, who died in 901 and was a pupil of Ibn Ḥabīb.⁷⁴ Ibn Ḥabīb spent three years in Egypt, where he was a pupil of 'Abd al-Ḥakam, whose son wrote a "History of the Conquest of the Maghreb and al-Andalus", and where he may have heard for the first time the fabulous tales about the locked chamber in Toledo and the Table of Solomon. Ibn Ḥabīb also travelled to Medina, and seems to have copied part of his history of al-Andalus from the Medinan scholar al-Waqidi, via his pupil Ibrahim ibn al-Mundhir al-Hizami (d. 850). The work of al-Waqidi survives only in fragments cited in other sources; the thirteenth-century historian Ibn 'Idhāri gave him as the authority for the agreement between Ṭāriq and count Julian, the battle between Ṭāriq and Rodrigo, the arrival of Mūsā and the marriage between 'Abd al-Aziz, the son of Mūsā, with Egilona, here called the daughter, rather than the wife of Rodrigo. What Ibn Ḥabīb, or his pupil al-Maghami, took from al-Waqidi, is a brief and sober account of the rulers of al-Andalus, which is in general agreement with the account given by the "Chronicle of 754":

⁷⁴ Ibn al-Faraḡī, *Ta'rikh 'ulama' al-Andalus*, ed. F. Codera and J. Ribera y Tarragó, vol. 2, Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana (Madrid 1892) no. 201; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Ta'rikh*, p. 75.

‘Abd al-Malik told us from Ibrahim ibn al-Mundhir al-Hizami, from al-Waqidi: Ṭāriq remained in al-Andalus for one year from the day of the conquest until he left, then after him Mūsā ibn Nusayr [reigned] for two years and one month, then ‘Abd al-Aziz, the son of Mūsā for two years, then al-Ḥurr ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Thaqafi for two years and eight months [. . .]. Then Yusuf ibn ‘Abd al-Rāḥmān ruled for six years and nine months. Then ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mu‘āwiya ibn Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan ruled, may God be wholly pleased with him! He was the one who entered al-Andalus [i.e. the first of the Umayyads to rule Hispania]. Yusuf marched towards him and met him at the garrison of Cordoba and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mu‘āwiya defeated him and took possession of the kingdom and entered the palace from that time on and was acknowledged as sovereign [. . .].⁷⁵

Thus it seems that the history of the conquest had been forgotten in al-Andalus and had to be reimported from outside the peninsula.

The prominence which Ibn Ḥabīb gave in his “History” to the stories which he had heard in Egypt led the prominent nineteenth-century Arabist Dozy to dismiss the “History” as about as much use to historians as “The 1001 Nights”—which is indeed where many of the stories of the conquest ended up. Ibn Ḥabīb’s “History” was excluded from the canon of Arabic chronicles of al-Andalus, and it is one of the few sources that have not been translated. Yet Ibn Ḥabīb’s evidence is preferable to some of the later sources upon which modern historians rely. Most of the Arabic histories are the work of scholars who were active after the establishment of the Umayyad caliphate in 929. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and his son al-Ḥakam II are said to have sponsored the writing of history and genealogy, which became largely a series of panegyrics of the Umayyads.⁷⁶ The difficulty in viewing the history of al-Andalus from any other perspective has been compounded by nostalgia for the glories of Umayyad Cordoba which was generated in the tiny taifa kingdoms which emerged from the collapse of the caliphate, and is still alive in modern Arabic culture. The first author to be dignified with the title “the historian” by the Umayyad propagandist was Aḥmad al-Rāzī (d. 955), who, according to his son, was the first to collect and evaluate the histories of the conquest. Al-Rāzī’s work on the conquest does not sur-

⁷⁵ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Ta’rikh*, p. 434.

⁷⁶ G. Martínez-Gros, *L’idéologie omeyyade: La construction de la légitimité du califat de Cordue (X^e-XI^e siècles)* (Madrid 1992).

vive, although he was cited by later authors such as Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 1076) and Ibn ʿIdhārī, a thirteenth-century historian from the Maghreb. Some of these works survive, and they were also collated by a Moroccan historian active in the seventeenth century, al-Maqqari, in a compendium which is still the source most commonly cited for the history of al-Andalus.⁷⁷ Al-Rāzī may have some connection with the work bearing his name that was translated into Portuguese by order of king Dinis (1279–1325).⁷⁸ Only two short passages of this version survive in a seventeenth-century transcription.⁷⁹ One or more Castilian translations were made shortly afterwards, but the bulk of the work is a gazetteer of al-Andalus. In the three extant Castilian versions, the section on the conquest is unusable because it was turned into a historical novel by Pedro de Corral c. 1430. It is difficult to see why al-Rāzī is always considered a more reliable source than Ibn Ḥabīb.

The ethnic origins of the participants in the Arabic histories are often mentioned. Yet one may draw rather fewer conclusions from the Arabic sources than from the “Chronicle of 754”, since all these accounts are biased by later rivalries between Arabs and Berbers, and by the mesh of false genealogies which these engendered. Ibn Ḥabīb described Ṭāriq’s first army force as consisting of 1,700 Berbers, closely followed by another 10,000 Berbers with a mere 60 Arabs. He recounted a prophecy given to Ṭāriq that a Berber would conquer al-Andalus.⁸⁰ By the time that Ibn Ḥabīb was writing, the prominence given to the Berbers in this version of the conquest may have been unpalatable. Ibn Ḥabīb’s stories had been thoroughly islamized, and Ṭāriq’s conquest of Hispania was represented as a Holy War, and by implication, an Arab project. The relationship between the religion for which the Holy War was being pursued and its origins in the Arab world was controversial throughout the Islamic world. Particularly vexed was the question of the status of non-Arabs, particularly of those who had converted to Islam and become clients

⁷⁷ Al-Maqqari, *Analectes sur l’histoire et la littérature des Arabes d’Espagne par al-Makkari*, ed. R. Dozy, G. Dugat, L. Krehl and W. Wright, 2 vols. (Leiden 1855/61; repr. Amsterdam 1967).

⁷⁸ *Crónica del Moro Rasis*, ed. D. Catalán, D. de Andrés and M.S. de Andrés (Madrid 1974).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 179.

⁸⁰ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kūāb al-Taʾrīkh*, p. 136.

of rulers and noble families. Among these men was Ṭāriq, the client of Mūsā. Ibn Ḥabīb's history reflected these concerns, which I have explored elsewhere.⁸¹ He also quoted a passage, probably taken from an eastern source, which is ostensibly a conversation between a governor of Kufa at the end of the eighth century and a scholar about the famous scholars of the Islam.⁸² One by one, they were identified as clients rather than men of pure Arab origin. The emir's rage at this unwelcome information was appeased only by the naming of two genuine Arabs. The Berbers in al-Andalus were similarly a victim of their non-Arab origins. Ibn Ḥabīb's pupil seems to have added to the "History" a prophecy that Cordoba would be destroyed by the Berbers.⁸³

Berbers from North Africa would continue to be recruited as mercenaries at times of internal strife in al-Andalus, such as the struggles between the brothers of 'Abd al-Rahmān I and his nephew al-Ḥakam I. Particularly galling to the Arabic historians was the role of the Berbers in the rise of al-Manṣur at the end of the tenth century and the collapse of the caliphate. Berbers continued to destabilize the Andalusian polity right through to the arrival of the Almohads and Almoravids. No wonder then, that the role of the Berbers in the conquest was played down and that of Mūsā ibn Nusayr, a man with an impeccable Arab background whose father had been a member of the royal guard of the caliph Mu'āwiya,⁸⁴ became central. As the politics and culture of al-Andalus became more sophisticated and emulated that of Baghdad—perhaps not before the ninth century and reaching its zenith in the mid-tenth century—all things Arab were praised and the Berbers denigrated. Genealogists such as Ibn Ḥazm,⁸⁵ writing in the eleventh century, were anxious to give their subjects prestigious Arab genealogies and an ancestor who came to al-Andalus at the time of the conquest. Ibn Ḥabīb mentioned members of the "followers"—noble Arab families whose immediate ancestors had been companions of Muḥammad—

⁸¹ A. Christys, "The *History* of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb and ethnogenesis in al-Andalus", *Power and the Construction of Communities*, ed. W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (forthcoming).

⁸² Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Ta'rikh*, pp. 173–4.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁸⁵ Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansab al-'arab*, ed. 'A.M. Harun (Cairo 1971).

who came to al-Andalus, although he was not sure how many of them had participated in the conquest.⁸⁶ Ibn Idhārī, writing in the thirteenth century, noted that Arabs from North Africa came to al-Andalus with two of the early governors, al-Ḥurr in 716 and al-Samḥ in 718,⁸⁷ and Abu al-Khattar brought thirty members of his tribe, the Kalbis, in c. 742. Arab origins were even invented for the Berbers by Islamic scholars, who divided them into two groups, the Butr and the Baranis, and gave them two origins, one in Palestine, and the other in Yemen. There are very few references to these origins in the first centuries after the conquest.⁸⁸ Such distortions have also bedevilled discussions of the fate of the Berbers of al-Andalus in the Umayyad period, especially the highly controversial subject of Berber settlement in al-Andalus. There is little reference to Andalusis who spoke Berber, and their languages left little trace on Romance, in contrast to Arabic. By the eleventh century it is difficult to find traces of the Berbers who arrived with the conquest of 711. These recreations of history made the conquest look more Arab than it in fact was.

Working from a different historiographical perspective to that of scholars of the first, “Germanic”, transformation of Hispania, it is impossible to answer all the “leading questions” posed to the contributors to this volume. Analysis of any socio-economic or constitutional developments which may have taken place in the first three centuries after the conquest are too dependent on late and contradictory sources usefully to be debated here. Not until the tenth century did the rulers of al-Andalus actively promote an official line on the origins of the Umayyad state and only for this period do we have the evidence that Roman, or rather Byzantine, ritual played an important role in this—if we are to believe our sources.⁸⁹ Both the Latin and the Arabic evidence considered in this paper show

⁸⁶ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Taʾrīkh*, p. 138.

⁸⁷ Ibn Idhārī, *Al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, ed. R. Dozy, E. Lévi-Provençal and G. Colin, 2 vols. (Leiden 1948/51) p. 25.

⁸⁸ Brett and Fentress, *The Berbers*, p. 92; M. Brett, “The Islamization of Morocco from the Arabs to the Almoravids”, *Journal of Moroccan Studies* 2 (1992) pp. 57–71; repr. id., *Ibn Khaldun and the Medieval Maghreb* (Aldershot 1999); H. de Felipe, “Leyendas árabes sobre el origen de los beréberes”, *Al-Qantara* 11/2 (1990) pp. 379–98.

⁸⁹ M. Barceló, “El Califa patente: el ceremonial omeya de Córdoba o la escenificación del poder”, *Estructuras y formas del poder en la historia*, ed. R. Pastor, I. Kieniewicz, E. García de Enterría et al. (Salamanca 1991) pp. 51–71.

the transformation of Hispania after 711 as an episode in which questions concerning the relationship between *gens* and *regnum* may be addressed. The author of the “Chronicle of 754” did indeed write up the conquest period as though it were another “barbarian” migration, although he was perhaps too influenced by his reading of Isidore. Isidore’s Hispania, which had absorbed the Goths and Hispano-Romans, seemed to absorb the new *gentes* of 711 almost seamlessly into the beloved *regnum*. The Arabic histories’ rewriting of the events of the conquest to suit the Arabicized world of the ninth century and after provide an alternative ethnogenesis which may be seen as a distorting mirror image of a similar process of state formation. Here the focus was more on *gens* than *regnum*. The stories about the rivalry between the Berber Ṭāriq and the Arab Mūsā, and the invented Arabs who took part in the conquest, are part of a reformulation which explained how a largely Berber army of the conquest became the Andalusis of Hispania.

APPENDIX: The Governors of al-Andalus

Chronicle of 754	Ibn Habib	Prophetic chronicle
Musa Era 749	Mūsā ibn Nusayr 2 years 1 month	Musa 1 year 3 months
‘Abd al-Aziz 3 years	‘Abd al-Azīz ibn Mūsā 2 years	‘Abd al-Aziz 2 years 6 months
Ayub 1 month		Ayub 1 month
Al-Hurr 3 years	Al-Hurr ibn ‘Abd al- Raḥmān al-Thaqafī 2 years 8 months	Al-Hurr 2 years 10 months
Al-Samh	Al-Samḥ ibn Malik al- Khawlanī 2 years 9 months	Al-Samh 2 years 9 months
‘Abd al-Rahman 1 month		‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Abdullah 1 month
Anbasah 4 1/2 years	‘Anbasa ibn Saḥīm al- Kalbī 4 years 5 months	‘Udra 1 month
Yahya 3 years	Yahya ibn Salāma 2 years 6 months	Yahya ibn Salama 2 years 6 months
Odiffa 6 months	Hadhifa ibn al-Aḥūṣṣ al-‘Abasī 1 year	Hudhaifa ibn al-Ahwas 6 months
Uthman 4 months	Uthmān ibn Abi Nasca al- Khathcāmī 5 months	Uthman ibn Abi Nisa 4 months
Haytham 1 year	Al-Haytham ibn ‘Abīd 4 months	Al-Haytham ibn ‘Ubayd 10 months
Muhammad al-Ashjai		Muhammad ibn Ashjai 1 month
‘Abd al-Rahman 3 years	‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Abd Allah 2 years 8 months	‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Abd Allah 1 year 10 months
‘Abd al-Malik almost 4 years	‘Abd al-Malik ibn Qatṣan al-Fihri 4 years	‘Abd al-Malik ibn Qatan 2 years
Uqba	‘Uqba ibn al-Hajjāj al Salūlī 5 years 2 months	‘Uqba ibn al-Hajaj 4 year 5 months ‘Abd al-Malik 1 year 1 month
	Balj ibn Bishr al-Qaysī 11 months	
	Thcalaba ibn Salāma al- ‘Āmalī 5 months	Tawaba ibn Salama 1 year 2 months
Abu al-Khattar Hisham ibn Dirar al-Kalbi 2 years	Abu al-Khatār 2 years	
Thalabah	Abu Thawāba al- Jadhamī	
Yusuf 6 years 9 months Era 785	Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al- Raḥmān [to 138 AH]	Yusuf 11 years

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GENTES, KINGS AND KINGDOMS—THE EMERGENCE OF STATES: THE KINGDOM OF THE GIBICHUNGS

Ian N. Wood

The successor states of Western Europe and North Africa are one of the distinguishing features of the post-Roman period, possibly the most distinctive feature of all, yet each state was created in different circumstances, even if a number of them can be seen as beginning their independent existence in the 470s. Equally, each state ended in different circumstances, some already in the 530s, others in much later transformations. Just as important, each was written up at different times and for different reasons—those that collapsed early were less likely to be represented to suit the needs of later generations, except as foils for their victorious conquerors. This question of the dating of our sources is a point of particular significance when one considers the literary accounts of the creation of each *gens* that constitute their ethnogenesis. In thinking comparatively about state formation, it is as well to keep chronology firmly in mind. The Burgundians of the fourth century can usefully be set alongside other peoples mentioned in the pages of Ammianus Marcellinus: those of the fifth need to be compared with the peoples who established themselves in Gaul at the same time: their demise in the sixth century naturally suggests comparison with the Vandals and Ostrogoths. Unlike these last two peoples, however, the Burgundian kingdom had a *Nachleben* in Frankish Burgundy, which has no parallels in Byzantine Africa or sixth-century Italy, but may bring to mind other groups subjected to the Franks in the Carolingian period, notably the Lombards and Saxons.

Although the Burgundians already appear in the writings of Pliny¹ and Ptolemy,² and are attested in the Byzantine historian Zosimus' account of events in the third century, notably as opponents of the Emperor Probus,³ they first receive significant attention in the fourth

¹ Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 4,99, ed. G. Winkler and R. König (Munich 1988).

² Ptolemy, *Geographia* 2,11,8, ed. C. Müller (Paris 1883).

³ Zosimus, *Histoire Nouvelle* 1,68, ed. F. Paschoud, vol. 1 (Paris 1971).

century, when Ammianus Marcellinus recounts Valentinian I's use of them against Macrianus, king of the Alamans.⁴ In setting out this narrative Ammianus makes a number of observations: first, that the Burgundians were related to the Romans;⁵ second that they had long been enemies of the Alamans, with whom they quarrelled over borders and access to salt-mines;⁶ and finally that they were ruled over by a pair of leaders—a general, the *hendinos*, who could be deposed in the event of ill-fortune, and a priest-king, the *sinistus*, whose power was for life.⁷ That they were enemies of the Alamans is not unlikely, nor is the significance of frontiers and salt in causing conflict. The other two statements are more problematic. The dual rulership over the Burgundians is often cited in discussions of sacral kingship,⁸ and Ammianus himself makes comparison with the Egyptians: *ut solent Aegyptii casus eius modi suis assignare rectoribus*. The use of the present tense *solent* in the comparison with Egypt, however, suggests that Ammianus was drawing his information from an old source, for the description of Burgundian kingship is scarcely compatible with what is known about Egyptian attitudes to their rulers in the Late Roman period.⁹ Even if the comparison with Egypt were ever valid, there is no reason to think that Ammianus' observation held true for the Burgundians of the fourth century. Certainly the information cannot be used as the basis for understanding the political structures of the fourth-century Burgundians, particularly when there is no other evidence to suggest the existence of such a set-up. That the Burgundians were ruled by kings is as near certain as can be, but one can deduce no more from Ammianus' comments. What he has to say about the relationship of the Burgundians to the Romans is perhaps more helpful. Clearly this cannot be founded on biological reality, but the Romans are known to have referred to their allies as being related to them by blood.¹⁰ The likelihood is that the stated relationship

⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 28,5,9; 30,7,11, ed. J.C. Rolfe (Cambridge Mass. 1935–39).

⁵ *Ibid.* 28,5,11.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.* 28,5,14.

⁸ See most recently J. Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde (443–534)* (Lausanne 1997) pp. 43–4.

⁹ I.N. Wood, “Kings, Kingdoms and Consent”, *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds 1977) pp. 6–29, here p. 27.

¹⁰ I.N. Wood, “Defining the Franks: Frankish Origins in Early Medieval Histo-

between Burgundians and Romans originated in imperial diplomacy. The statement, nevertheless, constitutes the earliest written reference to the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians. Moreover, although it is an ethnogenesis which is likely to have been created by the Romans rather than Burgundians, it may have had some impact on the ruling elite of the Burgundians themselves, and indeed Ammianus explicitly claims that it was the Burgundians who knew of their Roman descent (*subolem se esse Romanam Burgundii sciunt*).¹¹

A generation later Orosius offered another comment on the people. For him 80,000 Burgundians, “a new enemy with a new name”, descended on the Rhine, but following the subjugation of Germania by Tiberius and Drusus they were settled in *burgi*, whence they gained their name.¹² Orosius thus provides the people with a second ethnogenesis, and like that of Ammianus it is a Roman one, depending this time on a bogus Latin etymology. He adds the interesting, but puzzling information, that by his own day, that is the second decade of the fifth century, the Burgundians were Catholic.¹³ The accuracy of this need not concern us, but it will be necessary to consider the extent to which the Arianism of Gundobad and some of those surrounding him helped differentiate the Burgundians from the Gallo-Romans.¹⁴

riography”, *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. S. Forde, L. Johnson and A.V. Murray, Leeds Texts and Monographs. New Series 14 (Leeds 1995) pp. 47–57, here p. 51.

¹¹ Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, p. 42 rightly notes that this is a Burgundian claim, but it is likely, given the parallels noted in I.N. Wood, “Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians”, *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 1, ed. W. Pohl and H. Wolfram, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 201. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 12 (Wien 1990) pp. 53–69, here pp. 57–8, that the connection between the Romans and Burgundians originated in Roman ideology.

¹² Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* 7,32,11–12, ed. K. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna 1882; repr. Hildesheim 1967). See Wood, “Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians”, pp. 56–7.

¹³ Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos* 7,32,13.

¹⁴ For the question of the religion of the Burgundians, Wood, “Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians”, pp. 58–60. The argument has been challenged by Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, but his criticism fails to take full account of the evidence for Catholicism among the Burgundians. If one argues that Orosius is incorrect, one has to explain away the presence of Catholics among the Burgundians before the conversion of Sigismund: if one argues that the Burgundians were originally converted to Catholicism, one has to explain the presence of Arians at Gundobad’s court. One possibility is that the distinction between the beliefs of

By the time that Orosius was writing Burgundians were to be found on the Rhine.¹⁵ They had probably taken advantage of the chaos of the years 406–7 to move westwards.¹⁶ According to Olympiodorus their phylarch Guntiarus (= Gundichar) was instrumental in the appointment of the usurper Jovian in 411¹⁷—if so he was not to be the last Burgundian to elevate a Roman emperor. The activities of Burgundians within the Empire, however, were sharply curtailed in the mid 430s when they were defeated by Aetius.¹⁸ The fullest statement of this is by Prosper, who comments: “Aetius wore down in war Gundichar, king of the Burgundians, who was living in Gaul, and granted him the peace for which he was begging, which he did not enjoy for long, since the Huns destroyed him and his people utterly.”¹⁹ Some, however, survived, and Aetius was later to settle a group of Burgundians in Sapaudia,²⁰ which lay largely to the north of Lake Geneva, in the Roman province of Maxima Sequanorum.²¹ How sizeable this group was, and whether it included all the Burgundians who survived the cataclysm on the Rhine is unclear. What is certain is that Aetius’ policy of resettling the Burgundians paid off, since they subsequently fought for him at the Battle of the Catalaunian or Mauriac Plains—a battle of some importance both for Aetius and for the Burgundians themselves, as we will see.²² The settlement out of which the Burgundian kingdom devel-

the Burgundians and the Catholic episcopate only really became clear after the settlement in Sapaudia, and that it was only after the settlement that individuals could clearly be classified as Arian or Catholic.

¹⁵ Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon* s.a. 413, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 9 (Berlin 1892; repr. Munich 1981).

¹⁶ The sole evidence for this move, however, is Jerome, *Lettres* 123, ed. J. Labourt, vol. 7 (Paris 1961), discussed by Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, pp. 45–6.

¹⁷ Olympiodorus, *Fragmenta* 17, ed. and transl. R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* 2 (Liverpool 1982; repr. 1983).

¹⁸ *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana* 108 (= 436), ed. R.W. Burgess (Oxford 1993); *Chronicorum a. CCCCLII* 118 (= 436), ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 9 (Berlin 1892); *Chronicorum a. DXI* 596 (= 436?), ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 9 (Berlin 1892).

¹⁹ Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon* 1322 (= 435).

²⁰ *Chronicorum a. CCCCLII* 128 (= 443). The chronology of the Chronicle is, however, totally unreliable: see I.N. Wood, “The fall of the western empire and the end of Roman Britain”, *Britannia* 18 (1987) pp. 251–62, here pp. 253–6.

²¹ The fullest recent discussion of Sapaudia is to be found in Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, pp. 100–17.

²² Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum* 36,191, ed. F. Giunta and A. Grillone, *Fonti per la storia d’Italia* 117 (Rome 1991) [henceforth: Jordanes, *Getica*].

oped was, therefore, entirely dependent on the policy and actions of a Roman general.

In later tradition the destruction of the Rhineland Burgundians was an epic moment. The story is at the heart of numerous epics and legends, which have prompted the much-debated question *Gab es ein Burgunderreich bei Worms?* That the destruction of a Burgundian kingdom took place, and that the memory of its end was transformed into legend is not in question. There is, however, no indication that any significant memory of the event was preserved by those Burgundians who were subsequently settled in Sapaudia.²³ Indeed if the memory had been carried by the Gibichungs and their followers, it would surely have presented the destruction of the Rhineland kingdom as a prelude to another settlement, and not as a final cataclysm. If the memory of the destruction of the kingdom of Gundichar were to be ascribed to Burgundians, one might speculate as to whether that memory was preserved by Burgundians who never transferred to Sapaudia, and who perhaps descended from groups opposed to the Gibichungs. Such a possibility is raised by the existence in the late sixth and seventh centuries of the family of the Burgundofarones, who are associated with the region round Melun, in Frankish Neustria, rather than any part of the Burgundian kingdom.²⁴ One might equally hypothesise that the story of the destruction of the Rhineland kingdom was elaborated by neighbouring peoples, like the Franks, who had no wish to remember Burgundian survival. On the other hand it is far from clear that the ethnicity of the legendary Rhineland

²³ P. Amory, "Names, ethnic identity, and community in fifth- and sixth-century Burgundy", *Viator* 25 (1994) pp. 1–30, here p. 13, rightly comments on the lack of interest shown in the historical background of the Burgundians by Avitus, Gundobad or Sigismund. W. Goffart, "Conspicuously absent: martial heroism in the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours and its likes", *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I.N. Wood (Leiden 2002) pp. 365–93, to my mind rightly denies that there was an unwritten Burgundian tradition about the fall of Gundichar's kingdom.

²⁴ Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Columbani* 1,26; 2,7, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrG 37 (Hannover 1905). But see also Hildegard of Meaux, *Vita Faronis*, ed. J. Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis sancti Benedicti* (Mâcon 1936) pp. 606–25, for an account of the family set in the context of Gibichung history. The Burgundofarones or Faronids are extensively studied by R. Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VII^e–IX^e siècle)* (Paris 1995) pp. 388–95, where the majority of the family is placed firmly in the region of Meaux, with only one group having links with the "confins de l'Austrasie et de la Bourgogne". See also ead., "Convents, violence, and competition for power in seventh-century Francia", *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. M. de Jong, F. Theuvs and C. van Rhijn, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 6 (Leiden 2001) pp. 243–69, here pp. 250–2, 254.

kingdom was a matter of much interest. In the earliest of the stories concerned with Gundichar, the ninth- or tenth-century *Waltharius*, which admittedly does not conclude with the kingdom's destruction, the king is portrayed as a Frank, as indeed is Haganus (Hagen)!²⁵ The kingdom of Worms was a kingdom enshrined in legend: its relationship to the historical Burgundians was not a matter of crucial importance. At all costs, there is nothing to suggest that the group settled in Sapaudia looked back to the kingdom on the Rhine, and its destruction, as providing a past which was central to their own self identification.

Yet Gundobad, in a law preserved in the *Liber Constitutionum* issued by his son, did look back to his ancestors, Gibich, Godomar, Gislahar, Gundahar (= Gundichar), as well as to his father (Gundioc) and uncle (Chilperic I), without noting any break in Burgundian history.²⁶ The list takes us back generations before the settlement in Sapaudia, perhaps even to the time of the wars against Macrianus, and might be thought to suggest a pattern of hereditary kingship which sorts ill with the *hendinos* and *sinistus* of Ammianus.²⁷ Equally important, the list reveals that Gundichar was not forgotten by the Burgundians of Sapaudia, although the events at the end of his reign seem to have been. This list of ancestors, together with a reference to the Battle of the Mauriac Plains,²⁸ is the nearest that the Burgundian rulers come to recording the past of their people, in contrast to Theodoric, who seems to have had Cassiodorus compile a history of the Ostrogoths.²⁹ The ancestral list of the *Liber Constitutionum* is short, but it is nevertheless interesting: it is the only surviving Burgundian or

²⁵ The poem may have originated in the Strasbourg region. Fragments of an earlier Anglo-Saxon poem, *Waldere*, may come from a version of the same story: Ekkehard, *Waltharius of Gaeraldus*, ed. A.K. Bate (Reading 1978) pp. 1–8. For the full legend of the destruction of Gundichar's kingdom one has to wait until the thirteenth-century *Nibelungenlied*.

²⁶ *Liber Constitutionum* 3, ed. L.R. von Salis, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 2,1 (Hannover 1892); for the dating of the code, see I.N. Wood, "Disputes in late fifth- and early sixth-century Gaul: some problems", *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. W. Davies and P. Fouracre (Cambridge 1986) pp. 7–22, here p. 10.

²⁷ By contrast Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, p. 46, sees this as an indication that Gundichar was the descendent of a *hendinos*.

²⁸ *Liber Constitutionum* 17,1.

²⁹ See most recently A. Soby Christensen, "Cassiodorus and the making of a history of the Goths", *Analecta Romana* 26 (1999) pp. 173–7.

Gibichung kinglist, and, like the list in the later Lombard code of Rothari,³⁰ it is enshrined within a lawcode. It might be said to link Burgundian kingship and lawgiving: on the other hand, unlike the list provided by Rothari, that given in the *Liber Constitutionum* is no part of a prologue, but is provided simply in the context of a statement about royal freedmen and freedwomen: those who were already freed under the listed ancestors of the legislator were to retain their status. The list is not, therefore, associated with the process of legislation. An equally significant sense of the past is to be found in the statement in the *Liber Constitutionum* that the Battle of the Mauriac Plains provides the terminus earlier than which lawsuits among the Burgundians were to be dismissed.³¹ Once again, however, history merely provides a limit to legal claims.

Thus, to recapitulate what can be said about the notions which the Burgundians of the kingdom of Sapaudia held of their past, they seem not to be concerned with the kingdom of Gundichar on the Rhine. Even though Gundichar was an ancestor of the Gibichung rulers of Sapaudia and the Rhône-Saône kingdom that grew out of it, and even though the family provided the sole ruling dynasty for the Burgundian kingdom, there is no evidence that any memory of the Rhine catastrophe stuck to the Gibichungs. The Burgundians of the kingdom of Sapaudia, despite the various traditions they could have drawn on, are not presented in any early source, other than the *Chronicle of 452*, as being the descendents of the Rhineland Burgundians. Unlike the Goths, Lombards or Anglo-Saxons, who are given seamless histories stretching from their migrations through to the establishment of their respective kingdoms, early sources do not set the Burgundians of Sapaudia into a history of past migration. Even those eighth- and ninth-century saint's *Lives* which do present a history of Burgundian migration make no mention of the Rhineland catastrophe or indeed of the subsequent transfer to Sapaudia, which is left unrelated.³² As for the Burgundians of the late fifth and sixth centuries, it looks as if they did not make much of their history prior to their settlement in the province of Maxima Sequanorum. Although

³⁰ *Edictus Rothari* prol., ed. F. Bluhme, MGH LL 4 (Hannover 1868).

³¹ *Liber Constitutionum* 17,1.

³² *Passio Sigismundi* 1, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 2 (Hannover 1888); Hildegard, *Vita Faronis* 8.

there had been a *gens Burgundionum* for several centuries, the settlement in Sapaudia had, it seems, effectively created a new people—and that settlement was effected by Aetius and not by any named Gibichung. The earliest historical event with which the *gens Burgundionum* is associated in the documentation produced in the Sapaudian kingdom is the battle of the Mauriac Plains. Their royal dynasty stretched back to a past on the Rhine, but that past, or at least its catastrophic end, seems not to have been remembered in Gibichung circles.

The settlement in Sapaudia provided the kernel from which the kingdom of the Burgundians was created, even though the subsequent establishment of that kingdom is hard to trace. The *Continuatio Haviensis Prosperi* records that the Burgundians who were expanding throughout Gaul were driven back by the Gepids—a statement which, if correct, raises questions as to where this confrontation took place.³³ Easier to place in what is known of Burgundian activity is the involvement of Gundioc and Chilperic I, alongside the Visigoths, in the attack on the Sueves in Galicia in 456.³⁴ According to the *Continuatio Haviensis Prosperi*, the death of the Suevic leader was followed by an agreement between Gundioc and his Visigothic counterpart, Theodoric, over Burgundian settlement.³⁵ Here for the first time a formative role in his people's development is attributed to a member of the Gibichung family. Marius of Avenches ascribes to the same period an agreement made between Burgundians and senators to divide Gaul.³⁶ The arrangement was almost instantly ended by the new emperor Majorian.³⁷

³³ *Continuatio Haviensis Prosperi* 574 (= 455), ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 9 (Berlin 1892; repr. Munich 1981): *At Geppidos Burgundiones intra Galliam diffusi repelluntur*. The episode would be easier to understand were the subject and object to be reversed, which is how the passage is mistranslated by S. Muhlberger, "The Copenhagen continuation of Prosper: a translation", *Florilegium* 6 (1984) pp. 71–95, here p. 80: "But [sic] the Burgundians spread through Gaul and drove back the Gepids". The translation forms an appendix to the same author's "Heroic kings and unruly generals: the 'Copenhagen' continuation of Prosper reconsidered", *Florilegium* 6 (1984) pp. 50–70.

³⁴ Jordanes, *Getica* 44,231.

³⁵ *Continuatio Haviensis Prosperi* 583 (= 457).

³⁶ Marius of Avenches, *Chronique*, s.a. 456, ed. J. Favrod (Lausanne 1991) [henceforth: Marius of Avenches]. This is usually held to be the same as the episode in Fredegar, *Chronicon* 2,46, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 2 (Hannover 1888), where it is dated to 372.

³⁷ Sidonius Apollinaris, *carm.* 5, ll. 564–71, ed. A. Loyen, 3 vols. (Paris 1960–70); J. Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome* (Oxford 1994) pp. 85–6.

Despite Majorian's stance we soon meet members of the Burgundian royal family as Roman officials. Gundioc appears as *magister militum* (*per Gallias?*) in a papal letter relating to a disputed election at Die in c. 462/3,³⁸ while a Chilperic—probably Gundioc's brother rather than his son of the same name³⁹—was active as *magister militum* (*per Gallias?*) and *patricius* in the Geneva region almost a decade later.⁴⁰ He (or perhaps his nephew) receives a reasonable press from Sidonius Apollinaris in 472,⁴¹ and although two of the Roman rhetor's uncles got into hot water with the Burgundian official in 474, Sidonius noted the extent to which the *magister militum* could be assuaged by his, almost certainly Catholic and perhaps Roman, wife.⁴²

Opinions about the Burgundians and their position in the Empire at this time were, in fact, divided. Chilperic's rule in Geneva was denounced by the ascetic Lupicinus as tyranny.⁴³ Sidonius himself objected to having Burgundians as neighbours.⁴⁴ On the other hand a friend of Sidonius, Arvandus, was happy to envisage a division of Gaul between Goths and Burgundians in c. 469. His ideas led to his being tried for treason and convicted.⁴⁵ Yet, to judge by the events of the year 456 mentioned by Marius of Avenches he was not alone in thinking the way he did—and the rapid collapse of the Western Empire was effectively to justify his interpretation of the situation.

As for the two relatives of Sidonius who fell foul of Chilperic in 474, Simplicius and Apollinaris, their mistake was to throw in their

³⁸ *Epistolae Arelatenses Genuinae* 19, ed. W. Gundlach, MGH EE 3 (Berlin 1892).

³⁹ The problem of distinguishing Chilperic I and Chilperic II is usefully discussed by Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, pp. 149–51. Like Favrod I regard the crucial text as being *Liber Constitutionum* 3, which makes it quite clear that Chilperic I was a ruler of significance. Without this text, however, one would attribute to Chilperic II most of the actions (those of 456 apart) currently attributed to Chilperic I.

⁴⁰ *Vita patrum Iurensium* 2,10 (= 92), ed. F. Martine, Sources Chrétiennes 142 (Paris 1968).

⁴¹ Sidonius, *ep.* 6,12,3.

⁴² Sidonius, *ep.* 5,6; 5,7. The image of the new Lucumon swayed by a new Tanaquil may suggest that Chilperic's wife was Roman. These letters are read in a very different way by D. Frye, "Gundobad, the *Leges Burgundionum*, and the struggle for sovereignty in Burgundy", *Classica et Medievalia* 41 (1990) pp. 203–4, seeing them as highly critical. Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, p. 50 n. 180, reads Sidonius, *ep.* 6,12,3, as indicating that Chilperic was an Arian married to a Catholic wife. I find this interpretation unlikely, as discussed below.

⁴³ *Vita patrum Iurensium* 2,10 (= 92–5).

⁴⁴ Sidonius, *carm.* 12.

⁴⁵ Sidonius, *ep.* 1,7. See Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome*, pp. 159–66.

lot with the new emperor, Julius Nepos.⁴⁶ What made this such a crime was the simple fact that the previous emperor, Glycerius, was the appointee of Chilperic's nephew, or perhaps brother, Gundobad.⁴⁷ Unlike his other relatives Gundobad had gone to Italy, where he became a protégé of the *magister militum praesentalis* Ricimer, to whom he was related—although it is not clear whether he was the latter's nephew or son-in-law. Either he or Ricimer was the killer of Anthemius.⁴⁸ When Ricimer died, Gundobad took his place. He received the title of *patricius* from Olybrius,⁴⁹ but was nevertheless personally responsible for the emperor's death and for the appointment of Glycerius.⁵⁰ The arrival of an eastern appointee, Julius Nepos, seems to have prompted him to abandon Italian politics, and to return to Gaul. In such a context the support of Sidonius' uncles for Nepos was scarcely sensible.

It is useful to take stock of the position of the Burgundians and their Gibichung leaders in the 470s, directly before the emergence of a Burgundian kingdom. The people, or a proportion of what remained of it after conflict with the Huns, had been settled in Sapaudia—by Aetius, as part of a policy which included the settlement of Alans in Valence and in Gallia Ulterior.⁵¹ Comparison can also be made with the earlier settlement of the Visigoths in Toulouse.⁵² Unlike the Alans and the Visigoths, however, the leaders of the Burgundians had taken up mainstream jobs within the Roman Empire, with three of them acting as *magistri militum* of one sort or another. Whereas Euric was steadily expanding his authority as king of the Visigoths in the 470s, Gundioc and his relatives were very much acting as legitimist Roman figures. If they fell out with the Empire in 474, it was because the imposition of a new emperor left them

⁴⁶ Sidonius, *ep.* 5,6.

⁴⁷ John of Antioch, *Fragmenta* 209,1–2, ed. C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, vols. 4 and 5 (Paris 1868/70), transl. C.D. Gordon, *The Age of Attila* (Ann Arbor 1960) pp. 122–3.

⁴⁸ *Chronicorum a. DXI* 650 (= 472).

⁴⁹ *Fasti Vindobonenses Priores* 608 (= 472), ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 9.

⁵⁰ John of Antioch, *Fragmenta* 209,2.

⁵¹ *Chronicorum a. CCCCLII* 124 (= 440); 127 (= 442).

⁵² E.A. Thompson, "The settlement of the barbarians in southern Gaul", *Journal of Roman Studies* 46 (1956) pp. 65–75, reprinted in id., *Romans and Barbarians: the Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison 1982) pp. 23–37; for an alternative reading and date, I.N. Wood, "The barbarian invasions and first settlements", *Cambridge Ancient History* 13 (2nd edn., 1998) pp. 516–37.

stranded: comparison here might be made with Aegidius, Majorian's *magister militum*, who was forced to plough his own furrow after Ricimer's appointment of Libius Severus as emperor in 461.⁵³ Aegidius makes an interesting comparison, in that like him the Burgundian rulers never ceased to be imperial legitimists, despite the events of 474 and the years that followed. The issue was not whether one was subject to the Empire or not, but rather whether there was a legitimate emperor to whom one was subject.

Exactly what happened between 474 and 494 is unclear—and it is therefore uncertain when one might place the beginning of the Burgundian kingdom, as distinct from that of the presence of the Burgundians in Gaul and the appointment of members of the Gibichung family to official positions within the Roman hierarchy. Although one may also ask when the Visigoths ceased to be servants of the Roman state, in their case it is easier to trace the growth of an independent power, notably under Euric.⁵⁴ In 474 Chilperic was still *magister militum* and *patricius*. According to Ennodius of Pavia, writing early in the sixth century, by 494 Gundobad could be described as a Burgundian king. He was based in Lyons, while one of his brothers, Godegisel, had a separate but subordinate court in Geneva.⁵⁵ As we will see the development of such royal courts did not necessarily imply that the Burgundian rulers regarded themselves as independent of the Empire even after 476. Between 476 and 494 Chilperic vanished, as did two brothers of Gundobad.⁵⁶ The third brother, Godegisel, was subsequently to challenge Gundobad's power: in 500 he allied with Clovis, and the two drove Gundobad south. The latter was, however, able to come to terms with the Frank, to whom he momentarily became tributary. Clovis retired north, leaving Gundobad free to deal with his brother, which he did in the siege of Vienne. Having reestablished himself, the Burgundian king, according to Gregory of Tours, issued *leges mitiores*.⁵⁷ What these were is uncertain: they certainly cannot be equated with the *Liber Constitutionum*

⁵³ Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome*, pp. 96–7.

⁵⁴ K.F. Stroheker, *Eurich, König der Westgoten* (Stuttgart 1937).

⁵⁵ Ennodius, *Vita Epifani* 174, ed. F. Vogel, MGH AA 7 (Berlin 1885).

⁵⁶ The fates of Chilperic II and Godomar are uncertain, despite Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,28, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SSrM 1,1 (2nd edn., Hannover 1951).

⁵⁷ Marius of Avenches, s.a. 500; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,33.

itself, although they may be enshrined within that code.⁵⁸ That Gundobad was concerned with the well-being of all his subjects is also implied by his *Pax et Abundantia* coinage,⁵⁹ whose inscription is referred to in a dedication homily of Avitus of Vienne.⁶⁰

Gundobad ruled as *rex*, although it is worth noting that the more precise title *rex Burgundionum* is not often associated with him⁶¹—a point which may, or may not, reflect the nature of our sources, rather than the nature of his power. On the other hand, and more important, he was very definitely concerned with Roman titles, and not just while he was active as Ricimer's successor in Italy, nor only for himself. Admittedly he had his son, Sigismund, elevated in *regnum*, at Carouge, outside Geneva.⁶² Since this elevation seems to have taken place shortly after 500, it is probable that Sigismund was intruded into Godegisel's place, but it is equally clear that he remained subordinate to his father.⁶³ This "Germanic" office, however, was soon complemented by a Roman one, for Sigismund also held the title of *patricius* before the end of 515.⁶⁴ This was a title that both Gundobad and Chilperic had used.⁶⁵ Further, Sigismund started to

⁵⁸ There is an assumption that they should be identified with *Liber Constitutionum* 42–88; Frye, "Gundobad, the *Leges Burgundionum*, and the struggle for sovereignty in Burgundy", p. 209. Perhaps significantly *Liber Constitutionum* 42 is dated 501 and 54 (on ordeal) 502.

⁵⁹ P. Grierson, M. Blackburn and L. Travaini, *Medieval European Coinage* 1 (Cambridge 1986) p. 76.

⁶⁰ Avitus of Vienne, *hom.* 24, ed. R. Peiper, MGH AA 6,2 (München 1883).

⁶¹ The use of the title in von Salis' reconstruction of the *Prima Constitutio* of the *Liber Constitutionum* is questionable. See also H. Wolfram, *Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Intitulatio 1 (Graz 1967) pp. 87–9. Gundobad does use the title *rex Burgundionum* in *Liber Constitutionum*, *constitutio extravagans* 19, while it is associated with Sigismund in *constitutio extravagans* 20; Sigismund also appears as *rex* in the *capitula* to the council of Epaon: *Les canons des conciles mérovingiens (VI^e–VII^e siècles)*, vol. 1, ed. J. Gaudemet and B. Basdevant, Sources Chrétiennes 353 (Paris 1989). The word *rex* (but not *rex Burgundionum*) is used for both Gundobad and Sigismund in the addresses of Avitus of Vienne's letters, but it is not clear whether these are original. Cassiodorus does, however, use the title *rex Burgundionum* (Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1,46; 3,2, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 12 [Berlin 1894], and transl. S.J.B. Barnish, *Translated Texts for Historians* 12 [Liverpool 1992]), though this obviously reflects Ostrogothic requirements. See Amory, "Names, ethnic identity, and community in fifth- and sixth-century Burgundy", p. 13.

⁶² Fredegar, *Chronicon* 3,33.

⁶³ See Avitus of Vienne, *Letters and Selected Prose*, ed. D. Shanzer and I.N. Wood (Liverpool 2002) pp. 20–2.

⁶⁴ Avitus, *ep.* 9; *Vita Abbatum Acaunensium absque epitaphiis* 3, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 7 (Hannover 1920).

⁶⁵ Gundobad: *Fasti Vindobonenses Priores* 608 (= 472); Chilperic: *Vita patrum Iuvenium*, 2,10 (= 92).

negotiate with the emperor Anastasius for his father's title of *magister militum*—something which Theodoric the Ostrogoth seems to have tried to block, but which the Burgundian did obtain, apparently after his father's death in 516.⁶⁶ Meanwhile the demise of Gundobad led to the full elevation of Sigismund as king.⁶⁷

Sigismund, like his father, was intent on being seen as a Roman official as much as a Germanic king.⁶⁸ In this the two might be compared with Theodoric the Ostrogoth—although the latter's claim to rule Italy and to the *ornamenta palatii* of the West depended on conquest, in a way that Gundobad and Sigismund's claims to office in Gaul did not.⁶⁹ Gundobad had been a legitimate Roman office-holder in the West before 476, and his son was his successor. At the same time, of course, the *ornamenta palatii* are a reminder that Italy had been the seat of the western emperor, while Gaul had only been in the hands of imperial officials, at least in the last days of the Empire. Clovis, too, had his eye on imperial approval, but even the acclamations at Tours came nowhere near to placing him within the old hierarchy which Gundobad and Sigismund seem to have hankered after.⁷⁰

The attitudes of Gundobad and Sigismund towards their Roman offices is best expressed in a series of letters written to the Emperor Anastasius on the latter's behalf by Avitus of Vienne. In the first, a fragmentary letter of c. 515, Sigismund refers to his father as *gentis regem, sed militem vestrum*, the king of his people but the soldier of the emperor.⁷¹ This doublet was picked up again in a marginally later letter where Sigismund was angling for his father's title of *magister militum*. Here he states, *cum gentem nostram videamur regere, non aliud nos quam milites vestros credimus*, "while we are seen to rule our people, we believe ourselves to be nothing other than your soldiers".⁷² The word

⁶⁶ Avitus, *ep.* 93; 94. See also *ep.* 47.

⁶⁷ Marius of Avenches, s.a. 516.

⁶⁸ Amory, "Names, ethnic identity, and community in fifth- and sixth-century Burgundy", p. 8: "From the instant that a Burgundian first appears on the historical stage, we seem to be viewing a man steeped in the formal hierarchy and ceremony of Mediterranean politics"; p. 13: "the Burgundian royal family appear in all the contemporary sources as quintessential late antique magnates."

⁶⁹ A.H.M. Jones, "The constitutional position of Odoacer and Theodoric", *Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962) pp. 126–30.

⁷⁰ On this see M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal rulership in late antiquity, Byzantium, and the early medieval West* (Cambridge 1986) pp. 335–7.

⁷¹ Avitus, *ep.* 46A.

⁷² *Ibid.* 93.

miles no doubt involved an allusion to Gundobad's office of *magister militum*.

But while the king is the emperor's soldier, what do these letters say about the king's people? Sigismund goes so far as to claim that *vester quidem est populus meus*, "my people is yours".⁷³ Elsewhere he sees his people as *subiecti* of the emperor, and claims that they illustrate the extent of the imperial *respublica*: *ornat quippe imperii vestri amplitudinem longinquitas subiectorum et diffusionem reipublicae vestrae adserit*.⁷⁴ In official correspondence the Burgundian kingdom was thus an extension of the Empire, as were its inhabitants. What is less clear is what Avitus intended to imply by the words *gens* and *populus*. A precise reading of the words would seem to suggest that both words refer to the Germanic followers of the rulers. In the law code, the *Liber Constitutionum*, in those cases where it is possible to distinguish between Romans and Burgundians, *populus noster* refers exclusively to the latter. On the other hand, there are laws, *quod in populo nostro debeat custodire*, which were admittedly issued at an assembly of Burgundians, but which unquestionably include legislation which is not directed solely at the king's Germanic subjects.⁷⁵ This Burgundian assembly, which is recorded in only some manuscripts of the law code, moreover, took place in very specific circumstances. It clearly followed a defeat, apparently at the hands of the Franks, and is probably to be placed after the retirement of Sigismund to Agaune. In the circumstances it is best seen as a *conventus* of army leaders under the aegis of Godomar.⁷⁶ In this context the phrase *conventus Burgundionum* reflects not so much a continuity of Burgundian *Selbstbewußtsein* as the realities of leadership in a period of acute military crisis. In general, the implication would seem to be that in official Gibichung documents the phrase *populus meus* or *noster* was normally a synonym for the *gens Burgundionum*, and that it meant the Germanic followers of the king,

⁷³ Ibid. The phrase is taken over in the title of an article by G. Scheibelreiter, "Vester est populus meus. Byzantinische Reichsideologie und germanisches Selbstverständnis", *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E. Chrysos and A. Schwarcz (Vienna 1989) pp. 203–20; the passage in question is discussed on pp. 206–8. See also the commentary on these letters in Avitus of Vienne, *Letters and Selected Prose*, pp. 141–53.

⁷⁴ Avitus, *ep.* 78.

⁷⁵ *Liber Constitutionum, constitutio extravagans* 21.

⁷⁶ For the date of the assembly, K. Binding, *Das burgundisch-romanische Königreich* (Leipzig 1868) pp. 260–2; Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, p. 451.

but that on occasion it might be convenient for its meaning to seem open-ended. Sigismund would surely not have wanted Anastasius to think that he himself had no jurisdiction over the Roman population of his kingdom. Had the emperor consulted the patriarch of Constantinople, who received a letter written in Avitus' own name, he would have found the bishop describing Sigismund as *domnus meus filius vester*, my lord and your son.⁷⁷ The Romans of the Burgundian kingdom certainly knew that they were subject to Gibichung lords, but the same letter of Avitus also recognises Anastasius as *princeps*.⁷⁸

Avitus' letters are an important insight into official Gibichung views of the *populus* over whom the Burgundian kings ruled. Equally important is the evidence of the law-code. Unfortunately later tradition ascribing the *Liber Constitutionum* to Gundobad, and a consequent tampering with the preface or *Prima Constitutio*, has muddied the waters considerably. Suffice it to say that the preface is dated to 29 March, in the second year of a king's reign, and that it was issued in Lyons. Since Sigismund issued other legislation on 29 March 517, the second year of his reign, at his Easter court in Lyons,⁷⁹ it is highly likely that the *Liber Constitutionum* was issued at the same time. Of course the code included earlier legislation, and we do not, in any case, have it in its pristine form. The actual production of a code, however, must be ascribed to Sigismund, and set in the context of the king's Easter court.

It is equally important to note that this is not a law of the Burgundians, a *Lex Burgundionum*, but a book of constitutions, a *Liber Constitutionum*, even though one clause specifically refers to acts of the legislator's named ancestors.⁸⁰ It regulates relations between Burgundians, and between Burgundians and Romans, and it deals also with other barbarians and incomers.⁸¹ It does refer the Romans back to "Roman laws just as has been established by our predecessors",⁸² perhaps to the *Codex Theodosianus*, or to the enigmatic *Lex Romana Burgundionum*, assuming it to have been an official compilation, which

⁷⁷ Avitus, *ep.* 9.

⁷⁸ See also *ibid.* 48.

⁷⁹ *Liber Constitutionum* 52.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 3.

⁸¹ P. Amory, "The meaning and purpose of ethnic terminology in the Burgundian laws", *Early Medieval Europe* 2 (1993) pp. 1–28, here pp. 10–2.

⁸² *Liber Constitutionum*, *prima constitutio* 8.

is by no means certain. Overall, however, the *Liber Constitutionum* is not law simply for the Burgundians. Of course the *Pactus legis Salicae* is not concerned solely with Clovis' Franks,⁸³ yet there is a distinction to be drawn between the Frankish and Burgundian codes. The *Liber Constitutionum* is prefaced with a long *Prima Constitutio* which discusses the implementation of the law in some detail, not least the responsibilities of Burgundian and Roman judges,⁸⁴ and it is followed by a list of the names of the, admittedly Burgundian, *comites* who signed it. It also contains within it edicts identifiable by their dating clauses. The *Pactus legis Salicae* has no such prefatory information and no list of witnessing officials. It is possible to trace within the Frankish code some clauses which must have originated as edicts,⁸⁵ but in general it belongs far less obviously to a Roman tradition of law-giving than does the Burgundian book of constitutions. Sigismund's legislation is yet another indication of the problem of categorising the rulership of the Gibichungs or indeed their kingdom as predominantly Germanic.

It is important to look at kings and the perceptions they have of their followers, but it is also useful to try to come a little closer to an understanding of the make-up of the Germanic population of the Gibichung kingdom, and here the law-code is of particular use. With regard to the Burgundians as a *gens*, we have traced them essentially to their settlement in Sapaudia in the 440s, and have mentioned the rather fragmentary evidence relating to attempts at expansion, with and without the agreement of Roman senators, in the ensuing years. It is necessary, however, to touch briefly on the thorny problem of the Burgundian settlement, for which the *Liber Constitutionum* is our chief, but not sole, source. That is not to say that the much-debated issue of tax versus land requires detailed reconsideration here.⁸⁶ Both

⁸³ I.N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London-New York 1994) p. 110.

⁸⁴ *Liber Constitutionum, prima constitutio* 3; 5; 8; 11; 13.

⁸⁵ Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 110.

⁸⁶ W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans A.D. 418–584. The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton NJ 1980); W. Liebeschuetz, "Cities, taxation and the accommodation of the barbarians: the theories of Durliat and Goffart", *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. W. Pohl, *The Transformation of the Roman World 1* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1997) pp. 135–51; J. Durliat, "Cité, impôt et intégration des barbares", *ibid.* pp. 153–79; H. Wolfram, "Neglected evidence on the accommodation of the barbarians in Gaul", *ibid.* pp. 181–3; Wood, "Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians", Appendix: the settlement of the Burgundians,

tax and land are mentioned explicitly in the evidence for the earliest stages of the settlement of the Burgundians. That land was involved seems to be implied by the *Chronicle of 452*'s statement that *Sapaudia Burgundionum reliquiis datur cum indigenis dividenda*,⁸⁷ and more obviously by Marius' announcement for the year 457 that *Eo anno Burgundiones partem Galliae occupaverunt terrasque cum Galliis senatoribus dividerunt*. Yet Fredegar, in a passage related, clearly erroneously, to 373, links Burgundian settlement to the reduction of taxation on the Romans, which could well imply that on occasion tax grants were the basis of barbarian accommodation.⁸⁸ On the other hand Sidonius seems to refer to the billeting of Burgundians.⁸⁹ In other words there was no single mechanism for the accommodation of the followers of the Gibichungs, and any attempt to squeeze a single model from the evidence is doomed to failure. Moreover, that there were a number of different stages in the settlement of the Burgundians is quite clear from the evidence, and it is worth pausing on this issue.

Leaving aside the evidence for the initial settlement in Sapaudia, and the temporary agreement with senators in 457, the legal evidence shows very clearly that settlement was an on-going process.⁹⁰ The *Liber Constitutionum*, in an unfortunately dateless clause, talks of "our people" (*populus noster*) who received land and slaves from the legislator and his predecessors (which suggests that the clause was issued by Gundobad, or just possibly Sigismund), and announces that these men should not receive one third of the slaves or two parts of the land where they had been given *hospitalitas*.⁹¹ It is unlikely that this clause refers to allocations of revenue from tax, because of the mention of slaves, but it might imply either billeting or the partition of property: it certainly implies illegal annexation of slaves and land: it also indicates previous grants by kings of both these commodities. The implication would seem to be that close followers of

pp. 65–9; for a judicious survey, Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, pp. 189–206.

⁸⁷ *Chronicorum a. CCCCLII* 128 (= 443). Compare *Continuatio Havniensis Prosperi* 583 (= 457).

⁸⁸ Fredegar, *Chronicon* 2,46; Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, p. 107.

⁸⁹ Sidonius, *car.* 12.

⁹⁰ Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 127–161; D. Boyson, "Romano-Burgundian society in the Age of Gundobad: some legal, archaeological and historical evidence", *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 32 (1988) pp. 91–118, here pp. 98–100, provides a summary.

⁹¹ *Liber Constitutionum* 54,1.

a king might be treated in one way, and others in another. The picture is further complicated by a later law, the very one issued by the *conventus Burgundionum*, which states that the present arrangement for those Burgundians coming from elsewhere (*qui infra venerunt*) is that they should receive half the land and half the slaves.⁹² Who these Burgundians are is uncertain, but they may have been forced out of previous arrangements when parts of the kingdom were lost to the Franks, Ostrogoths or even the Alamans. Regardless of which method of accommodation was being used at any one time, what is clear is that the settlement of the Burgundian *gens* was not a single event, but a process, and that different groups received land, slaves or *hospitalitas* in different proportions at different periods.

The *Liber Constitutionum* has more light to shed on the nature of the *gens*, not least because of its use of such terms as *Burgundio/nes*. It is necessary to state from the start that a very high percentage of the laws deal with Romans and Burgundians alike: indeed such phrases as *si quis Burgundio aut Romanus* abound.⁹³ On the other hand there are a significant number of laws which are addressed to Burgundians alone, and of those a good percentage deal with settlement and inheritance. It is fairly clear that a major concern of the laws issued by the Gibichungs was the settlement of their military following.⁹⁴ In addition there are two eye-catching laws concerned with preventing undue Burgundian influence in Roman law-suits.⁹⁵ There is, it seems, a binary opposition of Roman and Burgundian in the law-book, which the legislators were both setting out rhetorically and at the same time trying largely to override.

This opposition could also be expressed in terms of Roman and barbarian, for, interestingly, the word *barbarus* is frequently used as a synonym for Burgundian, and just as one finds phrases like *Burgundio aut Romanus*, so too one finds *tam barbarus quam Romanus*.⁹⁶ Indeed in only one instance does the term *barbarus* appear to mean something

⁹² *Liber Constitutionum, constitutio extravagans* 21,12.

⁹³ E.g. *Liber Constitutionum* 9; Frye, "Gundobad, the *Leges Burgundionum*, and the struggle for sovereignty in Burgundy", p. 206, notes that 12 of the first 41 titles proclaim the equality of Burgundians and Romans.

⁹⁴ Amory, "The meaning and purpose of ethnic terminology in the Burgundian laws", p. 26.

⁹⁵ E.g. *Liber Constitutionum* 22; 55.

⁹⁶ E.g. *ibid.* 8,1. The words also appear as variants in the various manuscripts: see *ibid.* 47,1.

other than Burgundian: in clause 79, *de praescriptione temporum* (on the setting of time limits relating to the possession of land) Gundobad legislates on the situation where “anyone of our people has invited a person belonging to a barbarian nation to live with him” (*si quis in populo nostro barbarae nationis personam, ut in re sua consisteret, invitasset*).⁹⁷ Here, the normal meaning of the term *barbarus* as Burgundian appears to be excluded by the phrase *in populo nostro*, which as we have seen almost without exception implies Burgundian, leaving one to conclude that *barbarus* in this one clause means non-Burgundian. That there were Germanic incomers who wished to settle in the Gibichung kingdom, is made absolutely clear in the final ordinance of the *Liber Constitutionum*, where Goths who have been captives among the Franks, and indeed any other outsider (*quicumque persona de alia regione*), are given permission to settle.⁹⁸ The *barbari* are, thus, usually Burgundians, but could also be Germanic people of non-Burgundian origin. That the same word is used for both groups implies a fluidity, and indicates that the Burgundians of Sapaudia were essentially, but not exclusively, the Germanic followers of the Gibichungs. *Burgundio* and *barbarus* are very nearly synonymous: and as we have already seen, so too are *Burgundio* and *populus noster*.

The evidence of the code, in its clauses on settlement in particular, and also of Avitus is an important reminder that, however much Gundioc, Chilperic I, Gundobad and Sigismund wanted to be Roman officials, and can indeed be portrayed as such, they had behind them a military following, which needed to be accommodated. The two aspects of rule were not, in any case, separate: the chief Roman office held by the Gibichung rulers was that of master of the soldiers, *magister militum*, and, as we have seen, Gundobad and Sigismund openly conceived of themselves as soldiers of the emperor. Their military following carried with it women and children. Although the term “Burgundian” in the *Liber Constitutionum* and in other sources is unquestionably employed within identifiable rhetorical strategies,⁹⁹ there were people who could be so classified, and who had to be settled.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 79,1: the translation is that of K.F. Drew, *The Burgundian Code* (Philadelphia 1949) p. 75. That the lawgiver in this instance is Gundobad is clear from the date at the end of the clause.

⁹⁸ *Liber Constitutionum, constitutio extravagans* 21,4,6.

⁹⁹ Amory, “The meaning and purpose of ethnic terminology in the Burgundian laws”.

That the Burgundians could be regarded as a military unit up until the days of the settlement in Sapaudia is clear enough. If we compare that settlement with other settlements of the same period, it is likely that it had a military purpose.¹⁰⁰ The Burgundians certainly continued to act as a warrior people—although it must be said that they tended to be successful as raiders, for instance against Italy¹⁰¹ and Brioude in the Auvergne,¹⁰² and when they were acting together with other peoples—the Goths in the 450s¹⁰³ and the Franks in 508:¹⁰⁴ otherwise they did less well. Their one major victory was against the army of a single, and young, Frankish king, Chlodomer, at Vézeronce.¹⁰⁵ They collapsed totally before the onslaught of two adult sons of Clovis ten years later.¹⁰⁶ There may have been other wars which can no longer be distinguished in the historical record: Avitus wrote to Sigismund in the context of campaigns which have not been securely identified.¹⁰⁷ This dossier of military activity leaves open the question as to how powerful a military force the Burgundians were after the 430s, but it sheds some light on the Gibichung claim to be the soldiers of the emperor.

Juxtaposition of this last claim with what can be deduced of the *gens Burgundionum* suggests that the Gibichungs thought of themselves as being Roman officials who happened to have access to Burgundian troops, rather than as being primarily kings of the Burgundians or of a Burgundian kingdom. The former impression is dominant in the letters of Avitus, which provide much of our information, where first Gundobad and then Sigismund are seen through Roman eyes, surrounded by Romans.¹⁰⁸ Of course they knew they had to pay attention to the needs of their Burgundian subjects and to govern them, and they had Burgundian *comites* to do so. It is these men,

¹⁰⁰ Thompson, “The settlement of the barbarians in southern Gaul”.

¹⁰¹ Ennodius, *Vita Epifani* 168–77.

¹⁰² Gregory of Tours, *Liber de Virtutibus sancti Juliani* 7–8, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 1,2 (Hannover 1885).

¹⁰³ Jordanes, *Getica* 44,231; *Continuatio Havniensis Prosperi* 583 (= 457).

¹⁰⁴ *Chronicorum a. DXI* 689 (= 508).

¹⁰⁵ Marius of Avenches, s.a. 524; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 3,6.

¹⁰⁶ Marius of Avenches, s.a. 534; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 3,11. Marius’ assertion that Theudebert was present may be undermined by Gregory. See I.N. Wood, “Clermont and Burgundy: 511–534”, *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 32 (1988) pp. 119–25.

¹⁰⁷ Avitus, *epp.* 91; 92.

¹⁰⁸ Amory, “Names, ethnic identity, and community in fifth- and sixth-century Burgundy”, pp. 19–22.

and not their Roman counterparts, who attest the *Prima Constitutio* of the Book of Constitutions. The problematic *Prima Constitutio* apart, however, there are only two moments in the *Liber Constitutionum* where the ruler is designated *rex Burgundionum*,¹⁰⁹ and a third, already discussed, where legislation comes specifically out of an assembly of the Burgundians¹¹⁰—all three pieces of legislation, one might note, not being in the original compilation, but in the *Constitutiones Extravagantes*. Otherwise one only finds the phrase *rex Burgundionum* used as an official title in Cassiodorus' *Variae*, a view from outside.¹¹¹ The *Liber Constitutionum*, moreover, is, as we have seen, not concerned solely with Burgundians, but with all Sigismund's subjects—and in dealing with Burgundian-Roman relations it was concerned with the issue of equality.¹¹²

There is, therefore, no indication that the Burgundian kings wished to perpetuate a policy of apartheid between their Germanic followers and their Roman subjects, despite the fact that the former raised some very particular legal problems, concerned above all with settlement, landholding and inheritance, which required specific legislation. The fact that there were issues of settlement, as well as social and legal differences between the Romans and Burgundians, meant the Gibichungs could never iron out the distinction between the two peoples entirely, but the laws suggest that the official policy of the rulers was to treat both peoples as equally as possible.

Even in the area of religion, which is sometimes seen as crucial to the distinction between barbarians and Romans,¹¹³ there appear to have been no hard and fast lines in the Burgundian kingdom, at least as portrayed in the evidence from the fifth and early sixth centuries. First, Orosius and other early fifth-century writers saw the Burgundians as Catholics.¹¹⁴ By the later fifth century it is clear that Gundobad and those around him were largely Arian, although there were still Catholics in the royal family, particularly amongst the

¹⁰⁹ *Liber Constitutionum, constitutiones extravagantes* 19; 20.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 21.

¹¹¹ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1,46; 3,2. Also Ennodius, *Vita Epifani* 174.

¹¹² Frye, "Gundobad, the *Leges Burgundionum*, and the struggle for sovereignty in Burgundy", p. 206; Boyson, "Romano-Burgundian society in the Age of Gundobad: some legal, archaeological and historical evidence", p. 92.

¹¹³ P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London 1971) pp. 124–5.

¹¹⁴ Wood, "Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians", pp. 58–9.

women.¹¹⁵ Further, although Gundobad had an Arian priesthood, which he was never quite willing to abandon,¹¹⁶ he discussed theological matters with Catholics and was open to persuasion—unlike his Vandal counterparts¹¹⁷ or, later, the Visigoth Leovigild.¹¹⁸ He even seems to have condoned a religious *Dialogus* written by Avitus of Vienne, in which the bishop demolished the king's arguments.¹¹⁹ In addition, Gundobad put up no opposition to the conversion to Catholicism of his son, Sigismund, which took place apparently shortly after 500, as a result of a journey to Rome.¹²⁰ Sigismund himself was not prevented by his father from founding major Catholic churches,¹²¹ and it is even possible that Gundobad himself endowed Catholic foundations.¹²² All in all, despite the fact that Gundobad was Arian, there is nothing to suggest that religion acted as a distinguishing mark between Burgundian and Roman, or that it was exploited to keep the two peoples separate.

It is worth returning to set alongside these observations on royal power and religion the complete absence of the cultivation by Burgundians of an ethnogenetic tradition, either comparable to the stories told by Ammianus Marcellinus or Orosius, or similar to the tale of Scandinavian origins of the Burgundians put about in the eighth century.¹²³ During the period of the Burgundian kingdom, there

¹¹⁵ Wood, "Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians", pp. 59–60. See also the reservations of Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, pp. 50–4. Favrod, however, fails to deal with the question of named Catholic Burgundians of the fifth century, while I do not find his reading of Sidonius, *ep.* 6,12,3 (p. 50 n. 180) convincing. It is open to question as to whether Sidonius would have made much of Chilperic's enjoyment of Patiens' feasts, if the Burgundian had been Arian.

¹¹⁶ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,34.

¹¹⁷ Apart from the evidence of Victor of Vita, *Historia persecutionis Africanae provinciae*, ed. C. Halm, MGH AA 3,1 (Berlin 1879) pp. 1–58, there is also Ferrandus, *Vita Fulgentii*, PL 65, cols. 117–50.

¹¹⁸ See especially *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium*, ed. A. Maya Sánchez, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 116 (Turnhout 1992).

¹¹⁹ See Avitus of Vienne, *Letters and Selected Prose*, pp. 187–93.

¹²⁰ Avitus, *ep.* 8. See the commentary in Avitus of Vienne, *Letters and Selected Prose*, pp. 220–4.

¹²¹ Especially St. Maurice d'Agaune: see B.H. Rosenwein, "Perennial prayer at Agaune", *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts*, ed. S. Farmer and B.H. Rosenwein (Ithaca 2000) pp. 37–56.

¹²² Avitus, *hom.* 24; C. Perrath and A. Audin, "Alcimi Ecdicii viennensis episcopi homilia dicta in dedicatione superioris basilicae", *Studi in onore di Aristide Calderini e Roberto Paribeni* 2 (Milan 1957) pp. 433–51.

¹²³ *Passio Sigismundi* 1; Wood, "Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians",

appears to have been no legend of Burgundian ethnogenesis. Of course, one should be careful about this silence: it may reflect a gap in our source material. It may, on the other hand, be Theodoric in Italy who was unusual in sponsoring the composition of a literary ethnogenesis for his people in the early sixth century. We know of nothing comparable for the Franks, Vandals or Visigoths from the same period—and even in the seventh century Isidore resorted only to finding Biblical and Scythian origins for his Goths.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, whether or not it is the Ostrogoths rather than the Burgundians who are the exception in the early sixth century, the absence of any ethnogenetic tradition in the evidence for the court-culture of Gundobad and Sigismund is worth noting.

Legislation and the letters of Avitus of Vienne are views from the centre. It is possible that the Burgundians themselves took a different view of their relations with the Romans. Discovering the opinion of the Burgundian “man in the street” is, however, a difficult matter, although the laws do provide some possible insights. The fact that Burgundians were only too delighted to exploit differences between Romans¹²⁵ shows that they were extremely happy to seize opportunities to benefit themselves. So too, their cavalier attitude towards the Roman practice of oath-taking, which prompted the reinstatement of the traditional Burgundian custom of trial by battle,¹²⁶ indicates that there were plenty of incomers who did not take Roman legal methods seriously. One may wonder whether the majority of Burgundians remained unintegrated, as has been the case of many immigrant groups down the centuries. One might also ask whether such groups felt alienated from the increasingly Romanised Burgundians of the royal court. Such an interpretation was argued by Edward Thompson in the case of the Visigoths.¹²⁷ One might well

p. 56. For the context in which the *Passio* was written, B.H. Rosenwein, “One site, many meanings: Saint-Maurice d’Agaune as a place of power in the early Middle Ages”, *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. M. de Jong, F. Theuvs and C. van Rhijn, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 6 (Leiden 2001) pp. 271–90, here p. 285. The fullest ethnogenesis of the Burgundians comes in Hildegard’s *Vita Faronis*.

¹²⁴ Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum, Wandalorum, Sueborum* 1–3; recapitulatio 66, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 11 (Berlin 1894); Soby Christensen, “Cassiodorus and the making of a history of the Goths”, p. 176.

¹²⁵ *Liber Constitutionum* 22; 51,1–2.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* 45.

¹²⁷ E.A. Thompson, “The Visigoths from Fritigern to Euric”, *Historia* 12 (1963)

hypothesise that the adoption of a highly Romanised, not to say extravagant,¹²⁸ lifestyle at court alienated the rank and file Burgundian settlers, and, indeed, helped weaken the kingdom. Such a hypothesis, although ultimately unprovable, is plausible: that Sigismund, after retiring to the monastery of Agaune, was supposedly betrayed to the Franks by a Burgundian called Trapsta¹²⁹ is one possible indication that not all members of the *gens* were happy with developments at court. So too, the *conventus Burgundionum* of the *constitutiones extravagantes* may indicate that Godomar was having to conciliate Burgundian warriors after Sigismund's fall. On the other hand the *Passio* which contains the information about Sigismund's betrayal comes from the eighth century, and may not be trustworthy as evidence. Even if it is, Trapsta's betrayal of his king may reflect a personal grudge rather than any class sentiment. The best that can be said is that our view of the development of the Burgundians as a *gens* is one formulated at the centre of Gibichung power. The majority of Burgundians may have had different views, rather more closely allied to the needs of daily life.

In evaluating the largely official evidence for the Burgundian kingdom it is difficult not to conclude with Justin Favrod, that "Le royaume ne semble exister que pour l'étranger. Jamais personne ne considère cette unité politique comme une patrie ou comme un lieu d'origine. En outre, la Bourgondie semble exister surtout par ses rois [. . .]"¹³⁰ To this one should add that the kings themselves had an extraordinarily Roman view of their positions. The kingdom of the Gibichungs does not appear to have been regarded by its rulers as a Burgundian kingdom, even if Theodoric, Cassiodorus and Ennodius saw it in that way. As already mentioned Aegidius is as good a parallel for Gundobad as any other contemporary.

As Favrod also remarked, "Le royaume burgonde ne reçut donc pas de nom avant sa disparition."¹³¹ It was in the *Nachleben* of the Gibichung kingdom, as the basis for one of the Merovingian *Teilreiche*,

pp. 105–26, reprinted in id., *Romans and Barbarians. The decline of the Western Empire* (Madison 1982) pp. 38–57.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Avitus, *ep.* 86, with the commentary in Avitus of Vienne, *Letters and Selected Prose*, pp. 279–84.

¹²⁹ *Passio Sigismundi* 9.

¹³⁰ Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, p. 134.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

that the phrase *regnum Burgundionum* and the related geographical term *Burgundia* began to stick, and it was only in the Carolingian world that the Burgundians finally received an ethnogenesis equivalent to that of the Goths and the Lombards, bringing them from the Baltic to the Rhône.¹³² By this time, however, the Burgundians were something other than the followers of the Gibichungs, although increasingly they were those supposedly subject to the *Lex Gundobada*—a title given to the *Liber Constitutionum* perhaps for no better reason than the fact that Gundobad had been responsible for the most distinctive of all the laws of the code: that which substituted trial by battle for the oath.¹³³

Leaving aside the development of the Burgundians and the notion of Burgundy or a Burgundian kingdom in the generations after the fall of the Gibichung kingdom in 534, it is worth returning to emphasise the crucial lessons of the evidence for the previous century of Burgundian history. What the Burgundian example does is draw attention to a case for which the evidence, like that for the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy, comes largely from the early sixth century. The picture in both instances is extremely Roman—although Theodoric, unlike Gundobad or Sigismund, showed an interest in discovering a past, or creating an ethnogenesis, for his people, and this suggests a different awareness of the Germanic *gens* present in each regime. The fact of this distinction between the Burgundians and the Ostrogoths—and indeed the fact that the evidence for the Vandals is different from either—suggests that we should not conclude that all peoples in the late fifth and early sixth centuries were like the Burgundians, or that all ruling dynasties in the period were like the Gibichungs. On the other hand the evidence for the Burgundians does give some indication of quite how close a barbarian dynasty and its gentile following might come to integration into the Roman world—at least in the fifth century: the sixth century is, of course, another matter.

One indication of the difference between the late fifth and early sixth century on the one hand and the late sixth on the other can be seen in a simple comparison between the image of the Gibichung

¹³² Wood, “Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians”, p. 56.

¹³³ Wood, “Disputes in late fifth- and early sixth-century Gaul: some problems”, p. 16.

kingdom proposed here, largely on the basis of evidence from the period 443–534, and that set out by Gregory of Tours. The rulers of the Burgundians are introduced by the later historian as the descendents of the (Visigothic) persecutor Athanaric,¹³⁴ which is unlikely to have been the case. In the bishop of Tours' account their early history was dominated by fraternal dissension, which led to the killing of Chilperic, the exile of Chrotechildis, and her eventual marriage to Clovis. Fraternal conflict is picked up again with the outbreak of hostilities between Gundobad and Godegisel.¹³⁵ Gregory's picture of heresy and fratricide is momentarily deepened by a long excursus on the religious relations of Gundobad and Avitus of Vienne, taken largely from the latter's own works.¹³⁶ A bloodthirsty narrative line is subsequently resumed with Sigismund's murder of his son, on the prompting of his second wife, and his griefstricken retirement to his foundation of Agaune.¹³⁷ The collapse of the king prompts Chrotechildis to pursue her long-harboured vengeance for the murder of her own father, Chilperic II, against the descendants of Gundobad. This results first in the death of Sigismund, whose body is thrown down a well in symbolic retaliation for the supposed death of Chilperic, and then in that of Chrotechildis' son Chlodomer on the field of Vezéronce.¹³⁸ The story only ends ten years later, with the destruction of the Burgundian kingdom at the hands of the Frankish queen's other sons, Chlothar and Childebert.¹³⁹ Factually, much—although by no means all—of this account can be supported from elsewhere, but the tone is completely at odds with that presented in sources from the early sixth century. Arianism is given an importance by Gregory of Tours that it seems not to have had—on the other hand from Gregory's point of view it provides a useful point of comparison for his interpretation of the conversion of Clovis.¹⁴⁰ So too, although fraternal conflict and murder probably was a significant factor in the reign of Gundobad, Avitus of Vienne

¹³⁴ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,28.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 2,32–3.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 2,34.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* 3,5.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* 3,6.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* 3,11. For the problems of Gregory's narrative here, Wood, "Clermont and Burgundy: 511–534".

¹⁴⁰ I.N. Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis", *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 63 (1985) pp. 249–72.

gives a very different impression of this from that to be found in Gregory of Tours,¹⁴¹ while the theme of Chrotechildis' vengeance seems to be a later gloss.¹⁴² Equally important, the Roman tone which suffuses the evidence from either side of 500 is absent in Gregory's presentation. The Burgundians in the bishop of Tours' narrative are a foil for his image of Clovis—which is also less Roman than it could have been, although the Franks could scarcely have pretended to have the Roman credentials which the Gibichungs certainly could boast.

A search for comparisons in the evidence from the late fifth and early sixth centuries suggests a spectrum of kingdoms, which includes not just the Burgundian kingdom of the Gibichungs, but also the Roman kingdom of Aegidius—and which stretches at the other, less Roman, extreme to the earliest English foundations: Gregory of Tours may not have been wrong to have entitled Syagrius *Romanorum rex*.¹⁴³ Gundobad in particular, but also Sigismund, needs to be considered not just alongside the kings of the Vandals, Visigoths and Ostrogoths, but also alongside Odoacer, Ricimer, Aetius and Stilicho. It would not have taken radically different circumstances for the Gibichungs and their followers to have remained little more than *magistri militum* with their federate armies—only hindsight requires that they are understood as the founders and rulers of a Germanic kingdom. They deserve to be categorised as a half-way house—as a type of federate group which was made irrelevant by the collapse of the Western Empire and the rise of the Franks, but which suggests that there were other possibilities in the period from 476 to 534 than those offered by the Germanic kingdoms which won out.

¹⁴¹ Avitus of Vienne, *Letters and Selected Prose*, ep. 5, pp. 208–12.

¹⁴² Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 43.

¹⁴³ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,27.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FRANKISH *GENS*
AND *REGNUM*: A PROPOSAL BASED ON THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Michael Schmauder

How can an archaeologist, with the help of his specific source material, succeed in making statements regarding the concepts of *gens* and *regnum*, and how far is it possible for him to take a position in the question of the relationship between the two? Both questions will be answered at the beginning of this article. A prerequisite for doing so is to consider the state and progress of historical research on both these concepts, which are still subjects of discussion. Only in this way may the knowledge and the considerations regarding this field of research, as formulated on the basis of archaeological material, be given its due historical relevance. Here, the old problem of interdisciplinary research comes to the fore: once the field of specific archaeological methodology, like, for instance, typology and chronology, is abandoned and questions of a sociological-cultural nature are touched upon a link with historical terminology is unavoidable.

First of all, it should be made clear how far archaeological research can take a position regarding the problem of the relation between *gens* and *regnum* for the Franks at all. This, naturally, raises the question of the nature of the available evidence. For the whole of the Migration Period and the early Middle Ages it consists primarily of funerary material. Excavated settlements—and especially published excavation reports of these—are, at present, much rarer. Only small excavations at Merovingian centres have thus far taken place, and their subsequent destruction by later building activity does not give much reason for optimism concerning future finds in these places.¹

¹ For a summary, see: P. Périn, “Paris, merovingische Metropole”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas. Vor 1500 Jahren: König Chlodwig und seine Erben. Katalog zur Ausstellung im Reiss-Museum Mannheim 1* (Mainz 1996) pp. 121–8; H. Ament, “Die Franken in den Römerstädten der Rheinzone”, *ibid.*, pp. 129–37; H.-P. Kuhnen, “Zwischen Reichs- und Stadtgeschichte—Trier in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter”, *ibid.*, pp. 138–44; B. Päffgen and S. Ristow, “Die Römerstadt Köln zur Merowingerzeit”,

Consequently, archaeological research of the Migration Period and the early Middle Ages will need to base its results predominantly on funerary finds. This raises—even before discussing the aspects to which archaeology is related—the evaluation of the specific problems posed by grave-goods.

A question of interpretation? The sources for early medieval archaeology

The formulation of statements based on archaeology depends on the state of the sources, the quality of which is primarily based on the preservation of the archaeological finds.² Several factors influence archaeological finds and findings, and change their previous appearance. The find itself reflects, at best, a part of a former “living” reality. This is especially applicable to grave-goods. Hardly any type of artefact is subject to a stronger “distortion” than that from a funerary context.³ All the known data are the result of a selection process carried out by the contemporary society and by the deceased, on background of his past social position within a (complex) cultural context. Hence, the valuation of grave-goods cannot be uniform. Recently, Horst Wolfgang Böhme was prompted, by the exhibition, “Gräber—Spiegel des Lebens”, to state that grave-goods essentially

ibid., pp. 145–59; M. Grünewald, “Worms zwischen Burgund und Salern”, *ibid.*, pp. 160–2.

² For the interpretative possibilities presented by cases where finds are recovered under favourable circumstances, see: O. Doppelfeld, “Das fränkische Knabengrab unter dem Chor des Kölner Domes”, *Germania* 42 (1964) pp. 156–88; R. Marti, “Das Grab eines wohlhabenden Alamannen in Altdorf UR, Pfarrkirche St. Martin”, *Jahrbuch der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte* 78 (1995) pp. 83–130; H. Amrein, A. Rast-Eicher and R. Windler with a contribution by E. Langenegger, “Neue Untersuchungen zum Frauengrab des 7. Jahrhunderts in der reformierten Kirche von Bülach (Kanton Zürich)”, *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 56 (1999) pp. 73–114. See also the section on the ship-burial on the Fallward near Wremen.

³ Cf. most recently: A. Miron, “Die babylonische Verwirrung. Überlegungen zur Terminologie der Spätlatène-Chronologie”, *Studien zur Archäologie der Kelten, Römer und Germanen in Mittel- und Westeuropa. Alfred Haffner zum 60. Geburtstag gewidmet*, ed. A. Müller-Karpe et al., Internationale Archäologie, Studia honoraria 4 (Rahden Westf. 1998) pp. 429–38; *id.*, “Zentrale Fragestellung—Das Grab als kulturhistorische Quelle”, *Kelten, Germanen, Römer im Mittelgebirgsraum zwischen Luxemburg und Thüringen*, ed. A. Haffner and S. von Schnurbein, Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 5 (Bonn 2000) pp. 257–61.

represent “a distorted mirror”⁴ and that “the valuation of grave-goods as evidence for living culture [...] should always be made against a background of the then binding traditions of grave-goods, functioning as a filter in the selection of these”.⁵ But, how should this filter be defined? On this Ursula Koch has remarked: “undoubtedly grave-furnishings were seen as serving as a worthy passage to, and a suitable life in, the here-after”.⁶ Jürgen Hannig’s remarks in his ground-breaking article “Ars donandi. Zur Ökonomie des Schenkens im früheren Mittelalter” point in the same direction.⁷ He writes: “[...] grave-goods should be considered less as documentation of a living person’s rank and social standing than as means of securing the deceased’s position in the distribution processes in the here-after”.⁸ In clear contrast to Hannig’s views is Hagen Keller’s opinion: “Going from the finds, one ought to conjure up the image of how an expensively prepared chamber-grave, with the deceased and his rich outfit for the here-after, was ‘publicly’—that is, not only with his direct neighbours, but also with present relatives—‘sent on his way’, in order to understand how the precedence of the deceased, and particularly of those ‘left behind’, could be demonstrated and established in the community.”⁹ Recently, Sebastian Brather has expressed

⁴ “eher ein[en] Zerrspiegel”: H.W. Böhme, “Franken und Romanen im Spiegel spätrömischer Grabfunde im nördlichen Gallien”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen bis zur ‘Schlacht bei Zülpich’* (496/97), ed. D. Geuenich, Ergänzungsbande zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 19 (Berlin-New York 1998) pp. 31–58, here p. 31.

⁵ “die Auswertung der jeweiligen Grabausstattungen als Zeugnis für die lebende Kultur [...] in allen Fällen vor dem Hintergrund der gerade verbindlichen Beigabensitte, die wie ein Filter bei der Beigabenauswahl wirkt, vorzunehmen ist”: *ibid.*, n. 1.

⁶ “Zweifelloos sollte die Grabausstattung einem würdigen Auftritt und angemessenen Leben im Jenseits dienen”; U. Koch, “Stätten der Totenruhe—Grabformen und Bestattungssitten der Franken”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 2, pp. 723–37, here p. 728.

⁷ J. Hannig, “Ars donandi. Zur Ökonomie des Schenkens im früheren Mittelalter”, *Armut, Liebe, Ehre*, ed. R. van Dülmen, Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung 1 (Frankfurt a. M. 1986) pp. 11–37; pp. 275–8.

⁸ “[...] die Grabbeigaben sind wohl weniger als Dokumentation des ehemaligen Ranges und der sozialen Stellung im Diesseits anzusehen denn als Mittel, dem Toten seine Stellung in den jenseitigen Distributionsprozessen zu bewahren”: *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁹ “Man muß es sich—an den Funden orientiert—bildlich vorstellen, wie ein aufwendig vorbereitetes Kammergrab mit dem Toten und mitsamt seiner reichen Ausstattung für das Jenseits ‘vor allen’—wohl nicht nur vor der Nachbarschaft, sondern auch vor herbeigeeilten Verwandten—‘beschenkt’ wurde, um zu ahnen, wie der Vorrang des Toten und wohl mehr noch der ‘Hinterbliebenen’ in der Gemeinschaft

yet another opinion. According to him, the furnishings of graves, if they are really an “image of the deceased’s role in life”¹⁰ (which, according to Brather, can be evidenced only in individual cases), may be considered rather as “a mirror of social prestige, and hence of the social identity, of individuals and groups.”¹¹ However, Frans Theuws and Henk A. Hiddink have pointed out that “during the interpretation [. . .] the specific meaning of the rites was as little noted as the form chosen in such a case”.¹² This consideration fits in well with the hope, recently expressed by Hagen Keller, that it will become possible to look at the “localisation” (*Verortung*) of “structural changes”, which from the middle of the fifth century led to the creation of the Frankish realm and to a process of consolidation for other Germanic *gentes*, rather than concentrating on “the typological predecessors and previous phases—burials, weapons as grave-goods, provisions of material goods, royal graves in Germania, and graves of *foederati* in Gaul”.¹³ In what follows, this will be discussed as it relates to the case of the Franks.

demonstriert und gefestigt werden konnte”: H. Keller, “Strukturveränderungen in der westgermanischen Welt am Vorabend der fränkischen Großreichsbildung. Fragen, Suchbilder, Hypothesen”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen bis zur “Schlacht bei Zülpich” (496/97)*, ed. D. Geuenich. Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 19 (Berlin-New York 1998) pp. 580–607, here p. 599.

¹⁰ “als Abbild der Rolle des Toten im Leben”: S. Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie”, *Germania* 78 (2000) pp. 139–77, here p. 168. Regarding the valuation of grave-goods, this idea accords with the title chosen by J. Biel for a grave from the Hallstatt-period at Hochdorf: J. Biel, “Die Ausstattung des Toten. Reichtum im Grabe—Spiegel der Macht”, *Der Keltenfürst von Hochdorf. Methoden und Ergebnisse der Landesarchäologie* (Stuttgart 1985) pp. 79–105.

¹¹ “eher ein Spiegel des Sozialprestiges und damit der sozialen Identität von Individuen und Gruppen”: Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”, p. 168.

¹² “bei der Interpretation [. . .] die spezifische Bedeutung der Riten ebensowenig Beachtung [fand] wie die Form, die in einem solchen Fall gewählt wurde”: F. Theuws and H.A. Hiddink, “Der Kontakt zu Rom”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 66–80, here p. 70.

¹³ “die typologischen Vorläufer und Vorstufen—Körperbestattung, Waffenbeigabe, Sachgüterausstattung, Fürstengräber in Germanien, Foederatengräber in Gallien”: Keller, “Strukturveränderungen in der westgermanischen Welt”, p. 593. Keller here asks something of early Medieval archaeology that has, previously, been formulated even clearer by Reinhard Wenskus: “No matter how important, before anything else, answering typological questions may be, to historians the morphology as researched by prehistorians [sic!] often seems unrewarding and uninteresting. Striving for methodological purity can, thus, lead in directions that no longer have anything to do with historical questions. It may render archaeology uninteresting for historians, it becomes sterile to them.” (R. Wenskus, “Randbemerkungen zum Verhältnis von Historie und Archäologie, insbesondere mittelalterlicher Geschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie”, *Geschichtswissenschaft und Archäologie. Untersuchungen zur*

Gens and regnum: the possibilities of archaeology

In his book on the relationship between Alamans and Franks, Frank Siegmund has listed those criteria that influence the furnishings of a grave.¹⁴ In his opinion, we can consider a grave as the smallest unit of information. These criteria, therefore, enable us to shed light on wider relationships, like that between *gens* and *regnum*, which is the emphasis here.

According to Siegmund, it is of special importance when working with funerary material primarily to consider aspects of gender and of chronological phasing, which are of greater significance than regional perspectives and ethnic predetermination. It is only after working on these questions that one can proceed to those concerning “vertical social structure”.

Against the background of Siegmund’s ideas, the following questions can now be formulated regarding the relationships between Frankish *gens* and *regnum*, which will be discussed in what follows:

1. Can a *gens*, like the Franks, be identified by archaeology and, if so, at which point in time and on the basis of which criteria?
2. Where geographically do the Franks appear as a *gens*, and how does their further territorial development proceed?
3. What type of social structure is evidenced by the actions of the Franks as a *gens*, and how does this change with the founding and development of the Frankish *regnum*?
4. From an archaeological perspective, what is the position of the Frankish *gens* and *regnum* over the course of the centuries?

The historical point of departure: a diffuse image

Research agrees that the name of the Franks derives from a Germanic language-root (Old High German *Franchon*, Old English *Francan*, Old Norse *Frakkar*).¹⁵ Generally, its meaning is now translated as “wild,

Siedlungs-, Wirtschafts- und Kirchengeschichte, ed. H. Jankuhn and R. Wenskus [Sigmaringen 1979] pp. 637–57, here p. 645).

¹⁴ F. Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken*, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 23 (Berlin-New York 2000) pp. 77–80.

¹⁵ H. Ament, H.H. Anton, H. Beck, A. Quak, F. Rexroth, K. Schäferdiek, H. Steuer, D. Strauch and N. Voorwinden, “Franken”, *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*

courageous, fierce”, as suggested by late antique and early medieval sources.¹⁶ It has been established that the name *Franci* appears for the first time in 291 A.D., in a panegyric by Mamertinus on Emperor Maximianus.¹⁷ From the description, it may be gathered that already at this point in time the Franks were a *gens*, for explicit mention is made of a *rex*.¹⁸ Other sources mentioning the *Franci* in third-century contexts date from the fourth century or later.¹⁹ Probably the Franks, like a whole series of other historical *gentes* (Bructeri, Chamavi, Ampsivarii, Salians, Tubantes, Angrivarii, Falchovarii and Chattuarii[?]), were a *gens* initially settled in the area of the northern Netherlands, Westphalia and Lower Saxony. The occurrence of pirate raids²⁰ make it seem likely that the Frankish territory was located near the coast.²¹ Given their mention in Roman sources, the *gentes* of the Bructeri, Chamavi, Ampsivarii and Chattuarii (who apparently disappeared in the course of the fourth century to the profit of the Franks), presumably, did not live far from the borders of the Roman Empire.²² Julian, writing in the fourth century, mentions a people called the Salians, who by modern scholars have been considered (a part of) one of the Frankish tribes.²³ The location of the Salian settlement is

9 (2nd edn., 1995) pp. 373–461, here “I. Philologisches § 1. Namenkundliches” by H. Beck, pp. 373–4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 374. See further: R. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln-Graz 1961) pp. 513–4.

¹⁷ *Panegyrici Latini* 11,7, p. 376; 8,17, p. 382, ed. J. Herrmann, *Griechische und lateinische Quellen zur Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas bis zur Mitte des 1. Jahrtausends u. Z.*, vol. 3: *Von Tacitus bis Ausonius*, Schriften und Quellen der Alten Welt 37,3 (Berlin 1991).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 376: *Francos ad petendam pacem cum rege venientes*.

¹⁹ M. Springer, “Geschichtsbilder, Urteile und Vorurteile. Franken und Sachsen in den Vorstellungen unserer Zeit und in der Vergangenheit”, 799—*Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn. Beiträge zum Katalog der Ausstellung Paderborn 1999*, ed. C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff (Mainz 1999) pp. 224–32.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ The imprecise evidence for the settlement area of the Franks, during the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries, may be associated with their origins in the north-eastern coastal region.

²² Ch. Reichmann, “Frühe Franken in Germanien”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 55–65.

²³ Cf. the critique by M. Springer on the meaning of Salian: M. Springer, “Salier und Salisches Recht—Beobachtungen zu den Wörtern Salii und Salicus”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 485–7; *id.*, “Gab es ein Volk der Salier?”, *Nomen et gens. Zur historischen Aussagekraft frühmittelalterlicher Personennamen*, ed. D. Geuenich, W. Haubrichs and J. Jarnut, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 16 (Berlin-New York 1997) pp. 58–83.

unclear, though the reference in Zosimus (3,6), that they were driven away by the Saxons, may indicate that they should be sited in eastern Westphalia and western Lower Saxony.²⁴ On the fourth-century *Tabula Peuteringiana*, the name *FRANCIA* already appears east of the Rhine in the vicinity of *Colonia Ulpia Traiana* (Xanten).²⁵

Can the Frankish gens be identified archaeologically?

The archaeological point of departure—the third and fourth centuries in the Netherlands, Westphalia and Lower Saxony

The inconclusive historical data, regarding in which area the *Franci* settled, still provide the starting-point, also in archaeology, for determining and attributing finds and findings as connected to the Frankish *gens*.²⁶ Archaeologically it is impossible to differentiate the various *gentes* in the area of the Netherlands, Westphalia and Lower Saxony mentioned in the historical sources. Following Rafael von Uslar, they are generally clustered together as the “Rhine-Weser Germanic finds group”.²⁷ In this respect, maps constructed on the basis of historical

²⁴ See the various places the name occurs on the maps by Ch. Reichmann (Reichmann, “Frühe Franken”, p. 57 fig. 39) and H.W. Böhme (H.W. Böhme, “Franken oder Sachsen? Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Bevölkerungsgeschichte in Westfalen vom 4.–7. Jahrhundert”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12, ed. H.-J. Häbler [Oldenburg 1999] pp. 43–73 fig. 1).

²⁵ For coins with the legend *Francia*, see: M. Schmauder, “Verzögerte Landnahme? Die Dacia Traiana und die sogenannten *decumates agri*”, *Integration und Herrschaft. Ethnische Identitäten und soziale Organisation im Frühmittelalter*, ed. M. Diesenberger and W. Pohl (Vienna 2002).

²⁶ Böhme, “Franken oder Sachsen?”, pp. 45–6 fig. 1; id., “Ethnos und Religion der Bewohner Westfalens. Methodische und historische Problematik”, 799—*Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn. Beiträge zum Katalog der Ausstellung Paderborn 1999*, ed. C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff (Mainz 1999) pp. 237–45, here p. 238 fig. 1. On the Saxon settlement in England, H. Härke has recently rightly made the following critical remark: “The identification of the tribes concerned, and (where present) their kingdoms or settlement areas, nearly always depends on the ethnic interpretation of the archaeological material in combination with the written sources—a method that was so common in archaeological research of early history that, also after 1945, it has hardly been critically discussed even once. On the other hand, for proto-history it has, since the end of the war at the latest, been emphatically abandoned.” (H. Härke, “Sächsische Ethnizität und archäologische Deutung im frühmittelalterlichen England”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12, ed. H.-J. Häbler [Oldenburg 1999] pp. 109–22, here p. 110).

²⁷ R. von Uslar, *Westgermanische Bodenfunde des ersten bis dritten Jahrhunderts nach Christus aus Mittel- und Westdeutschland*, *Germanische Denkmäler der Frühzeit* 3 (Berlin 1938). This group of finds has still not been reevaluated.

sources, showing settlement areas of *gentes* presumed to be “concealed” by the Franks, offer a representation for which there is no archaeological proof. The reason for that lies in an exceptionally rare use of grave-goods, further limited by the custom of cremating the dead. On the continuity of the “Rhine-Weser Germanic finds group”, Hermann Ament states: “The Rhine-Weser Germanic form complex of the later imperial period [second to third century A.D., author’s note] continues, without any noteworthy break, a finds complex of the same name from the early imperial period, as can be gathered from the many examples of settlement continuity in essentially the same areas and from the constant and organic development of objects”.²⁸ Even using the groupings of a *gens* of Franks and a *gens* of Saxons provided by the historical sources, it is impossible to divide the material culture of the fourth and fifth centuries in Westphalia. A similar point has recently been made by Christoph Grünewald: “I think that our investigation around Westphalia has shown that a clear definition of ‘Frankish’ and ‘Saxon’ is not possible. Neither in grave-goods or grave-forms, nor in the organisation of cemeteries or in the alignment of individual graves are clear criteria available”.²⁹ Archaeology clearly demonstrates that those Germans, who in the fourth and fifth centuries lived and were buried in northern Gaul as *foederati* or—to use a neutral term—as settlers, originally came from an area centred around the northern Netherlands, Westphalia and the Elbe-Weser triangle in Lower Saxony.³⁰ These con-

²⁸ “Der jünger-kaiserzeitliche rheinwesergerm. Formenkreis setzt ohne nennenswerten Bruch eine gleichnamige Fundgruppe der Ält. RKZ fort, wie an der mehrfach nachweisbaren Siedlungskonstanz, dem im wesentlichen gleichen Verbreitungsgebiet und der gleichsam organischen Weiterentwicklung der Sachformen abzulesen ist”: Ament, Anton, Beck, Quak, Rexroth, Schäferdiek, Steuer, Strauch and Voorwinden, “Franken”, here p. 388.

²⁹ “Ich denke, unser Rundblick durch Westfalen hat gezeigt, daß eine klare Definition von Fränkischem und Sächsischem nicht gelingt. Weder die Grabbeigaben noch die Grabformen, weder die Anlage der Gräberfelder noch die Ausrichtung der Einzelgräber geben klare Kriterien an die Hand”: Ch. Grünewald, “Neues zu Sachsen und Franken in Westfalen”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12, ed. H.-J. Häbler (Oldenburg 1999) pp. 83–108, here p. 107.

³⁰ See, for instance: H.W. Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts. Zwischen unterer Elbe und Loire. Studien zur Chronologie und Bevölkerungsgeschichte*, Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 19 (München 1974); id., “Söldner und Siedler im spätantiken Nordgallien”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 91–101, esp. fig. 68 and 75; id., “Sächsische Söldner im römischen Heer. Das Land zwischen Ems und Niederelbe während des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts”, *Über allen Fronten. Nordwestdeutschland zwischen Augustus und Karl dem Großen*, ed. M. Fansa (Oldenburg 1999)

nections can be proven not only on basis of the well-known late Roman items of clothing (though the cultural significance of these is doubted),³¹ but also, among other things, by the distribution of hand-made

pp. 49–73. Further, a considerable proportion of funerary finds indicates that a substantial migration from central Germany took place from the middle of the fifth century onwards. (Ch. Reichmann, “Krefeld [2352/003]”, *Bonner Jahrbücher* 197 [1997] pp. 314–6; H.W. Böhme, “Les Thuringiens dans le Nord du royaume franc”, *Revue Archéologique de Picardie* 3/4 [1988] pp. 57–69).

³¹ Cf. the critique by Guy Halsall: G. Halsall, “The origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: forty years on”, *Fifth-century Gaul: a crisis of identity?*, ed. J.F. Drinkwater and H. Elton (Cambridge 1992) pp. 196–207; id., *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An archaeological introduction to burial in the Post-Roman West* (Glasgow 1995); id., “Archaeology and the late Roman frontier in northern Gaul: The so-called ‘Föderatengräber’ reconsidered”, *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. W. Pohl and H. Reimitz, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* 1 (Wien 2000) pp. 167–80. Some remarks should briefly be made here; though these cannot replace a more detailed examination of the arguments raised by G. Halsall. The idea that graves containing late Roman dress elements can be regarded as Bagaud burials raises various problems. Firstly, from an archaeological perspective, the fundamental question that ought to be addressed is why the members of the Bagaud movement would use a different burial ritual? It is also difficult to explain why similar archaeological phenomena occur in other border regions of the Roman Empire, including areas where there is no evidence for a Bagaud movement, but rather for the settlement and stationing of barbarian *foederati*. For the area on the Lower Danube, the latest research by K. von der Lohe, for the cemeteries at Piatra Frecăței, shows that already after one generation a newly arrived people, on the basis of its particular manner of grave construction, can archaeologically only be recognized as “non-Romans”. For historical research, in particular the fact that there is evidence for Bagauds in the third and fifth centuries, but not for the fourth, will cause problems (S. Szadeczky-Kardoss, “Bagaudae”, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Supplement* 11 [1968] pp. 346–54; R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* [Berkeley 1985]). It is not clear to the author why Halsall presupposes an Alamannic origin of this phenomenon. As far as the author is aware, there are no precedents of this in modern research. J. Kleemann has recently worked on the emergence of the custom of interment burials. His conclusions clearly point in another direction (J. Kleemann, “Zum Aufkommen der Körperbestattung in Niedersachsen”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 13, ed. H.-J. Häbler [Oldenburg 1999] pp. 253–62). Also, mention ought to be made of the newly discovered burial of a body in Leer (Lower Saxony), which dates from the second century. The deceased had been buried “lying on his right side with the legs drawn up in a slightly squatting position” (R. Bärenfänger, “Fundmeldungen: 6. Leer FstNr. 2710/5:10”, *Emdener Jahrbuch* 77 [1997] p. 269). It is interesting that the evidence for interment burials in Germanic settlements so far has had no wider consequences for the discussion (W. Haarnagel, *Die Grabung Feddersen Wierde. Methode, Hausbau, Siedlungs- und Wirtschaftsformen sowie Sozialstrukturen* [Wiesbaden 1979] pp. 230–8). See now: M.D. Schön, “Gräber und Siedlungen bei Ottendorf-Westerwörden, Landkreis Cuxhaven”, *Probleme der Küstenforschung im südlichen Nordseegebiet* 26 (1999) pp. 123–208, esp. pp. 149–61. Halsall’s arguments on the origins of specific shapes of fibulas, like the *Tutulusfibel* (trumpet brooch) and *Stützarmfibel* (supporting-arm brooch), are dubious. The supposition that the presence of these fibulas were the only difference from the female graves generally acknowledged as late

pottery in Belgium, the Netherlands and northern Germany.³² With the inclusion of the north German coastal region, the area that is usually classified as typically “Saxon” is incorporated too.³³ From a cultural perspective, it is important that the finds, recovered from settlements situated in a wide strip along the Roman border, belong

Roman, in which necklaces, earrings, bracelets and hair pins are present, limits the ethnic determination claims unnecessarily (on the Roman customs of grave-goods, see the thorough study of the cemetery at Kaiseraugst: M. Martin, *Das spätromisch-frühmittelalterliche Gräberfeld von Kaiseraugst, Kt. Aargau*, 2 vols., Basler Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte 5 [Derendingen 1976/91], esp. vol. 2, pp. 293–307). In fact, the question of the provenance of fibula-types is less fundamental than the use of particular fibulas in relation to a specific costume (it is beyond doubt that several Germanic fibula-types were derived from Roman examples. The *Tutulusfibel* can, however, be traced back to Barbaricum. Cf.: V. Brieske, *Schmuck und Trachtenbestandteile des Gräberfeldes von Liebenau, Kr. Nienburg/Weser*, Studien zur Sachsenforschung 5,6 [Oldenburg 2001], esp. pp. 15–9). Unless found in northern Gaul at a future date, these fibula-types are undisputedly associated with the west Germanic *peplos*-dress with cloak (M. Martin, “Fibel und Fibeltracht. § 41. W-germ. F. und F.-Tracht. A. Diskontinuität der F.-Tracht zur RGZ und MZ”, *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 8 [2nd edn., 1994] pp. 549–56; id., “Tradition und Wandel der fibelgeschmückten frühmittelalterlichen Frauenkleidung”, *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 38,2 [1991] pp. 629–80). Further, in numerous graves, which have been interpreted as those of *foederati*, there are a variety of elements that point to the Germanic lands. Most recently, Claus von Carnap-Bornheim has made an exemplary study of this for the grave of the *chef militaire* of Vermand (C. von Carnap-Bornheim, “Kaiserzeitliche germanische Traditionen im Fundgut des Grabes des ‘chef militaire’ in Vermand und im Childerich-Grab in Tournai”, *Germanen beiderseits des spätantiken Limes*, ed. Th. Fischer, G. Precht and J. Tejral, Spisy Archeologického Ústavu Av ČR Brno 14 [Köln-Brno 1999] pp. 47–61). Lastly, Halsall’s argument (Halsall, “The origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*”, p. 200) that the inclusion of an *obolus* (a coin placed in the mouth) did not differ between Germans and Romans, is still open to debate. M. Martin has researched the late antique/Frankish cemetery at Krefeld-Gellep from this perspective, and has been able to show that—in the fourth and fifth centuries and later—the inclusion of an *obolus* was there, as elsewhere, a typical Germanic custom of Roman origin (Martin, *Das spätromisch-frühmittelalterliche Gräberfeld*, esp. vol. 2, pp. 165–9).

³² P. de Paepe and L. van Impe, “Historical Context and Provenancing of Late Roman Hand-Made Pottery from Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. First Report”, *Archaeologie in Vlanderen* 1 (1991) pp. 145–80; Y. Hollevoet and J.-P. van Roeyen, “Germanic settlers at Sint-Gillis-Waas? (Prov. East-Flanders)”, *Archaeologie in Vlandern* 2 (1992) pp. 209–21; Theuws and Hiddink, “Der Kontakt zu Rom”, p. 78.

³³ From a historical perspective, this is no real surprise: in late antique sources, more than once *incursions* of Franks and Saxons undertaken together are mentioned. (Julian, *Or.* 1,34d, ed. W.C. Wright [*The works of the Emperor Julian*] [New York 1930] pp. 88–91; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae—Römische Geschichte* 27,8,5, ed. W. Seyfarth, 4 vols. [Berlin 1970] pp. 76–7; Zosimus, *Neue Geschichte* 3,6–7, ed. O. Veh and S. Rebenich, Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 31 [Stuttgart 1990] pp. 124–5). Cf.: B. Gutmann, *Studien zur römischen Außenpolitik in der Spätantike (364–395 n. Chr.)* (Bonn 1991) pp. 44–5.

to a *limes* area that was intensively drawn into the Roman sphere of influence. This is demonstrated, especially, by the large amount of Roman small coinage,³⁴ but also by the adoption of Roman techniques of ceramics production,³⁵ as well as the presence of Roman glass and coarseware ceramics.³⁶

It ought, therefore, to be borne in mind that, on the basis of the archaeological finds from the fourth and the first half of the fifth centuries, no identification as an individual *gens* (as an ethnically identifiable group) is possible for the Franks, though they are, already at that time, mentioned in historical sources.

*Evidence for Frankish settlement activity in Northern Gaul?
Germans between the Rhine and the Loire*

With his book on Merovingian *Bügelfibeln* (bow fibulas), Alexander Koch is the latest to deal with the question of Germanic settlers in the Dutch, Belgian, west German and north French regions.³⁷ Koch's discussions are largely based on research done by Hermann Ament.³⁸

³⁴ D.G. Wigg, *Münzumschlag in Nordgallien um die Mitte des 4. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.*, Studien zu Fundmünzen der Antike 8 (Berlin 1991); F. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu römischerzeitlichen Münzfunden in Nordwestdeutschland*, Studien zu Fundmünzen der Antike 9 (Berlin 1992).

³⁵ G. Mildenerger, "Terra Nigra aus Nordhessen", *Fundberichte aus Hessen* 12 (1972) pp. 104–26; M. Erdrich, "Terra Nigra-Fußschalen wie Chenet 342 oder Gellep 273: eine salisch-fränkische Keramikgattung", *Germania* 76 (1998) pp. 875–83; A.D. Verlinde and M. Erdrich, "Eine germanische Siedlung der späten Kaiserzeit mit umwehrter Anlage und umfangreicher Eisenindustrie in Heeten Overijssel, Niederlande", *Germania* 76 (1998) pp. 693–719.

³⁶ Most recently, Michael Erdrich has stated that "the Roman evidence found in the Germanic settlements and burials outside the borders of the Empire can hardly be considered as the result of cross-border exchange of goods, but should rather be regarded as the effect of Roman decisions in foreign politics and security at times of far reaching domestic and military crises." (M. Erdrich, "Wirtschaftsbeziehungen zwischen der Germania inferior und dem germanischen Vorland—ein Wunschbild", *Germania inferior. Besiedlung, Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft an der Grenze der römisch-germanischen Welt*, ed. T. Grünwald with H.-J. Schalles, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 28 [Berlin-New York 2001] pp. 306–35, here p. 335).

³⁷ A. Koch, "Zur Problematik der sog. fränkischen Landnahme", id., *Bügelfibeln der Merowingerzeit im westlichen Frankenreich*, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, Monographien 41,2 (Mainz 1998) pp. 565–80.

³⁸ The problem of the different interpretation of the archaeological material posed

The early phase of Germanic settlement, in the area described, has been thoroughly discussed archaeologically by Horst Wolfgang Böhme, on the basis of funerary material.³⁹ The conclusions drawn by Böhme have been widely recognised by research. According to these findings, there is, in conformity with the cemetery material from the fourth and fifth centuries, evidence for the presence of a substantial number of Germani, or—as Böhme even more carefully expresses it—of “non-Roman people”⁴⁰ in northern Gaul. From the late fourth century onwards, an increasing number of cemeteries appears (Furfooz, Vermand, Vireux-Molhain, Vron etc.)⁴¹ and a greater number of Germanic burials emerge at the edges of existing late Roman cemeteries. These are predominantly recognisable by the presence of weapons in male graves and by the widely practised custom of including grave-goods.

The newly founded burial grounds were, until the third quarter of the fifth century, generally used for two generations. Böhme assumes

by components of French early medieval archaeological research can not be discussed here. On this subject, see Koch, “Zur Problematik der sog. fränkischen Landnahme”, pp. 567–9.

³⁹ The settlements of the *laeti*, mentioned as early as the third century (K. Böhner, “Zur historischen Interpretation der sogenannten Laetengräber”, *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 10 [1963] pp. 139–67; R. Günther, “Laeti, foederati und Gentilen in Nord- und Nordwestgallien im Zusammenhang mit der sogenannten Laetenzivilisation”, *Zeitschrift für Archäologie* 5 [1971] pp. 39–59; id., “Einige neue Untersuchungen zu den Laeten und Gentilen in Gallien im 4. Jahrhundert und zu ihrer historischen Bedeutung”, *Klio* 69 [1977] pp. 311–21) are becoming increasingly comprehensible through archaeological research (J. Henning, “Germanische Siedlungen im spätrömischen Nordgallien. Neue Ergebnisse archäologischer Forschungen”, *Zeitschrift für Archäologie* 23 [1989] pp. 211–7; P. van Ossel, *Établissements ruraux de l'Antiquité tardive dans le nord de la Gaule*, Gallia, Suppl. 51 [Paris 1992]; Theuws and Hiddink, “Kontakt zu Rom”, esp. pp. 75–80). Possible evidence for the presence of Germanic settlers, as early as “the first to second third of the fourth century” (K.H. Lenz, *Siedlungen der Römischen Kaiserzeit auf der Aldenhovener Platte* [Köln-Bonn 1999] p. 89), was provided by the archaeological analysis of K.H. Lenz for the area of the Aldenhovener Platte c. 20 km north-east of Aachen. The label “Germanic” for this settlement is, however, exclusively based on the wood construction-type.

⁴⁰ Böhme, “Söldner und Siedler”, p. 92.

⁴¹ Furfooz: A. Dasnoy, “La nécropole de Furfooz”, *Annales de la Société Archéologique de Namur* 55 (1969) pp. 121–94; Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde*, pp. 288–90, Kat.-Nr. 120, pl. 88–90; Vermand: *ibid.*, pp. 330–4, Kat.-Nr. 192, pl. 136–142 (with lit.); *La Picardie, berceau de la France. Clovis et les derniers Romains. 1500ème anniversaire de la bataille de Soissons 486–1986* (Amiens 1986) pp. 70–2, Kat.-Nr. 24; Vireux-Molhain: *La cimetière et la fortification du Bas-Empire de Vireux-Molhain, Dép. Ardennes*, ed. J.-P. Lemant (Mainz 1985); Vron: C. Seillier, “Les tombes de transition du cimetière germanique de Vron (Somme)”, *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 36 (1989) pp. 599–634.

that the Germanic settlement “obviously took place in the shape of small family units of closed ethnicity, whereby gentile identity was preserved”.⁴² On basis of the archaeological material, this statement is hard to verify, which also led Böhme to make the following observation: “Unfortunately, it is hard to decide in single cases exactly which tribes west of the Rhine once belonged to the ‘imperial Germans’ (*Reichsgermanen*) in northern Gaul”.⁴³ Neither are developments in attire, for which notable variations are apparent in Gaul during the mid- and second half of the fifth century, necessarily evidence of different ethnicities.⁴⁴ The distribution of the “simple belt-fittings with two decorated pins, a buckle with reinforced fittings, a lancet-shaped tongue and three to five holes”,⁴⁵ which are mainly found in Germania II and Belgica II, but nowhere in the area between Loire and Somme, may indicate different ethnicities. On the subject of the distribution of this type of belt-fitting, Heike Aouni has rightly critically remarked that “the belt-type A of the simple belt-fittings with buckles of Haillot variant A type [. . .] are products of various workshops, supplying different groups, and consequently these types have no *a priori* power of ethnic expression”.⁴⁶

⁴² “offensichtlich als kleine geschlossene ethnische Einheiten im Familienverband erfolgte, wobei gentile Identität gewahrt blieb”: Böhme, “Söldner und Siedler”, p. 97. Unfortunately, there is still not sufficient anthropological research to confirm Böhme’s—probably correct—assumption.

⁴³ “Leider ist im Einzelfall nur sehr schwer zu entscheiden, welchen rechtsrheinischen Stämmen im einzelnen die nordgallischen ‘Reichsgermanen’ einst angehörten”: *ibid.*, p. 97.

⁴⁴ Böhme draws a parallel between this finding and the settlement areas of Salian and Rhine Franks, as known from written sources (*ibid.*, p. 99).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ “[. . .], daß Gurtyp a der einfachen Garnituren mit Schnallen vom Typ Haillot Variante a [. . .] Produkte verschiedener Fabrikationsstätten mit unterschiedlichen Belieferungsströmen sind, so daß diese Typen nicht a priori ethnische Aussagekraft besitzen”: H. Aouni, “Das spätantuk-frühmittelalterliche Gräberfeld von Jülich—die ‘einfachen’ Gürtelgarnituren”, *Archäologie des Frankenreiches—Neueste Forschungen. Internationales Kolloquium anläßlich der Ausstellung “Die Franken—Les Francs” Berlin, 10. bis 12. Oktober 1997*, ed. W. Menghin, *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica* 30 (1998) pp. 19–37, here p. 36. Frank Siegmund evaluates, in a similarly critical manner, the ethnic interpretation on the basis of the spread of find-types (Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken*, p. 84). From the context of his study on the *Goldgriffspatha* (sword with gold mounted grip) of the Merovingian period, it becomes clear that H.W. Böhme is convinced that the spread of certain dress elements and weaponry primarily represent the market for certain production centres. In the same spirit Böhme writes: “The inhabitants of northern Gaul and its immediately neighbouring northern and eastern border zones—especially those of Germanic warrior bands who had become *foederati*—were,

There is no doubt that among the numerous Germani who settled in northern Gaul during the fourth and fifth centuries, there was a substantial number of those Germani who in the historical sources are indicated as Franks. To identify them in the archaeological finds-material with real certainty is, however, impossible.

Only in the second half of the fifth century does a process of consolidation begin to appear in the material culture that, more clearly than before, demonstrates a unification of burial customs and of the range of grave-goods. Still, it should be emphasised here, that behind the political term “Merovingian realm” one cannot archaeologically recognise a closed ethnicity during the fifth and sixth centuries. In all regions that fell under the rulership of the Merovingian dynasty, we find burials of various ethnicities in greater or lesser numbers.⁴⁷

The south of France: a gradual southward expansion

According to the archaeological sources, the conquest of southern Gaul was far less intensive than that of the northern Gaulish regions. The research undertaken over the last two decades gives a well-

between the end of the fourth century and the middle of the fifth, exclusively supplied with the products of specialised workshops in northern Gaul.” (H.W. Böhme, “Der Frankenkönig Chludwig zwischen Attila und Aëtius. Zu den Goldgriffspalten der Merowingerzeit”, *Festschrift für Otto-Herman Frey*, ed. C. Dobiat, Marburger Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 16 [Hitzeroth 1994] pp. 69–110, here p. 102).

⁴⁷ For Gaul, see for instance: M. Kazanski, “À propos de quelques types de fibules ansées de l’époque des Grandes Invasions trouvées en Gaule”, *Archéologie Médiévale* 14 (1984) pp. 7–27; id., “La diffusion de la mode danubienne en Gaule (fin du IV^e siècle—début du VI^e siècle): essai d’interprétation historique”, *Antiquités Nationales* 21 (1989) pp. 59–73; id., “Les barbares ‘orientaux’ dans l’armée romaine en Gaule”, *Antiquités Nationales* 29 (1997) pp. 201–17; H.W. Böhme, “Zur Bedeutung des spätömischen Militärdienstes für die Stammesbildung der Bajuwaren”, *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 23–37; id., “Les Thuringiens dans le Nord”; id., “Studien zu Gallien in der Spätantike”, *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 33 (1986) pp. 844–8; C. Seillier, “Céramique de type anglo-saxon du cimetière de Waben (Pas-de-Calais)”, *Antiquités Nationales* 21 (1989) pp. 83–9; A. Wiczorek, “Die Ausbreitung der fränkischen Herrschaft in den Rheinlanden vor und seit Chlodwig I.”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 240–60, esp. fig. 172; A. Koch, “Fremde Fibeln im Frankenreich. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nichtfränkischer germanischer Ethnien in Nordgallien”, *Archäologie des Frankenreiches*, pp. 69–89; W. Ebel-Zepezauer, “Ostgermanische Blechfibeln des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts zwischen Rhein und Garonne”, *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 29 (1998) pp. 297–303; V. Bierbrauer, “Les Wisigoths dans le royaume franc”, *Antiquités Nationales* 29 (1997) pp. 167–200.

differentiated image of this process. Cemeteries like that of L'Isle-Jourdain (situated between Bordeaux and Toulouse) testify to the incorporation of this region into the Frankish realm, already at the beginning of the sixth century.⁴⁸ The necropolis, in use between about 510 and 550, contains a range of grave-goods that can be compared without hesitation to those in the north-east of France. Burials like, for instance, 322 and 333 can be regarded as characteristic here. Tomb 322 was of a male and included, among other things, a francisca, a *Schilddornschnalle* (buckle with shield-shaped section attaching the buckle to the tongue), knives, a *Knickwandtopf* (biconical clay pot) and various coins.⁴⁹ The female grave 333 contained, among other finds, a pair of *Fünfknopf* fibulas (brooch with five terminals at the headplate) and a pair of *Scheibenfibeln* (disc fibulas) (that is, a complete set of fibulas), a rock-crystal with setting, amber beads, a small knife, a coin pendant as well as a *Knickwandtopf* with spout.⁵⁰ The research results from this site confirm in exemplary fashion the work of Françoise Stutz, who has studied the Frankish finds of middle and southern France.⁵¹ According to her, there is a significant density of Frankish finds in the entire area, which points to a Frankish presence from the sixth century.

Different developments: the west and east Frankish regions (selected aspects)

The baptism of Clovis in the year 508 marks a decisive step in the acculturation of Frankish life with the dominant "Roman cultural models".⁵² This change is especially clear when comparing Clovis' burial to that of his father, Childeric.⁵³ While Childeric was interred

⁴⁸ J.-L. Boudartchouk, "La nécropole francque de Ictium à L'Isle-Jourdain (Gers, Midi-Pyrénées, France)", *Archäologie des Frankenreiches*, pp. 126–36.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 133 fig. 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 133–5 fig. 6.

⁵¹ F. Stutz, *Les objets mérovingiens de type septentrional dans le Sud de la Gaule*, Mémoire de Maîtrise à l'Université Paris 1 (Paris 1993); *ead.*, *Les objets mérovingiens de type septentrional dans la moitié sud de la Gaule. Du corpus à l'histoire: position des problèmes*, Mémoire de DEA à l'Université (Paris 1994). See further: E. James, *The Merovingian archaeology of south-west Gaul*, 2 vols., British Archaeological Reports, Supplementary Series 25 (Oxford 1977).

⁵² See, with older literature: A. Dierkens, "Die Taufe Chlodwigs", *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 183–91; M. Rouche, "Die Bedeutung der Taufe Chlodwigs", *ibid.*, pp. 192–9.

⁵³ M. Müller-Wille, "Königtum und Adel im Spiegel der Grabfunde", *Die Franken—*

in a burial mound surrounded by horse burials, in accordance with the funerary practices for the highest social ranks east of the Rhine,⁵⁴ Clovis chose a burial *ad sanctos*.⁵⁵ The royal example was immediately copied, and after the turn of the sixth century noble burials can be found in the churches at Chartres, Cologne (St Severin), Rouen, Tournai and Xanten. Further, a substantial number of new churches was constructed, which from the very beginning were used as burial places for the Merovingian noble class.⁵⁶ This development, which is characteristic of sixth-century western Francia, only reaches the eastern Frankish lands around 600. From the second third of the seventh century onwards, foundations of churches with burials inside the churches or in their immediate neighbourhood also occur in the Baiuvarian lands. East of the Lech, according to Böhme, burials in churches only appear from the eighth century onwards.⁵⁷

The reduction of grave-goods follows a similar chronological and geographical development to that of high status burials in or near churches. While most of these practices in the south-western Frankish regions came to an end as early as “the end of the sixth century”,⁵⁸ in the east Frankish lands (depending on the region) they continued far into the eighth century—albeit in increasingly reduced form. The early abandonment of the inclusion of grave-goods in the south-west of the Frankish realm is causally connected to the dominance of the “Roman cultural model”.⁵⁹ In the area between the Seine, the Marne and the Meuse, this Roman influence, and hence Frankish acculturation with the “Roman cultural model”, is most notable in the

Wegbereiter Europas 1, pp. 206–21; id., *Zwei religiöse Welten: Bestattungen der fränkischen Könige Childerich und Chlodwig*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1998,1 (Stuttgart 1998) pp. 3–45.

⁵⁴ R. Brulet, “Tournai und der Bestattungsplatz um Saint-Brice”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 163–70; Böhme, “Frankenkönig Childerich”, pp. 69–74.

⁵⁵ K.-H. Krüger, *Königsgrabkirchen der Franken, Angelsachsen und Langobarden bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 4 (München 1971) pp. 40–54.

⁵⁶ See the distribution-maps by Böhme (H.W. Böhme, “Adelsgräber im Frankenreich. Archäologische Zeugnisse zur Herausbildung einer Herrschicht unter den merowingischen Königen”, *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 40 (1993) pp. 397–534, here p. 520 fig. 99).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 519.

⁵⁸ V. Bierbrauer, “Romanen im fränkischen Siedelgebiet”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 110–20, here p. 113.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

absence of weapons as grave-goods from around 600 onwards. From an archaeological point of view, this, too, blurs the borders between Franks and Romans in the west Frankish lands around this time. It is, therefore, hardly possible to draw conclusions regarding the relation between *gens* and *regnum* on the basis of the archaeological material.

Some remarks on the social stratification of the archaeological material

An example of the difficulty in using specific historical terminology for certain archaeological find-complexes is the often-discussed term “nobility”. The question whether a nobility existed in the early Frankish period has been, and still is, intensively discussed among historians. Arguments based on archaeological evidence play an important part in this discussion. Historians who have contributed significantly to this discussion have been Franz Irsigler,⁶⁰ Heike Grahn-Hoek,⁶¹ Thomas Zotz,⁶² Hans-Werner Goetz,⁶³ Gabriele von Olberg⁶⁴ and most recently Margarete Weidemann.⁶⁵ The results of the research regarding the use of the term “nobility” emphasise the need to distinguish between indicating a social group privileged by lordship, descent, status and property, or using the term for a group with a clear and precise juridical definition. Hans-Werner Goetz has demonstrated that the former usually seems unproblematic, since nobility can be equated with the Latin *nobilitas*. In contrast, M. Weidemann

⁶⁰ F. Irsigler, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des frühfränkischen Adels*, Rheinisches Archiv 70 (Bonn 1969).

⁶¹ H. Grahn-Hoek, *Die fränkische Oberschicht im 6. Jahrhundert. Studien zu ihrer rechtlichen und politischen Stellung*, Vorträge und Forschungen Sonderband 21 (Sigmaringen 1976). See further: K. Schreiner, “Adel oder Oberschicht? Bemerkungen zur soziologischen Schichtung der fränkischen Gesellschaft im 6. Jahrhundert”, *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 68 (1981) pp. 225–31.

⁶² T. Zotz, “Adel, Oberschicht, Freie. Zur Terminologie der frühmittelalterlichen Sozialgeschichte”, *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 125 (1977) pp. 2–20.

⁶³ H.-W. Goetz, “‘Nobilis’. Der Adel im Selbstverständnis der Karolingerzeit”, *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 70 (1983) pp. 153–91; id., *Moderne Mediävistik. Stand und Perspektiven der Mittelalterforschung* (Darmstadt 1999).

⁶⁴ G. von Olberg, *Die Bezeichnungen für soziale Stände, Schichten und Gruppen in den Leges Barbarorum*, Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung 11 (Münster 1991).

⁶⁵ M. Weidemann, “Adel im Merowingerreich. Untersuchung zu seiner Rechtsstellung”, *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 40 (1993) pp. 535–55. See also: K.F. Werner, *Naissance de la Noblesse* (Paris 1998).

has recently stated the following on the topic of the nobility as a juridically-defined class in the Merovingian period: "The Frankish nobility rather developed—as one may sum it up—on the basis of royal privileges, in which single persons were given special privileges in both public and private law, to which the free class had no birth-right."⁶⁶

From the archaeological evidence, it is impossible to contribute to the debate on the legal status of the nobility.⁶⁷ It is, however, on basis of the burial types and the grave-goods, possible archaeologically to recognise a stratum of graves that may be associated with the *nobilitas* referred to in the written sources.⁶⁸ This has been demonstrated most impressively by Hayo Vierck⁶⁹ giving the example of funerary material from one grave at Lehmbeck in Westphalia, and by Anke Burzler⁷⁰ on basis of the material from Alamannia and Bavaria. New finds from Westphalia and Lower Saxony now, for the first time, provide evidence for an "early nobility" in the area from which the Franks originated.

⁶⁶ Weidemann, "Adel im Merowingerreich", p. 554.

⁶⁷ There is, of course, much to suggest that burial within a church results from a privileged juridical position (as also H.W. Böhme states: "There is no need for further proof for the fact that the burial of influential, prominent and rich ladies and gentlemen in their own, separate necropolises, respectively in or near churches [...] could only take place due to a special, privileged juridical position" [Böhme, "Adelsgräber im Frankenreich", p. 525]), though this cannot be shown archaeologically.

⁶⁸ The basis for such an interpretation have been established first and foremost by: R. Christlein, "Besitzabstufungen zur Merowingerzeit im Spiegel reicher Grabfunde aus West- und Süddeutschland", *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 20 (1973) pp. 147–80; H. Ament, *Fränkische Adelsgräber von Flonheim in Rheinhessen*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit B 5 (Berlin 1970) pp. 130–63. On the basis of this research, H.W. Böhme rigorously uses the concept of nobility: Böhme, "Adelsgräber im Frankenreich".

⁶⁹ H. Vierck, "Ein westfälisches 'Adelsgrab' des 8. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. Zum archäologischen Nachweis der frühkarolingischen und altsächsischen Oberschichten", *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 2, ed. H.-J. Häbler (Hildesheim 1980) pp. 457–88. The author finds it remarkable how little the ideas, and the promising methodological hypotheses, developed within early medieval archaeological research have achieved or been adopted.

⁷⁰ A. Burzler, *Archäologische Beiträge zum Nobilifizierungsprozeß in der jüngeren Merowingerzeit* (unpublished Ph.D. München 1991).

Early nobility? On the sociological structure in the Dutch-Westphalian-Lower Saxon region during the fourth and fifth centuries

The finds recovered from funerary contexts, discussed in the following, clearly show how far the cultural-historical eloquence of archaeological find(ing)s and their valuation depend on the circumstances of their recovery. In 1994, a tomb, cut into the clay below the groundwater-level, was discovered near the Lower Saxon North Sea coast on the Fallward Wremen in the country of Wursten. Due to these fortunate circumstances, all the wooden elements of this burial had been preserved. The burial pit was covered with round poles and planks. Sixty oak boards and “a roof-like construction of rounded and squared wooden elements”⁷¹ together formed a boat-shaped structure. At its western extremity, shaped like a ship’s stern, was placed a “65 cm high, throne-like seat made of a hollowed-out alder tree-trunk”.⁷² To the richly carved throne belongs a footstool, decorated with a depiction of a deer-hunt, the function of which is indicated by a runic inscription reading *skamella* (footstool). A wooden vessel with a bird-shaped lid is a unique piece, though its function and meaning are unclear. Further, a bowl made of mountain maple was found, measuring 60 cm in diameter and decorated with carvings. Other finds include a small wooden table extravagantly constructed and with turned feet, as well as clay vessels, receptacles in wood (among others, a small cabinet) and metal (a late Roman kettle) as well as a well-preserved late antique belt-fitting. Under less favourable circumstances, little more than the unspectacular clay vessels, the late Roman kettle and the belt-fitting would have been preserved from this assembly.

One may ask how this burial would have been interpreted, had it not been preserved in such excellent circumstances. It seems clear that the grave would have been labelled as “soldier/*foederatus*”, a type on which H.W. Böhme has worked.⁷³ This label indicates warriors of barbarian provenance, who for a certain period would have

⁷¹ M.D. Schön, *Der Thron aus der Marsch. Ausgrabungen an der Fallward bei Wremen im Landkreis Cuxhaven*, Begleitheft zu Ausstellungen/Museum Burg Bederkesa, Landkreis Cuxhaven 1 (Bremerhaven 1995), p. 19.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷³ Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde*; *id.*, “Söldner und Siedler”; *id.*, “Franken und Romanen”; *id.*, “Sächsische Söldner”.

done military duties in the Roman Empire before returning to their place of origin with Roman dress-elements, badges of rank and other objects.⁷⁴ In 1982, H. Steuer described this type of burials as follows: “Considered together, these graves of the *foederati*-civilisation are not especially rich when one estimates its absolute value, for gold is lacking [. . .]. The absence of gold among the grave-goods hardly make it possible to categorise even the richer of these *foederati* burials as belonging to ‘the highest, socially and politically leading part of the population.’ Had it been members of the peak of society buried in these graves, then one would at least have found some golden *Zwiebelknopffibeln* [cruciform brooch with onion-shaped terminals]! Moreover, finds of contemporary treasures are known that are substantially more valuable and do contain gold.”⁷⁵ The complex found at Wremen fundamentally changes this image. In particular, it has become clear that an elevated social position is not solely manifested by the presence of gold objects. In the light of the results of new research, Steuer’s statement must therefore be revised. The footstool (*suppedaneum*) combined with the throne,⁷⁶ as well as the construction of the grave and its rich fittings with the beautifully worked wooden receptacles, leave no doubt that it was a person of high social standing who was buried on the Fallward, and whose chosen form of representation also included the late Roman military belt (*cingulum militiae*). It is of particular significance that the cemetery at Wremen is not far from the terp Feddersen Wierde.⁷⁷ The recog-

⁷⁴ See, for instance, the find at Lengerich: M. Schmauder, “Der Verwahrfund von Lengerich, Ldkr. Emsland: Spiegel innerrömischer Kämpfe?”, *Die Kunde* 50 (1999) pp. 91–118.

⁷⁵ “Insgesamt betrachtet sind diese Gräber der Foederaten-Zivilisation nicht besonders reich, wenn man den absoluten Wert abschätzt, denn Gold fehlt [. . .]. Der Mangel an Gold unter den Beigaben lässt es kaum zu, daß man bei den auch reicheren Bestattungen dieses Foederaten-Horizontes von der ‘obersten, sozial und politisch führenden Bevölkerungsschicht’ sprechen kann. Wären in den Gräbern die Spitzen der Gesellschaft bestattet, dann müßte man zumindest einige goldene Zwiebelknopffibeln gefunden haben! Zumal gleichzeitig Schatzfunde bekannt sind, die wesentlich wertvoller sind und Gold enthalten”: H. Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse 3,128 (Göttingen 1982) p. 346.

⁷⁶ For such thrones in the form of amulets, see: H. Drescher and K. Hauck, “Götterthrone des heidnischen Nordens”, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 16 (1982) pp. 237–301.

⁷⁷ See, with older literature: P. Schmid, “Feddersen Wierde”, *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 3 (2nd edn., 1994) pp. 249–66.

nisable development of a “lordly court” at Feddersen Wierde during the third century, and its existence with continuous habitation until the middle of the fifth century, ought henceforth to be interpreted against the backdrop of similar burials, like the one on the Fallward. That is why Karl-Heinz Willroth sees the Fallward burial as “a key to the understanding of the settlement-structure on the Feddersen Wierde”.⁷⁸

Decorative metalwork of a display shield found in the settlement of Dortmund-Oespel⁷⁹ also point to the existence of complex social differentiation. The nearest parallel for this piece has been found in the sacrificial complex at Illerup in Denmark.⁸⁰ But also a burial like the one in Vermand (dép. Aisne), discovered as early as 1885 but still not completely published, indicates—according to the latest ideas presented by C. von Carnap-Bornheim—how far social differentiation must have progressed outside the borders of the Roman Empire in order to enable burials of this type in northern Gaul.⁸¹

It is therefore no exaggeration to suppose an elaborate social differentiation also for the area in which the “early Franks” are to be located, as is generally acknowledged in the contemporary sources. This assessment is particularly important in view of the established opinion in current scholarship, stating that the process of social differentiation only started on a large scale after the so-called “settlement-period”. As demonstrated, individual aspects show how the origins of the *nobilitas*, who is so evident in the fourth and the first

⁷⁸ K.-H. Willroth, “Siedlungen und Gräber als Spiegel der Stammesbildung. Gedanken zur Abgrenzung germanischer Stämme in der ausgehenden vorrömischen Eisenzeit in Norddeutschland und Südsandinavien”, *Studien zur Archäologie des Ostseeraumes, Festschrift für Michael Müller-Wille* (Neumünster 1999) pp. 359–71, here p. 359. See the comparable case of Stepping Mølle, Haderslev Amt: P. Ethelberg, “The Chieftain’s Farms of the Over Jerstal Group”, *Journal of Danish Archaeology* 11 (1992/93) pp. 111–35. The special significance that the artisans of Feddersen Wierde seem to deserve in the context of the development of a ruling class suggests a differentiated social structure also in the case of a comparable site defined by craftsmen, like the settlement of Heeten (Verlinde and Erdrich, “Germanische Siedlung”, esp. p. 718).

⁷⁹ H. Brink-Kloke, A. von Bohlen, M. Doll, E. Lietz and C. Poniecki, “Ein (kleines) germanisches Dorf—Die jünger-kaiserzeitliche Siedlung von Dortmund-Oespel”, *Millionen Jahre Geschichte. Fundort Nordrhein-Westfalen*, ed. H.G. Horn, H. Hellenkemper, G. Isenberg and H. Koschik (Mainz 2000) pp. 343–8, esp. pp. 343–4.

⁸⁰ C. von Carnap-Bornheim and J. Ilkjær, *Illerup Adal 5: Die Prachtausrüstungen*, Jutland Archaeological Society Publications 25,5 (Aarhus 1996) pp. 279–89.

⁸¹ von Carnap-Bornheim, “Kaiserzeitliche germanische Traditionen”.

half of the fifth centuries through the richly equipped *foederati*-type graves, may date back into the third century. The developments of the fourth and the first half of the fifth centuries lead, from the second half of the fifth century onwards, to a type of burials characterised by *Goldgriffspatha*⁸² (here, a continuation of a specific group of people is not intended). With the emergence of separated burials in private churches (*Eigenkirchen*) and/or arranged in rows in cemeteries this particular social stratum—undoubtedly differentiated in time and region—becomes discernible in the whole of the Frankish realm.

The problem of ethnic interpretation

The problem regarding the evaluation of archaeological finds in relation to a possible ethnic labelling has been a remarkably controversial discussion for some time. Most recently, especially Sebastian Brather⁸³ and Frank Siegmund⁸⁴ have been working on this question from an archaeological point of view.⁸⁵

Siegmund states succinctly “that each science tends to follow a specific understanding of *ethnos*”,⁸⁶ from which it follows that “the criteria for *ethnos*-research [should] first and foremost [be] developed and interpreted within the discipline itself”.⁸⁷ The present author agrees that this is a fundamental prerequisite for working on the question of whether or not archaeological finds can express ethnicity.

Different from Siegmund, the research and interpretations of Brather, which will be the subject in the following, are founded on results in the conceptual development of ethnology. According to Brather, it is particularly difficult, if not completely impossible, to formulate ethnic identity on the basis of archaeological material. Consequently, he states that: “Since ‘ethnicity’ on the basis of its

⁸² D. Quast, *Die merowingerzeitlichen Grabfunde aus Gültlingen (Stadt Wildberg, Kreis Calw)*, Forschungen und Berichte zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg 52 (Stuttgart 1993) pp. 20–6; Böhme, “Frankenkönig Childerich”; W. Menghin, “Schwerter des Goldgriffspathahorizonts im Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin”, *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica* 26/27 (1994/95) pp. 140–91.

⁸³ Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”.

⁸⁴ Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken*.

⁸⁵ Further discussion of these facts is unfortunately impossible here.

⁸⁶ Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken*, p. 74.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

flexible, group-specific character can—or, by the same token, cannot—be linked to more or less every object, it poses substantial and long unresolved methodological problems for its vague identification in archaeological material”.⁸⁸ Two examples chosen by Brather ought to be repeated here, in order to show the points on which the present author wishes to present a methodological critique of Brather’s line of argumentation and instead favours a different interpretation of the archaeological finds.

The disappearance of rich graves in south-western Germany (the Alamannic area) at the beginning of the sixth century, can, on basis of the archaeological evidence, be understood as part of a break that can be traced also in other spheres.⁸⁹ In this period, especially some types of fibulas, which were typical of rich female graves in this region, appear also in neighbouring regions and in areas further away. Archaeologically, these finds can only be explained by the “moving out” of the upper class from south-western Germany, for there is no evidence for a “transfer” of the Alamannic settlement area as a whole.⁹⁰ The historical events that lead to this “moving out” cannot be determined on the basis of the archaeological finds. Only after an additional analysis of the historical sources can it be decided if there are parallels between archaeological findings and historical traditions. The methodology chosen by Brather, of

⁸⁸ Brather, “Ethische Identitäten”, p. 175.

⁸⁹ The destruction of the settlement on the “Runde Berg”, which possessed the function of a central place in this period (cf. in general with further literature: H. Bernhard et al., *Der Runde Berg bei Urach*, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Baden-Württemberg 14 [Stuttgart 1991]), reveals that the disappearance of richly furnished graves cannot have been solely the result of an alteration in burial customs, but was rather related to decisive repercussions caused by a change in the settlement structure as a whole. See the composition of the Alamannic cemeteries that cease to exist around 500, in Ursula Koch, “Der Beginn fränkischer Besiedlung im Rhein-Neckar-Raum. Gräber von Mannheim-Vogelstang und Mannheim-Straßenheim”, *Mannheimer Geschichtsblätter* NF 7 (2000) pp. 57–106, esp. p. 57 n. 3.

⁹⁰ Neither were Alamannic type cemeteries laid out in these regions, nor do we find evidence for the construction of the hill-top settlements that are so characteristic of the Alamannic settlement region. On the latter, see: H. Steuer, “Höhensiedlungen des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts in Südwestdeutschland”, *Freiburger Forschungen zum ersten Jahrtausend in Südwestdeutschland* 1 (Sigmaringen 1990) pp. 139–205; id., “Herrschaft von der Höhe. Vom mobilen Söldnertrupp zur Residenz auf repräsentativen Bergkuppen”, *Die Alamannen. Ausstellungskatalog Stuttgart, Zürich, Augsburg* (Stuttgart 1997) pp. 149–62. On the other hand, a large number of Alamannic cemeteries was abandoned in the early sixth century after a brief period of use (H. Ament, *Das alamannische Gräberfeld von Eschborn [Main-Taunus-Kreis]*, Materialien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Hessen 14 [Wiesbaden 1992] p. 50).

interpreting complex archaeological data on the basis of a historical source, is highly questionable from this point of view. For Brather formulates the following thesis: “The inclusion of the Alamannic region into the Frankish realm did furthermore not lead to an exodus of the entire old ruling class. Rather, it enabled a not insubstantial part of the (loyal) Alamannic elite to reach important positions. Agathias, for instance, writes about the brothers Leuthari and Butilin [. . .] who—Alamannic by birth, but with great influence among the Franks—served as Frankish army leaders”.⁹¹ The example from Agathias given by Brather is problematic for several reasons.⁹² Firstly, it cannot explain the archaeological fact of the absence of rich graves in south-western (Alamannic) Germany; secondly, facts concerning the behaviour of two individual members of the Alamannic ruling class is unacceptably generalised here.⁹³ Moreover, the instance quoted from Agathias relates to the period of the rule of the Frankish King Theudebert (534–547), and hence to an incident dating from the beginning of the second third of the sixth century at the earliest. Brather builds his argumentation specifically on this—for Agathias clearly exceptional—case,⁹⁴ and develops the idea that the main purpose of the Alamannic ruling class was to “be able to preserve, or

⁹¹ “Die Einbeziehung des alemannischen Raums in das Frankenreich hat bei weitem nicht zum Exodus der gesamten alten Führungsschicht geführt, sondern im Gegenteil einem nicht unbeträchtlichen Teil der (loyalen) alemannischen Elite weiterhin wichtigste Positionen ermöglicht. So berichtet beispielsweise Agathias von den Brüdern Leuthari und Butilin [. . .], die—Alemannen der Abstammung nach, aber mit großem Einfluß bei den Franken—wohl als fränkische Heerführer dienten.”: Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”, p. 167.

⁹² Agathias Myrinaei, *Historiarum libri quinque* A (1) 6,2, transl. C. Dirlmeier and G. Gottlieb, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Alamannen* 2, Schriften der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Kommission für Alamannische Altertumskunde 3 (Heidelberg-Sigmaringen 1978) p. 80.

⁹³ Still in discussion is whether Leuthari and Butilin were Alamannic dukes by descent, or if they achieved this position only after their service as Frankish army leaders (D. Geuenich, “Die Alamannen unter fränkischer Herrschaft”, *Die Alamannen. Ausstellungskatalog Stuttgart, Zürich, Augsburg* [Stuttgart 1997] pp. 204–8, esp. p. 204 n. 2).

⁹⁴ It ought, here, to be emphasised, that further written evidence for a considerable flight of Alamans from the Alamannic settlement region does exist. Making a mention of this would have ensured a more objective valuation of the historical sources. (Cassiodorus, *Variarum* 2,41, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 12 [Berlin 1894] p. 73; Ennodius, *Panegyricus Theoderico* 15, ed. F. Vogel, MGH AA 7 [Berlin 1885] p. 212.) See also the reference in Agathias (Agathias Myrinaei, *Historiarum libri quinque* A [1] 6,4), that the Alamans were dependent on Theoderic the Great, and had to pay him tribute.

win back, their hitherto existing positions of power, also under the changing power-relations.⁹⁵ In other words, it was processes respectively of social levelling and assimilation that, according to Brather, determined the relationship between societies of the Migration Period and of the early Middle Ages. It was, according to Brather, these processes that led to an exchange between social elites, which is rendered most visible in the female dress jewellery. However, processes of social levelling hardly explain either the absence of rich graves in the Alamannic settlement region, or the fact that members of the Frankish ruling class clearly very consciously settled near existing Alamannic settlements and buried their dead in Alamannic cemeteries. These new settlers are not only distinguished by their different dress, but—and this is of special importance—especially by their lavish burial-customs.⁹⁶ It is not “social continuities”⁹⁷ that are visible here but a cultural break, for which the departure of the Alamannic ruling class is but one aspect. The archaeological situation in south-western Germany in the period after 500 can also usefully be compared with the historical sources (as has been done by Ursula Koch and others),⁹⁸ linking the absence of rich graves in the Alamannic

⁹⁵ Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”, p. 167.

⁹⁶ U. Koch, “Ethnische Vielfalt im Südwesten. Beobachtungen in merowingerzeitlichen Gräberfeldern an Neckar und Donau”, *Die Alamannen. Ausstellungskatalog Stuttgart, Zürich, Augsburg* (Stuttgart 1997) pp. 219–32, esp. pp. 224–5. There is much evidence for the permanent presence of Frankish groups in Alamannia in the early sixth century. Cf. for instance: M. Martin, *Das fränkische Gräberfeld von Basel-Bernerberg* (Basel 1976), esp. pp. 146–55; G. Fingerlin, “Franken am Kaiserstuhl”, *Archäologische Nachrichten aus Baden* 44 (1990) pp. 7–15; id., “Ein früher Stützpunkt fränkischer Herrschaft am Oberrhein. Neue merowingerzeitliche Grabfunde aus Bad Krotzingen, Kreis Breisgau-Hochschwarzwald”, *Archäologische Ausgrabungen in Baden-Württemberg* (1998) pp. 200–3; E. Pohl, “Der Neuburger Stadtberg und sein Umfeld am Übergang von der Antike zum Mittelalter (4. bis 7. Jhd.) aus archäologischer Sicht”, *Neuburg an der Donau. Archäologie rund um den Stadtberg*, ed. K.H. Rieder and A. Tillmann (Neuburg 1993) pp. 109–32, esp. pp. 124–5; M. Trier, “Die frühmittelalterliche Besiedlung des Lechtals im Spiegel der archäologischen Überlieferung”, *Der Landkreis Augsburg*, vol. 2: *Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Archäologie einer Landschaft*, ed. W. Pötl and O. Schneider (Augsburg 1996) pp. 267–322, esp. pp. 279–84; B. Grosskopf-Theune, “Die Kontrolle der Verkehrswege. Ein Schlüssel zur fränkischen Herrschaftssicherung”, *Die Alamannen. Ausstellungskatalog Stuttgart, Zürich, Augsburg* (Stuttgart 1997) pp. 237–42.

⁹⁷ Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”, p. 167.

⁹⁸ U. Koch, “Fernbeziehungen im Spiegel merowingerzeitlicher Grabfunde—Wer waren die Kontaktpersonen?“, *Archäologisches Nachrichtenblatt* 3 (1998) pp. 107–17, esp. pp. 110–1; ead., “Besiegt, beraubt, vertrieben. Die Folgen der Niederlagen von 496/497 und 506”, *Die Alamannen. Ausstellungskatalog Stuttgart, Zürich, Augsburg* (Stuttgart 1997) pp. 191–201; ead., “Ethnische Vielfalt im Südwesten”.

lands and the archaeologically proven “transfer” of the Alamannic ruling class.⁹⁹

Undoubtedly, there would have been isolated cases of members of the Alamannic ruling class trying to secure their social status by integrating with the Frankish structure of rulership. However, no cases of this type can be evidenced archaeologically by reference to a demonstrable, unbroken tradition of Alamannic high-status graves within Alamannia itself.¹⁰⁰ Though, even if (as Brather proposes) the archaeological material may be regarded as evidence for the survival of social continuity/identities—which, as argued above, is highly doubtful—it does not signify that the archaeological material automatically loses its ethnic value. After all, the conservation of ethnic independence under foreign political rulership was not only possible, but to a certain extent also common.¹⁰¹

The second example, which will be discussed here, belongs in the Frankish realm. Brather discusses a particular section from Alexander Koch’s research on the “Merovingian *Bügelfibeln* in the western Frankish realm”. The citation from Koch’s work at the beginning of Brather’s discussion essentially accords with the view of the present author, as presented above: a radical change of dress only occurred in extreme situations during the Migration Period and the early Middle Ages. The following quote from Koch in Brather’s work, however, falsifies Koch’s original statement. The half sentence quoted by Brather is in Koch’s work preceded by the following: “In terms of material culture, ethnic identity can [in general only be outwardly articulated by means of dress]”.¹⁰² Since Koch’s intention is to restrict himself only to a valuation of objects, as stated in the

⁹⁹ The near complete absence of burials of the Alamannic elite in the former Alamannic settlement area does not make sense if a large segment of this elite proved themselves loyal to the Franks in their role as new rulers.

¹⁰⁰ It does not do justice to neither the archaeological finds nor the historical sources to see Alamannic elite loyalty to the Franks as the rule rather than the exception (Brather, “Ethische Identitäten”, p. 167).

¹⁰¹ Slavic groups, for instance, that had settled in the region of the Altmark, led a culturally independent existence also under Carolingian dominance. See M. Schmauder, “Überlegungen zur östlichen Grenze des karolingischen Reiches unter Karl dem Großen”, *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. W. Pohl and H. Reimitz, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 1* (Wien 2000) pp. 79–81.

¹⁰² “Im dinglichen Bereich kann ethnische Identität *praktisch nur durch Tracht nach außen artikuliert werden*”: Koch, *Bügelfibeln der Merowingerzeit*, p. 535; the italics indicate the part cited by Brather.

first half of his sentence, he is in no way lapsing into the “national-romantic notions of the nineteenth century”¹⁰³ that Brather accuses him of. Koch’s insights are therefore not “from a current point of view, flawed from the outset”,¹⁰⁴ as Brather asserts.¹⁰⁵ Further on, Brather refers to the spread of the “proto- or early Merovingian fibula shapes of Groß-Umstadt and Nieder-Florstadt”.¹⁰⁶ In the distribution of these types of fibulas, Brather does not see evidence for the mobility of individuals or groups of people belonging to a specific *ethnos*, but, here too, interprets the distribution of fibulas as a confirmation of “processes of social levelling”.¹⁰⁷ However, in the eyes of the present author, the association of these types of fibulas with specifically Bohemian ceramics indicates that these fibulas are to be connected with a particular ethnic group. Further, this group—and this seems essential—is also clearly recognisable from its particular funerary practices.¹⁰⁸

At this point, it ought to be emphasised that, in the opinion of the present author, maps showing the spread of individual types of finds are generally only of a very limited use in an ethnic interpretation of archaeological finds. This is, in this connection, undoubtedly due to a fundamental methodological problem.¹⁰⁹ However, it

¹⁰³ Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”, p. 168.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ That Koch is aware of this problem is evident also in other instances. He, for instance, differentiates and speaks of a “specific ethnic character as on a par with dress” (Koch, *Bügelfibeln der Merowingerzeit*, p. 562).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19. For these fibula-types, see also: H.W. Böhme, “Eine elbgermanische Bügelfibel des 5. Jahrhunderts aus Limetz-Villez (Yvelines, Frankreich)”, *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 19 (1989) pp. 397–406; D. Quast, “Vom Einzelgrab zum Friedhof. Beginn der Reihengräbersitte im 5. Jahrhundert”, *Die Alamannen. Ausstellungskatalog Stuttgart, Zürich, Augsburg* (Stuttgart 1997) pp. 171–90, esp. fig. 176.

¹⁰⁷ Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”, p. 168.

¹⁰⁸ With the aid of specific pottery types, but especially on the basis of particular forms in the cult of the dead, H. Ament has succeeded in finding evidence for an immigration from the Bohemian Danube-region within the cemetery at Eschborn (Main-Taunus-Kreis); (H. Ament, *Eschborn, Main-Taunus-Kreis, Grabfunde des 5. Jahrhunderts: ein alamannisches Gräberfeld an der Wende vom Altertum zum Mittelalter*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen 41 [Wiesbaden 1984] p. 50). See further: B. Svoboda, “Zum Verhältnis frühgeschichtlicher Funde des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts aus Bayern und Böhmen”, *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter* 28 (1963) pp. 97–116; T. Springer, “Germanenfunde der Völkerwanderungszeit in Nordbayern. Bemerkungen zur Keramik vom Typ Friedenrain-Prešt’ovice”, *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 15 (1985) pp. 235–43.

¹⁰⁹ Specific spreads in distribution on distribution-maps may be caused by several different reasons. In the previous, mention has already been made of the

also applies to a sociological interpretation of these maps, in the manner presented by Brather as if virtually an alternative to an ethnic interpretation. In order to create a foundation for an ethnical interpretation of archaeological finds, one must, in the view of the present author, necessarily consider the context in which the finds have been recovered. It is only on the basis of a (possibly) complex gathering of the archaeological material that the determining criteria necessary for establishing the presence of an *ethnos* may be possible. Siegmund has subsumed these criteria under the heading “customs and habits”.¹¹⁰

Two aspects ought, once again, to be emphasised: firstly, particularly when dealing with an ethnic interpretation, it is necessary to strictly separate archaeological and historical sources (that also applies to the use of particular terms referred to in the sources in relation to archaeological finds).¹¹¹ Secondly, any statement regarding *ethnos* is only valid when a wide spectrum of criteria is employed. In order to illustrate the latter point, two examples from the Frankish realm are given in order to demonstrate how difficult, and by no means always successful, an ethnic interpretation of archaeological finds can be.¹¹²

simple late antique belt fitting of the type Halliot, the distribution of which is presumably connected to the market of a place of production, of the type of workshop environment that can often be found in the early Middle Ages; see for instance: K. Banghard, “Eine frühmittelalterliche Gürtelgarnitur und ihre Motivgeschichte”, *Archäologische Nachrichten aus Baden* 59 (1998) pp. 24–35. Further explanations may be cited, which as a whole will demonstrate that the distribution-maps are certainly not primarily concerned with ethnic significance.

¹¹⁰ Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken*, p. 85.

¹¹¹ A good example of this is the use of the word “francisca”. For this see: W. Pohl, “Telling the difference: Signs of ethnic identity”, *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. id. with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-Boston-Köln 1998) pp. 17–69, esp. pp. 32–7 (it should be emphasised that the archaeological results, as far as the frequency of axes in respectively Alamannic and Frankish graves is concerned, is even more straightforward than Pohl indicates. According to Siegmund [F. Siegmund, “Kleidung und Bewaffnung der Männer im östlichen Frankenreich”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 691–706, esp. p. 705] the proportion in the sixth century is 26% against 6%, and not “half the percentage in Alamannic graves” [Pohl, “Telling the difference”, p. 33]).

¹¹² For examples from outside the Frankish sphere of influence, on the basis of which ethnical processes can be shown, see the Bavarian cemetery at Altenerding. (V. Bierbrauer, “Das Reihengräberfeld von Altenerding in Oberbayern und die bajuwarische Ethnogenese—Eine Problemskizze”, *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters* 13 [1985] pp. 7–25).

The importance of an ethnic interpretation of the archaeological material is, according to the present author, essential for a cultural analysis. Even the frequent failure to answer these questions, as we have seen for the early Frankish period, presents important observations, which are of great potential as cultural evidence.

Valuation and validity of the criteria.
*An example: the cemetery at Zeuzleben*¹¹³

The cemetery at Zeuzleben, situated in present-day Franken, represents a concise example of the difficulties that may occur when attaching ethnic labels to cemeteries. This cemetery came into use around 520–530, and was abandoned around 600. Particularly remarkable was the large and varied number of animal burials (mostly horses, but also dogs). Further, it was noteworthy that the male and female graves were organised in different manners within the family-group burials, and that the characteristic grave-types were of the so-called *Pfostenkammer* form (chamber grave). A. Rettner has rightly interpreted these finds in relation to the Thuringian area, where clear parallels can be found.

The study of the grave-goods and dress-elements, however, brought out completely different connections. Western influences on dress dominate both in the male and the female graves from the time of the earliest interments, including forms that are generally only found west of the Rhine. This finding was confirmed in the study of the ceramic grave-goods: a handled pot of the Mayener form Alzey 27, coarseware jars, flat dishes, but also buckets with handle attachment, bronze wash-basins and especially the lidded cups, clearly indicate the lands west of the Rhine. Middle German influences can be recognised only in the designs of the hand-made pottery belonging to the first period of use (520/30–550/60). During the second period (550/60–570/80), these have disappeared in favour of copies of western models. Still, two categories of grave-goods remained relatively constant at least during the first period. Firstly, the textiles, tools and amulets found in female graves; that are, objects not only

¹¹³ A. Rettner, "Thüringisches und Fränkisches in Zeuzleben", *Archäologie des Frankenreiches*, pp. 113–25.

of a functional character but also belonging to the realm of religion. Secondly, the male weapons; though during the last phase of the cemetery (570/80–c. 600) the *sax* appears, which at this time was widespread throughout the west Frankish region.¹¹⁴ Interestingly, the position of the deposition of riding equipment in the male graves remained similarly largely untouched by western influences. As opposed to the custom west of the Rhine, where riding equipment as a rule was deposited near the feet, at Zeuzleben it was placed near the head of the deceased.

Summarising, Rettner writes: “It is amazing that changes happen most quickly in dress and the vessel types used as grave-goods, that is, in spheres where one may expect the most reliable information on the people. With some little delay weaponry changes too. In the course of this process, shapes are changed easier than production methods—if we think back to the ceramics for a moment—and faster than customs of deposition. The tradition of construction, the post-construction method, was maintained unaltered the longest, as was the custom of funerary meals with rich gifts of food, and in particular the old manner of burials in groups with divisions by gender”.¹¹⁵

Franks and Romans? The cemetery at Dieue-sur-Meuse

The cemetery at Dieue-sur-Meuse, in western Lotharingia, has over the past years been an interesting starting-point for discussions regarding the question of the use of a burial-ground by both Franks and Romans.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ These finds clearly show that the question of armament is obviously not to be solved solely from a pragmatic point of view, in the sense of a change in fighting technique, as Brather has postulated (Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”, p. 170).

¹¹⁵ “Erstaunlich dabei ist, daß sich der Wandel am schnellsten innerhalb der Tracht und bei der Gefäßbeigabe vollzieht, also in Bereichen, wo man eigentlich die zuverlässigsten Aufschlüsse zum Volkstum erwartet. Mit etwas Verzögerung ändert sich auch die Bewaffnung. Formen werden im Laufe dieser Prozesse schneller aufgegeben als Herstellungsweisen—denken wir an die Keramik zurück—, auch schneller als Gewohnheiten und Deponierung. Am längsten hielt man an einer Bautradition fest, der Pfostenbauweise, ferner am Totenmahl mit reichen Speisebeigaben und vor allem an den alten Gruppenarealen mit der Geschlechtertrennung”: Rettner, “Thüringisches und Fränkisches in Zeuzleben”, p. 124.

¹¹⁶ J. Guillaume, “Les nécropoles mérovingiennes de Dieue/Meuse (France)”, *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica* 5/6 (1976/77) pp. 301–9.

On the basis of an analysis of the cemetery, Hermann Ament in 1976 reached the conclusion that both groups were represented there.¹¹⁷ Central to his argument were the characteristics of dress, as well as the forms and manner of burial. According to Ament, characteristic Merovingian belt-forms appear on the northern and eastern sides of the cemetery, whereas these forms have not been found in the western part. The graves found in the latter area are, additionally, distinguished from the others by their lesser size, the higher frequency of so-called *Plattengräber* and especially by their pronounced poverty of grave-goods.

Ament sums up the archaeological results as follows: "There is no way around the ethnic interpretation of this situation. In the graves of the western group, we find the burials of the descendants of those provincials who, as early as the fifth century, were buried in the southern part of the cemetery, in other words, Romanic burials of the Merovingian period. In the graves organised and equipped as "Reihen"-graves, on the other hand, the remains of newly arrived Germanic, in this case Frankish, elements of the population may be identified".¹¹⁸

Renewed work on the cemetery at Dieue-sur-Meuse and the interpretation proposed for it by Ament has most recently been carried

¹¹⁷ H. Ament, "Das Gräberfeld von Dieue-sur-Meuse, ein Bestattungsort von Franken und Romanen", *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica* 7-8 (1976/77) pp. 301-9. For the question of the archaeological evidence for Romance speakers in the Frankish realm, see: K. Böhner, "Romanen und Franken im Trierer Land nach dem Zeugnis der archäologischen Quellen", *Siedlung, Sprache und Bevölkerungsstruktur im Frankenreich*, ed. F. Petri, Wege der Forschungen 49 (Darmstadt 1973) pp. 346-82; H. Ament, "Franken und Romanen im Merowingerreich als archäologisches Forschungsproblem", *Bonner Jahrbücher* 178 (1978) pp. 377-94; id., "Romanen an Rhein und Mosel im frühen Mittelalter", *Bonner Jahrbücher* 192 (1992) pp. 261-71; V. Bierbrauer, "Romanen im fränkischen Siedelgebiet", *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 110-20. A. Rettner has recently made an in-depth study of the continuity of Romanic groups in Raetia after the fifth century. His observations, which are still to appear in print, are based on a combination of various archaeological observations on the basis of which he successfully provides proof for a "remnant *Romanitas*"; (most recently as a lecture "Romanen in Südbayern" during the yearly meeting of the West- und Süddeutscher Verband für Altertumsforschung e. V. in Trier [June 2001]).

¹¹⁸ "An der ethnischen Interpretation dieses Sachverhaltes führt kein Weg vorbei. In den Gräbern der Westgruppe fassen wir die Bestattungen der Nachfahren jener Provinzialen, die sich bereits im 5. Jahrhundert im Süden des Friedhofsareals beisetzen ließen, fassen wir also romanische Bestattungen der Merowingerzeit. Hingegen wird man in den nach Reihengräberart angelegten und ausgestatteten Gräbern die Hinterlassenschaft eines neu hinzugekommen germanischen, hier also wohl fränkischen Bevölkerungselementes erblicken dürfen": Ament, "Das Gräberfeld von Dieue-sur-Meuse", p. 305.

out by Uwe Fiedler.¹¹⁹ On the basis of a mapping of the various male dress belt-types, a continuity of use of the cemetery by Franks can be observed from the south towards the north-east. A similar image emerges in the case of the spread of various types of weapons. Lance-points and arrow-heads, as well as franciscas and axes are predominantly found towards the south, whereas *saxes* appear mainly towards the north, but also in the western part of the cemetery. The latter are obviously part of a newer type of military equipment. According to Fiedler, a mapping of *Bügelfibeln* and smaller fibulas also shows that the oldest Merovingian period graves adjoin the late Roman area in the south. The mapping of various types of ceramics, among which the *Knickwandtöpfe* play an important part, shows a similar development. Also in this case it is clear that the late (high) forms of *Knickwandtöpfe* appear towards the north and the (north-)west. The occurrence of graves containing stone structures or multiple burials also correspond to this pattern. Both phenomena likewise occur towards the north and north-west. It is particularly striking that the wearing of pendants made out of deer-antler discs, bone beads, vertebra and animal teeth, so typical of Germanic female dress, are also found in the western group that Ament classifies as Roman.

Fiedler's observations indicate, contrary to Ament's ideas, that the cemetery at Dieue-sur-Meuse should be regarded as a Frankish burial-ground. The character of the cemetery is distinguished by a progressive reduction of grave-goods, accompanied by a simultaneous adoption of Romanic burial customs. The analysis clearly demonstrates how exceptionally difficult an ethnic interpretation can be—not just for a single find, but also for a complete cemetery. There is no doubt that the last word on the cemetery at Dieue-sur-Meuse has not yet been spoken.

¹¹⁹ U. Fiedler, "Zu Hermann Aments These eines romanischen Bestattungsareals auf dem merowingerzeitlichen Gräberfeld von Dieue-sur-Meuse", *Archäologie des Frankenreiches*, pp. 244–52.

Acculturation as set entity

For aspects of acculturation in the case of Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Lombards, the work of Volker Bierbrauer is still fundamental.¹²⁰ Research conducted over the last two decades clearly shows that processes of acculturation are the defining characteristic of the Migration Period and the early Middle Ages.¹²¹ A similar, dynamic process is evidenced also in the entire area dominated by the Franks (in the political sense of the word), where the acculturation of the Germani with "Romanic cultural models" especially is clearly visible. M. Martin has undertaken a thorough study of the effects of late Roman influences on Germanic fibulas.¹²² Martin has shown that as early as around 400, the Germanic women living in northern Gaul abandoned the previously customary *peplos*, in favour of a tunic worn without fibulas, and in this manner followed a practice of dress customary in Roman circles. For the sixth and seventh centuries, M. Schulze and H. Vierck have worked on the pronounced influence of the Byzantine display-dress style on the Frankish female costume, which is most evident in the wearing of a single fibula and in the costly use of pearls as decoration on clothing.¹²³ Both examples ought to be understood as indications of the fact that changes in dress are universal elements in archaeology. The dynamics of change in archaeological finds usual for this period, especially in clothing, is to be emphasised particularly for the Migration Period and the early Middle Ages. Despite archaeological research often

¹²⁰ V. Bierbrauer, "Frühgeschichtliche Akkulturationsprozesse in den germanischen Staaten am Mittelmeer (Westgoten, Ostgoten, Langobarden) aus der Sicht des Archäologen", *Atti del VI° congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo* (Spoleto 1980) pp. 89–105.

¹²¹ Early medieval England provides an example of acculturation that is only archaeologically evident at a late date. According to the latest work by H. Härke, it is not before the seventh and eighth centuries that an acculturation of the large Roman segment of the population with the Germanic (Anglo-Saxon) immigrants took place (Härke, "Sächsische Ethnizität", esp. pp. 117–21).

¹²² Martin, "Tradition und Wandel"; id., "Fibel und Fibeltracht".

¹²³ M. Schulze, "Einflüsse byzantinischer Prunkgewänder auf die fränkische Frauentracht", *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 6 (1976) pp. 149–61; H. Vierck, "La 'chemise de Sainte-Bathilde' à Chelles et l'influence byzantine sur l'art de la cour mérovingienne au VII^e siècle", *Actes du Colloque International d'Archéologie, Rouen 1975* (Rouen 1978) pp. 521–70; id., "Imitatio imperii und interpretatio Germanica vor der Wikingerzeit", *Les Pays du Nord et Byzance*, ed. R. Zeidler, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis N.S. 19 (Uppsala 1981) pp. 64–113.

giving the impression of being mainly concerned with constant images, this is essentially not the case. Archaeologists are rather concerned primarily with the recognition of those forms, within a heterogeneous assemblage, that can be established as continuous over a longer period of time. Constants are at best certain basic forms in the archaeologically relevant finds-material that—with a few exceptions—nevertheless are subject to constant typological change. The search for stable factors in this context is represented by the attempt at finding a sequence within these developments, on which basis a variety of questions may be discussed. Sebastian Brather quite rightly states that: “Ethnic identities are generated by historical processes. An ethnic identity is, therefore, not a durable or even an eternal, unchanging entity—even if it vehemently and continuously claims to be exactly that. In decisive situations—like moments of crisis, states of threshold, or phases of transition—it may even change rapidly. This is especially true for individuals”.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, it is, in the opinion of the present author, still a rule that dress was supposed to be worn for “a life-time”. It was only under special circumstances that it was demonstrably altered or abandoned.¹²⁵ Similarly, during the Migration Period and the early Middle Ages it is not automatically the case that “a nobleman, a Gaul by birth for instance, [could] be a Frank when close to the king and an Alaman as a duke”.¹²⁶ Rather, cases of this type remain notable exceptions.

¹²⁴ “Ethnische Identitäten entstehen durch historische Prozesse. Die ethnische Identität kann deshalb keine dauerhafte oder gar ewige, unveränderliche Substanz besitzen—auch wenn sie dies stets vehement behauptet. Sie vermag in entscheidenden Situationen—Krisenmomenten, Schwellenzuständen oder Übergangsphasen—sogar rasch zu wechseln. Dies gilt besonders für Individuen”: Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”, p. 161.

¹²⁵ A classic example of this is Priskos’s description of the Greek merchant from Viminacium, who gave up his previous existence in order to join the court of Atilla and apparently adapted completely to the “Scythian” manner of dress. (Priscus of Panium, *Fragmenta* 8, transl. E. Doblhofer, *Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber* 4 [*Byzantinische Diplomaten und östliche Barbaren. Aus den Excerpta de legationibus des Konstantin Porphyrogenetos ausgewählte Abschnitte des Priskos und Menander Protector*] [Graz-Wien-Köln 1955] pp. 42–3.)

¹²⁶ “[ein] Adliger konnte beispielsweise von Geburt ein Gallier, in Königsnähe ein Franke und als Herzog ein Alemanne sein”: Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten”, pp. 167–8 (with reference to: P.J. Geary, “Ethnic identity as a situational construct in the early middle ages”, *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 113 [1983] pp. 15–36).

Conclusion

From an ethnic point of view, it is for the fourth and the first half of the fifth centuries extraordinarily difficult to define that which may be called Frankish, and in the end the image remains vague. Nevertheless, a notable increase of Germanic finds and findings in northern Gaul is demonstrable, which may be set in relation to the Frankish expansion as recounted in the historical sources. In the course of the sixth century, characteristic aspects become evident—especially in burial-customs, grave-goods and the shapes of various objects—that it is possible to call “Frankish”. Through the archaeological material (both in finds and findings) the Franks can be discerned particularly clearly in the areas of the sixth-century expansion (southern France, south and middle Germany). The systematic settlement of newly conquered regions points to a central organisation.¹²⁷ The “archaeologically recognisable Franks” may, therefore, on the basis of the archaeological material be ascribable to the “*gens* of the Franks”.¹²⁸ This, however, does not represent a political definition of the Frankish *gens*.¹²⁹ The *regnum Francorum* or—expressed differently—the “realm of the Merovingians” from an archaeological point of view does not represent an ethnic unity, but was from its very beginnings a melting pot of people and groups of various origin. On the basis of the archaeological evidence it is possible to prove that belonging to the Frankish realm in a political sense did not automatically mean an abandonment of individual (ethnic) identity (as for instance with the Alamans or the Romans). That this, over the course of time, nevertheless did happen in the majority of cases is shown by the manifestations of acculturation found everywhere. At the same time, a highly differentiated social stratigraphy can be recognised or reconstructed archaeologically across the centuries, on basis of the clear differentiation within the contents of the

¹²⁷ Cf. note 98. See also V. Babucke, “Nach Osten bis an den Lech. Zur alamannischen Besiedlung der westlichen Raetia secunda”, *Die Alamannen. Ausstellungskatalog Stuttgart, Zürich, Augsburg* (Stuttgart 1997) pp. 249–60, esp. 251–4.

¹²⁸ Undoubtedly, also those Franks, who in the west Frankish realm abandoned grave-goods at an early date, belonged to the *gens* of the Franks.

¹²⁹ M. Schmauder, “Die Oberschichtgräber und Verwahrfunde Südosteuropas und das Childerichgrab von Tournai. Anmerkungen zu den spätantiken Randkulturen”, *Archäologie des Frankenreiches*, pp. 55–68, esp. pp. 62–6.

graves. For southern Germany this material has been studied in detail over the past three decades. By making use of these developments also archaeological research-results will allow ever deeper insights into the inner structure and construction of the *gens Francorum* and the *regnum Francorum*.

[Translated by Carine van Rhijn and Inge Lyse Hansen]

GENS, KINGS AND KINGDOMS: THE FRANKS

Hans-Werner Goetz

With regard to the relationship between *gens* and *regnum*, the Franks are a most irksome example: whereas we may easily observe far-reaching political changes under Clovis's reign, it is extremely difficult to define the Franks as a "people", to estimate the role of the Frankish people during the establishment of a kingdom, or to describe the relation between *gens* and *regnum* under Merovingian rulership. Current surveys of Merovingian history, such as those by Eugen Ewig, Reinhold Kaiser, Patrick Geary, or the latest Mannheim catalogue on the Franks, do not touch on this question explicitly.¹ Ian Wood alone seems to offer a suggestion: "Clovis had transformed the Franks from being an essentially northern people to one which was influential in the wider politics of Gaul and the Mediterranean".² However, this statement equally evades the question of *how* the Franks were "transformed". Consequently, in spite of our comparatively rich knowledge of Frankish history, if we wish to proceed further with our enquiries we cannot rely on straightforward research, but must search for and examine indications of a less explicit nature. In the following I shall attempt first to briefly outline the initial situation of a *gens Francorum* and then to survey the establishment and the development of a Frankish kingdom and the situation under the Merovingian kings, as far as the relationship between the Frankish people and the Frankish kingdom is concerned. Against this background I can try and suggest some summarizing observations and conclusions with regard to changes within and brought about by the Frankish kingdom. It is self-evident that in a brief essay like this it is neither possible nor necessary to present a historical survey of

¹ In the recent San Marino volume on "an ethnographic perspective" concerning Franks and Alamanni there is a long final discussion which raises many topics, but omits saying anything about ethnogenesis and the establishment of the kingdom! Cf. *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. I.N. Wood, Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology 3 (San Marino 1998).

² I.N. Wood, *The Merovingian kingdoms, 450-751* (London-New York 1994) p. 49.

Frankish history and Frankish institutions, which can easily be reread in a large number of excellent books.³

I. *The People: the "Early Franks" before Clovis?*

It is obvious that "Franks" existed before Clovis's establishment of a huge "Frankish" realm, though it is difficult to say who these Franks were or where they came from.⁴ *Franci*, a term handed down in Roman sources since the end of the third century⁵ and thenceforth mentioned again and again, was obviously a collective term for a number of peoples living in the Lower Rhine region and the Roman provinces in northern Gaul until this period. There is, however, no sufficient evidence of there having been any greater inva-

³ Cf. E. Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (München 1970); K.F. Werner, *Les origines (avant l'an mil)*, Histoire de France 1 (Paris 1984); P. Périn and L.-C. Feffer, *Les Francs*, 2 vols. (Paris 1987); W. Bleiber, *Das Frankenreich der Merowinger* (Wien-Köln-Graz 1988); E. Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich*, Urban 392 (Stuttgart 1988); P.J. Geary, *Before France and Germany. The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York-Oxford 1988); E. James, *The Franks* (London 1988); Wood, *The Merovingian kingdoms*; R. Schneider, *Das Frankenreich*, Oldenbourg Grundriß der Geschichte 5 (3rd edn., München 1995); R. Kaiser, *Die Franken: Roms Erben und Wegbereiter Europas?*, Historisches Seminar N.F. 10 (Idstein 1997); id., *Das römische Erbe und das Merowingerreich*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 26 (2nd edn., München 1997) (bibliography!); H. Schutz, *The Germanic Realms in Pre-Carolingian Central Europe, 400–750* (New York 2000) pp. 137–254. Further E. Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien. Gesammelte Schriften (1952–1973)*, 2 vols., ed. H. Atsma, Beihefte der Francia 3 (Zürich-München 1976/77); *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas. Vor 1500 Jahren: König Chlodwig und seine Erben. Katalog zur Ausstellung im Reiss-Museum Mannheim*, 2 vols. (Mainz 1996) (exhibition catalogue), and the article "Franken" in the *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 9 (2nd edn., 1995) pp. 373–461 by H. Beck (Onomastics, pp. 373–4), A. Quak (Language, pp. 374–81), N. Voorwinden (Literature, pp. 381–7), H. Ament (Archaeology, pp. 387–414), H.H. Anton (History, pp. 414–35), D. Strauch (Law and Constitution, pp. 435–44), K. Schäferdiek (Christianization, pp. 444–7), F. Rexroth (Culture, pp. 447–61) and H. Steuer (Everyday life, p. 461).

⁴ The most exhaustive representation of the early Frankish history is still Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, a book, however, which is almost exclusively based on written sources. Cf. now W. Pohl, *Die Germanen*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 57 (München 2000) pp. 33–7; for recent discussions see *ibid.*, pp. 107–14.

⁵ *Franci* were mentioned for the first time with reference to the year 257/58, but in a source (*Epitome de Caesaribus* 33,3, ed. F. Pichelmayer [Leipzig 1961]) written a century later! The first contemporary allusion to the *Franci* was in the Panegyricus for Constantius Chlorus (293/306): *Panegyrici latini* 8,21,1, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1964) p. 229, and was written in a manner suggesting that by that time the term had already become completely common.

sion or migration of larger groups into this area: These peoples seem to have gradually “become” “Franks” (or simply been named so by the Roman sources). They were one of those large gentile units (like the Alamanni or the Saxones) that more or less suddenly emerged in the course of the third century, assimilating and replacing in their respective area a multitude of small “tribes” that were formerly mentioned in the sources. The reasons, however, for this shift of naming or for the regrouping of these peoples remain completely unknown. In the case of the Franks, according to predominant opinion, these were the Chamavi, Bructeri, Chattuarii, Ampsivarii and, possibly a little later, the Tubantes, Usipites, Tencteri and Chasuarii, whilst the integration of the Chatti is disputed. In virtue of archaeological evidence and the Merovingian myth of a sea god being their ancestor, a myth handed down by Fredegar, some researchers favour the claim that the Franks descended from the ancient Germanic group that lived in the North Sea region (*Nordsee germanen*), and therefore include the Chauca among the Frankish peoples. (According to others, however, the Chauca were more related to the Saxons.) In any case, these names do not disappear completely or immediately, but were increasingly replaced by the term *Franci*. Though the meaning of the term is questionable,⁶ it is most probably Germanic (or, according to some opinions, possibly though less probably, Celtic) in origin and therefore not a neologism of the Romans. However, it is widely considered to be a term given to the Franks by others (*Fremdbezeichnung*). *Franci* may therefore have been the name of one of those small peoples living on either side of the Roman border, which gradually came to be used by the Romans as a general term to denote the whole band of barbarians in the Lower Rhine region. Whatever its origins, this designation was adopted by the Roman sources. Thus, at least in the eyes of the Romans, the Franks were regarded from the beginning as some kind of unit that came close to being a (barbarian) people,⁷ though we have no knowledge of the criteria according to which this unification came about (ethnic? political?

⁶ For the different suggestions, see H. Beck, “Onomastics”, Ament et al., “Franken”, pp. 373–4.

⁷ For the Roman image of the barbarian, cf. A. Chauvot, “Images positives, images négatives des Barbares dans les sources latines à la fin du V^e siècle et au début du VI^e siècle après J.-C.”, *Clovis. Histoire et mémoire*, vol. 1: *Le baptême de Clovis, l'événement*, ed. M. Rouche (Paris 1997) pp. 3–14.

cultural? religious?). It is, however, significant that the Roman sources show evidence of an ethnic view: they regarded the Franks as being held together by some ethnic bond which allowed the different groups to be classified together under one name, whilst at the same time distinguishing them from other comparable groups like the Saxons or Alamans. Accordingly, the term *Francus* is linked to descent: As Ammianus Marcellinus reports, the *magister militum* (and later usurper) Silvanus emphasized his Frankish origin.⁸

In spite of this ethnic concept, these Franks cannot really be considered to have been either a united federal association of tribes (*Stammesverband*) or even a unified people,⁹ neither from the archaeological nor from the historical perspective, nor do we know anything about their self-perception as a *gens*. It is, however, significant that Ammianus Marcellinus testified to the existence of Frankish kings,¹⁰ that he distinguished several Frankish peoples (like the famous “Franks, that is those [Franks] who are normally called Salians”),¹¹ and that several Frankish kings ruled at the same time: It is apparent that even the Roman sources never saw the *Franci* as a unified community acting as a whole. The term normally signified no more than certain groups of Frankish origin¹² which invaded Roman territory or served as warriors in the Roman army. Throughout “the” Franks of the Roman sources were just single groups (or small parts

⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 15,5,16, ad a. 355, ed. W. Seyfarth, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig 1978) vol. 1, p. 49 [henceforth: Amm. Marc.]. Silvanus' father Bonitus was a Frank, but he stood up for Constantine (ibid. 15,5,33, p. 53), which proves that descent and political actions could diverge.

⁹ Cf. H.H. Anton, “History”, Ament et al., “Franken”, pp. 414–5. A similar statement has recently been made concerning the Saxons by M. Becher, “*Non enim habent regem idem Antiqui Saxones . . .* Verfassung und Ethnogenese in Sachsen während des 8. Jahrhunderts”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12, ed. H.-J. Häbler (Oldenburg 1999) pp. 1–31.

¹⁰ Cf. Amm. Marc. 16,3, vol. 1, p. 72, concerning Julian's peacemaking with the *reges Francorum*; cf. also ibid., 31,10,6, vol. 2, p. 183, for Mallobaudes.

¹¹ Amm. Marc. 17,8,3, vol. 1, p. 117. If the Salians, as M. Springer, “Gab es ein Volk der Salier?”, *Nomen et gens. Zur historischen Aussagekraft frühmittelalterlicher Personennamen*, ed. D. Geuenich, W. Haubrichs and J. Jarnut, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 16 (Berlin-New York 1997) pp. 58–83, has argued convincingly, actually never were a tribe or a people, it is nevertheless evident—and this alone is decisive in our context—that Ammianus believed them to be one. A second Frankish people were the *Attuarii* (Amm. Marc. 20,10,2, ad a. 356, vol. 1, p. 206).

¹² Already one of our earliest testimonies, *Panegyricus* 1 on Constantine I from 310, speaks of *diuersis Francorum gentibus*; cf. *Panegyrici latini* 6,5,3, p. 189.

of “the” Franks) under different leaders. Contrary to Roman perception, the Franks, like other groups of the Migration period, were not an ethnic unit, but an amalgamation of different peoples and groups. Unlike other groups, however, they were not yet politically united under kings during this period (probably due to the fact that there was no migration). Accordingly, we cannot discern a *Heerkönigtum* with functions comparable to that of other Germanic peoples.¹³

Historically the relationship of these Franks with the Roman Empire could be divided into at least three categories:¹⁴ On the one hand, as mentioned above, in the later third and fourth centuries, “they” (again that meant single groups) invaded Gaul repeatedly as pirates, troops or raiders.¹⁵ On the other hand, “they” (that is some of them) fought on the Roman side and served in the Roman army, or held offices far from their native country at the imperial court:¹⁶ Several Frankish leaders, such as Merobaudes, Richomer, Bauto or Arbogast, were *magistri militum*.¹⁷ It seems that at least in some cases they attained a double function: as Frankish “princes” and as Roman generals,¹⁸ and some of them, such as Magentius (350) or Silvanus (355), even

¹³ On the Frankish warlords, cf. now J. Laing, *Warriors of the Dark Ages* (Stroud 2000) pp. 77–87.

¹⁴ Cf. F. Beisel, *Studien zu den fränkisch-römischen Beziehungen. Von ihren Anfängen bis zum Ausgang des 6. Jahrhunderts*, Wissenschaftliche Schriften im Wissenschaftlichen Verlag Dr. Schulz-Kirchner, Reihe 9: Geschichtswissenschaftliche Beiträge 105 (Idstein 1987) pp. 11–63.

¹⁵ Cf. Amm. Marc. 17,2,1, ad a. 357, vol. 1, p. 105 (Julian broke into a formation of 600 lightly armoured Franks); 21,5,3, ad a. 360/61, p. 222 (invasions of the Alamanni and Franks); 27,8,5, ad a. 369/70, vol. 2, p. 47 (raids of the Franks and Saxons). Cf. Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* 7,25,3, ed. K. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna 1882; repr. Hildesheim 1967) p. 488, following Eutropius, *Breviarium ab urbe condita* 9,21, p. 134, ed. F.L. Müller (Stuttgart 1995) (*Franci et Saxones* afflicted the northern coast); 7,35,12, p. 529 (collected armed forces—*uires*—of the Gauls and Franks); 7,40,3, p. 550; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,9, ad a. 388, 389, 407/11, 413/15, 419/20, 428/31, 436, 440, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SSrM 1,1 (2nd edn., Hannover 1951) pp. 52 ff. For this and further evidence, cf. I. Runde, “Die Franken und Alemannen vor 500. Ein chronologischer Überblick”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen bis zur “Schlacht bei Zülpich” (496/97)*, ed. D. Geuenich, Ergänzungs-bände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 19 (Berlin-New York 1998) pp. 656–82.

¹⁶ Cf. Amm. Marc. 15,5,11, ad a. 355, vol. 1, p. 48: Malarich collected the Franks many of whom exerted a great influence at the court.

¹⁷ Cf. L. Cracco Ruggini, “Les généraux francs aux IV^e–V^e siècles et leurs groupes aristocratiques”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 673–88.

¹⁸ It is significant that Ammianus, by calling the Frank Mallobaudes *domesticorum comitem regemque Francorum*, attributed to him a Roman-Frankish double position (Amm. Marc. 31,10,6, vol. 2, p. 183).

usurped the imperial “throne”. Finally, “Franks” settled (quietly) with their wives and children (and hence not merely as soldiers) in northern Gaul. Franks, therefore, were enemies as well as associates of the Romans;¹⁹ Roman-Frankish relations were characterized by military confrontation as well as peaceful settlement and service in the Roman army. It is true that we may distinguish two phases of Frankish-Roman relations.²⁰ The first phase, lasting till the second half of the fourth century, was characterized by confrontation and raids which increasingly gave way to a (more or less) peaceful settlement on Roman soil from the end of the third century onwards, a process that, according to funeral findings, was intensified from the second half of the fourth century. Naturally, however, these “phases” were overlapping, and it might be more appropriate to conceive raiding and settling as simultaneous occurrences carried out by different groups respectively. Nevertheless we may assume that settlements increased and were, at least in some cases, carried through with Roman “permission”. Actually, our oldest evidence, the Panegyrici on Constantius and Constantine, praise these emperors for having settled Franks on—deserted—Roman territory, thus making them peasants or peasant warriors in Roman service.²¹ Additionally, there is Ammianus’ famous account of the year 358 when Julian settled “Salian” Franks, curiously enough, in the same area of Toxandria which they had illegally invaded and from where he had ostensibly driven them away immediately before making that treaty.²² Seven decades later, probably in 435 or 436, “Rhenish” Franks were allowed to settle on the left banks of the river Rhine.²³ It has been fervently discussed whether these settlements were based on federate treaties (*foedera; Föderatenverhältnisse*) or if the Franks only submitted themselves as *dediticii*. However, such a controversy loses its impact if we acknowl-

¹⁹ According to the strange account in Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,12, pp. 61–2, the Franks even made the Roman governor Aegidius their king; cf. J. Jarnut, “Gregor von Tours, Frankengeschichte II,12: Franci Egidium sibi regem adsciscunt. Faktum oder Sage?” *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung. Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. K. Brunner and B. Merta, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 31 (Wien-München 1994) pp. 129–34.

²⁰ Cf. Kaiser, *Die Franken*, pp. 38–9.

²¹ *Panegyrici latini* 8,9,4, p. 221; 8,21,1, p. 229; 6,5,3, p. 189; 6,6,2, pp. 189–90.

²² Amm. Marc. 17,8,3, vol. 1, p. 117.

²³ Cf. Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum* 34,176, p. 104; 36,191, p. 106, ed. F. Giunta and A. Grillone, *Fonti per la storia d’Italia* (Rom 1991); cf. Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, p. 119.

edge, along with the latest research, that there never was a clearly defined “federate system”, but that the respective conditions were negotiated separately for each case.²⁴ As well as these *foederati*, there were also the *laeti*, barbarian warriors, who were settled on Roman territory by Roman authorities. Furthermore, it can be assumed that many Germanic soldiers who had served in the Roman army in Gaul settled there after their retirement.

As far as political structures are concerned, the Franks, by the middle of the fifth century, seem to have been governed by several kinglets who were each assigned to certain centres (such as Childeric and, later on, his son Clovis to Tournai). There is, however, no indication as to whether these small kingdoms were connected with (smaller) ethnic groups within the Frankish people or whether the (former) gentile units had survived to become regional (political) federations.²⁵ Nor is there any clear indication of a kind of Frankish “overlord”, parallel to the Anglo-Saxon *bretwalda*, among these kinglets, though Childeric’s famous tomb already displays all the signs of a powerful prince.²⁶ It may also be significant that Gregory of Tours, when looking back at the early history of the Franks, although he is mistaken here, states that there was no mention of Frankish kingdoms in the earlier tradition,²⁷ which shows us that he did not acknowledge the Frankish kinglets as (real) kings. And even one of the few things about the early Franks that historians used to agree upon, namely the distinction between two larger groups, the “Salian” and the Rhenish Franks (later on called *Ribuarii*), who each had their proper laws, was not a political distinction, and has now become even more doubtful after Matthias Springer’s recent argumentation that neither *Salii*²⁸ nor *Ribuarii*²⁹ were names of peoples at all;

²⁴ Cf. the articles by Gerhard Wirth, Peter J. Heather and Walter Pohl in: *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. W. Pohl, The Transformation of the Roman World 1 (Leiden-New York-Köln 1997).

²⁵ Thus Kaiser, *Das römische Erbe*, p. 60. For the early kingdoms, see F. Staab, “Les royaumes francs au V^e siècle”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 539–66.

²⁶ For Childeric’s tomb, see now P. Périn and M. Kazanski, “Das Grab Childerichs I.”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 173–82; R. Brulet, “La tombe de Childéric et la topographie funéraire de Tournai à la fin du V^e siècle”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 59–78.

²⁷ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,9, p. 57.

²⁸ Cf. Springer, “Gab es ein Volk der Salier?”.

²⁹ M. Springer, “*Riparii*—*Ribuarius*—*Rheinfanken* nebst einigen Bemerkungen zum Geographen von Ravenna”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 201–69.

according to Springer, the *Ribuarii* (a comparatively late, possibly political term) did not mean “Rhenish Franks”, but the region of the colony of Cologne: Thus it seems that there never were two “peoples” of Salian and Rhenish Franks, but that there were numerous groups under different kings and leaders.

For further historical suggestions, we are dependent on the results of other disciplines. From the linguistic point of view, at least with regard to a later period, it is difficult to identify the Franks by any one specific language: “The” Franks did not speak one language, but rather several dialects. Furthermore, the border-line of the Germanic consonant shift (*Lautverschiebung*) ran right across the area of Frankish settlement.³⁰ (Nevertheless, linguists continue to use the term “Frankish”, although it is difficult to say nowadays who the Franks really were.) Moreover, the designation of language as a criterion for defining a people has become an increasingly weak argument³¹ (even according to early medieval standards, the same language could be used by several *gentes*):³² “Ethnic” communities were not identical with linguistic groups. It is true that Otfrid of Weißenburg referred to a Frankish language, that is, a “proper tongue” of the Franks,³³ though not until the ninth century, and not only is this an isolated, but also an ambiguous piece of evidence, for by *frenkisk*, a term parallel to the much discussed *theodisk*, Otfrid probably meant

³⁰ Cf. A. Quak, “Language”, Ament et al., “Franken”, pp. 374–81.

³¹ Cf. E. Neusz, “Sprachraumbildung am Niederrhein und die Franken. Anmerkungen zu Verfahren der Sprachgeschichtsschreibung”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 156–92, esp. pp. 165–6: Our opinions of “tribal languages” (*Stammessprachen*) are not confirmed empirically; actually, our knowledge of ethnogenetical processes strongly opposes this view.

³² Cf. H.-W. Goetz, “*Gentes*. Zur zeitgenössischen Terminologie und Wahrnehmung ostfränkischer Ethnogenese im 9. Jahrhundert”, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 108 (2000) pp. 85–116; id., “*Gentes et linguae*. Völker und Sprachen im Ostfränkisch-deutschen Reich in der Wahrnehmung der Zeitgenossen”, *Theodisca. Beiträge zur althochdeutschen und altniederdeutschen Sprache und Literatur in der Kultur des frühen Mittelalters*, ed. W. Haubrichs, E. Hellgardt, R. Hildebrandt, S. Müller and K. Ridder, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 22 (Berlin-New York 2000) pp. 290–312; W. Pohl, “Telling the difference: Signs of ethnic identity”, *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. id. with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-Boston-Köln 1998) pp. 17–69.

³³ Otfrid of Weißenburg, *Evangelienbuch* 1,1,31 ff., ed. O. Erdmann (Halle 1882; repr. 6th edn. Tübingen 1973) p. 12: The Franks (*Fräncon*) spoke in their own tongue (*in sina zungun*).

no more than common, colloquial speech.³⁴ Moreover, it has become widely accepted nowadays that the (later) language boundary is *not* identical with the Frankish settlement area. Whereas earlier research assumed a “Germanization” of northern France from the fifth century on, followed later by a re-Romanization,³⁵ this view has been challenged by the observation that Germanic place-names were seldom used for any lengthy period of time; we should, therefore, not overestimate the relevance of Frankish settlement.³⁶ Consequently, the traditional opinion has been abandoned in favour of the assumption of a large bilingual language belt which included both Romance and Frankish linguistic enclaves (some, as in the Moselle region, with a duration that sometimes reached far into the Middle Ages).³⁷ Many loan-words on both sides are the result of a long-standing bilingual situation and extensive communication between Romans and Franks.

The same seems to be true for place-names: not every site ending with *-heim* or *-court* is indisputably “Frankish” as was assumed by former research; and it is still to be seen whether it will ever be possible to detect specific “Frankish” attitudes and traits in the giving of personal names (a research project that has been pursued for some

³⁴ Cf. Neusz, “Sprachraumbildung am Niederrhein”, pp. 168–9.

³⁵ Cf. F. Petri, *Die fränkische Landnahme und die Entstehung der germanisch-romanischen Sprachgrenze in der interdisziplinären Diskussion*, Erträge der Forschung 70 (Darmstadt 1977).

³⁶ Cf. W. Haubrichs, “Fränkische Lehnwörter, Ortsnamen und Personennamen im Nordosten der Gallia. Die ‘Germania submersa’ als Quelle der Sprach- und Siedlungsgeschichte”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 102–29 (with an exhaustive bibliography).

³⁷ Cf. W. Haubrichs, “Germania submersa. Zu Fragen der Quantität und Dauer germanischer Siedlungseinseln im romanischen Lothringen und Südbelgien”, *Verborum amor. Studien zur Geschichte und Kunst der deutschen Sprache. Festschrift Stefan Sonderegger*, ed. H. Burger, A.M. Haas and P. von Matt (Berlin-New York 1992) pp. 633–66; W. Kleiber, “Mosella Romana. Hydronomie, Toponymie und Reliktverteilung”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 130–55. Regarding linguistic aspects of the continuity of (Roman) language, settlement, population and culture in the Moselle, Central and Upper Rhine and Black Forest regions, see W. Kleiber and M. Pfister, *Aspekte und Probleme der römisch-germanischen Kontinuität. Sprachkontinuität an Mosel, Mittel- und Oberrhein sowie im Schwarzwald* (Stuttgart 1992). The continuity of the Roman language is interpreted as an indication of a continuity of settlement. For the variety (and inexplicability) of language barriers, see W. Haubrichs, “Über die allmähliche Verfertigung von Sprachgrenzen. Das Beispiel der Kontaktzonen von Germania und Romania”, *Grenzen und Grenzregionen. Frontières et régions frontalières. Borders and Border Regions*, ed. W. Haubrichs and R. Schneider, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung 22 (Saarbrücken 1993) pp. 99–129.

years and is being continued by an interdisciplinary group of scholars).³⁸ No doubt there were differences between a “Germanic” and a “Romanized” population,³⁹ but these became less and less discernible (probably an indication of new ethnogenetical processes within the Frankish empire). Thus, the population in northern Gaul was (and increasingly became) a “mixed civilization”.⁴⁰ (This is very different from Britain which after the period of migration apparently became almost completely “Anglo-Saxon”.)⁴¹ Yet the great number of Romance place-names have to be regarded as an indication of the widespread continuity of Roman settlement.

On these grounds, it is almost impossible to discern distinct centres or border-lines of Frankish settlement in northern Gaul, though, from the third century, the main areas were with certainty situated in the northern parts of the former Roman provinces Germania and Belgica, around the rivers Lower Rhine, Waal and Meuse. From here, Frankish settlement spread gradually, stretching as is generally assumed, as far as the Scheldt (Escaut), Somme and Seine by the end of the fifth century.⁴² By comparison, before Clovis’s reign there had been no considerable Frankish settlement in the regions between the rivers Seine and Loire, and there never was any considerable settlement in southern France (south of the Loire).⁴³

³⁸ Cf. J. Jarnut, “Nomen et gens: Political and linguistic aspects of personal names between the third and the eighth century—presenting an interdisciplinary project from a historical perspective”, *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-Boston-Köln 1998) pp. 113–6; *Nomen et gens*; D. Geuenich and W. Kettmann, “Das Pilotprojekt zur *gens Alamannorum*. Erste Erfahrungen mit einem Teilprojekt von ‘Nomen et gens’”, *ibid.*, pp. 279–303. Cf. also D. Geuenich, “Personennamen als Personengruppennamen”, *Proceedings of the Thirteenth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences 1*, ed. K. Rymut (Wrocław 1981) pp. 437–45.

³⁹ Nevertheless it seems that Beisel, *Studien zu den fränkisch-römischen Beziehungen*, p. 49 exaggerates an “ethnic” contrast between “Germans” and “Romans”.

⁴⁰ Cf. H.W. Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts. Zwischen unterer Elbe und Loire. Studien zur Chronologie und Bevölkerungsgeschichte*, Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 19 (München 1974).

⁴¹ Cf. H. Härke, “Sächsische Ethnizität und archäologische Deutung im frühmittelalterlichen England”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12, pp. 109–22.

⁴² There may have been a caesura between Childeric and Clovis, since settlement south of the Somme is more or less restricted to the time after 486; cf. P. Périn, “La Progression des Francs en Gaule du Nord au V^e siècle. Histoire et archéologie”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 59–81; L. Verslype, “L’occupation mérovingienne aux confins de l’Austrasie et de la Neustrie septentrionales et l’image archéologique des aristocraties”, *Clovis 1*, pp. 567–605.

⁴³ Cf. G. Halsall, “Social identities and social relationships in early Merovingian Gaul”, *Franks and Alamanni*, pp. 141–65; 165–75.

From the archaeological point of view,⁴⁴ there is no sign of a “conquest” or rapid settlement, but, according to current opinions, we have to assume a gradual expansion over a period of several centuries: Frankish settlement in northern Gaul was not the result of “migration” but of gradual infiltration, partly by invasion, partly officially supported, or at least tolerated.⁴⁵ We have to reckon, however, with great regional differences.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the decision as to what is “Frankish” in northern Gaul has become less clear nowadays than it used to be.⁴⁷ Former assumptions that the so-called *Reihengräberfelder* (tombs in a line, with the interment of whole corpses, *Körperbestattungen*, and with grave goods) were Frankish have become doubtful because such burial rites were not restricted to northern France. On the other hand, not all burial grounds in northern Gaul were non-Roman.⁴⁸ On the contrary, we can observe that the “other” type of burial was adopted by both Roman and “Germanic” minorities.⁴⁹ And what seemed to be Roman graves could in fact have been Christian ones.⁵⁰ Thus, though the *Reihengräberkultur* was presumably “Germanic” in its origin, it did not necessarily remain so for any length of time, particularly not in regions with a mixed civilization.⁵¹ Accordingly, it has become almost impossible to define “Frankish”

⁴⁴ Cf. the contribution of Michael Schmauder in this volume.

⁴⁵ For this expansion, see now Staab, “Les royaumes francs”.

⁴⁶ Cf. G. Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization. The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge 1995), who, in the region of Metz, observes changes in the fourth century in the context of the Alamannic invasions and, again, important social changes at about 600.

⁴⁷ Archaeologists provide evidence of “alien” elements and settlements in northern Gaul since the middle of the fourth century, but, of course, they cannot prove that these were Franks. Cf. H.W. Böhme, “Söldner und Siedler im spätantiken Nordgallien”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 91–101.

⁴⁸ Cf. H.W. Böhme, “Franken und Romanen im Spiegel spätromischer Grabfunde im nördlichen Gallien”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 31–58. So far, we have knowledge of up to 200 cemeteries of the fourth and fifth centuries in northern Gaul. Similarly, the end of this “funeral civilization” in the seventh century can neither be attributed to ethnological reasons nor to Christianization, but it was due to a changing ecclesiastical organization (with funerals near the churches); cf. U. Koch, “Stätten der Totenruhe—Grabformen und Bestattungssitten der Franken”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 2, pp. 723–37.

⁴⁹ Cf. H. Ament, “Franken und Romanen im Merowingerreich als archäologisches Forschungsproblem”, *Bonner Jahrbücher* 178 (1978) pp. 377–94; B.K. Young, “Pratiques funéraires et mentalités païennes”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 15–42.

⁵⁰ Cf. P. Périn, “A propos de publications étrangères récentes concernant le peuplement en Gaule à l’époque mérovingienne: La ‘question franque’”, *Francia* 8 (1980) pp. 537–52.

⁵¹ According to G. Halsall, “The origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: forty years

from an anthropological point of view,⁵² though there may have been differences between Franks and Romans,⁵³ nor can we clearly define certain types of habits, jewellery, costume, or weapons as being unquestionably “Frankish” (particularly since, later on, “Frankish” women even in the Belgica dressed themselves in the Roman style).⁵⁴ Similarly, it seems hardly possible to detect a specific Frankish culture, so that some archaeologists, such as Guy Halsall, tend to doubt the ethnic relevance of archaeological findings at all.⁵⁵ The continuation of material culture does not necessarily mean a common ethnic identity (and vice versa).⁵⁶ Considering these “mingled cultures” in Gaul, it seems, once more, that the Franks were (or at least developed into) a political rather than an ethnic or cultural phenomenon.⁵⁷

on”, *Fifth-century Gaul: a crisis of identity?*, ed. J.F. Drinkwater and H. Elton (Cambridge 1992) pp. 196–207, gravegoods do not represent “Germanic” or “pagan” (or “Germanic pagan”) customs.

⁵² Cf. M. Kunter and U. Wittwer-Backofen, “Die Franken—Anthropologische Bevölkerungsrekonstruktionen im östlichen Siedlungsgebiet”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas 2*, pp. 653–61.

⁵³ Cf. L. Buchet, “Die Landnahme der Franken in Gallien aus der Sicht der Anthropologen”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas 2*, pp. 662–7.

⁵⁴ Cf. G. Zeller, “Tracht der Frauen”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas 2*, pp. 672–83. Cf. Schmauder this volume, p. 303.

⁵⁵ Cf. Halsall, “Social identities”; id., “The origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*”. Nowadays, it has become even more difficult to distinguish between the Franks and other Germanic peoples, such as the Saxons or Alamanni, by their archaeological heritage although, according to the written sources, these peoples were clearly distinct. Cf. Ch. Grünewald, “Neues zu Sachsen und Franken in Westfalen”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung 12*, pp. 83–108; H.W. Böhme, “Franken oder Sachsen? Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Bevölkerungsgeschichte in Westfalen vom 4.–7. Jahrhundert”, *ibid.*, pp. 43–73.

⁵⁶ Thus H. Ament, “Die Ethnogenese der Germanen aus der Sicht der Vor- und Frühgeschichte”, *Ethnogenese europäischer Völker. Aus der Sicht der Anthropologie und Vor- und Frühgeschichte*, ed. W. Bernhard and A. Kandler-Pálsson (Stuttgart-New York 1986) pp. 247–56. An opposite view is now again taken by F. Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken*, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 23 (Berlin-New York 2000), who after discussing the archaeological problem of ethnicity (pp. 55 ff.), defends an ethnical perspective as long as it does not adapt ethnic concepts from other disciplines (p. 81). Nevertheless, maps of distribution of certain objects cannot prove ethnic distinctions, and it seems to be completely arbitrary when Siegmund (pp. 253 ff.) interprets the archaeological “cultural patterns” as ethnic units which he identifies with being Franks and Alamanni (pp. 305 ff.) on the ground of the (delusive) assumption that archaeological evidence is true and objective (pp. 351 ff.).

⁵⁷ Thus Périn, “A propos de publications étrangères récentes”, p. 552.

All in all, we can conclude that there were Franks before Clovis's reign, but these Franks were far from being discernible as a confined "ethnic" community. Whereas late Roman sources (like Ammianus Marcellinus) perceived the Franks as an ethnic group, the (admittedly few) contemporary sources of the late fifth and early sixth century tended to avoid the term. It may well be that the mixture of "Roman" and "Germanic" civilization in northern Gaul stimulated an ethnogenetical process that had begun long before the establishment of a Frankish kingdom. Whatever it was that made these Franks appear as a unit in the fourth and fifth centuries, they obviously did not form a political union either. Nevertheless, there was a political order before Clovis, and in spite of Gregory of Tours complaining that he could not find any kings in the early history of the Franks, there *were* kings who, to some extent at least, were related to each other. From this we may conclude that there were even certain forms of royal "dynasties", *stirpes regiae* (among which the Merovingians were one). It is only by their later success and their historiographical tradition that their line of succession is the only one which is fairly well-known. Gregory, however, was obviously searching for *one* king of *the* (united) Franks.

II. *The Kingdom: the Achievement of Clovis*

The reign of Clovis, therefore, may not have changed much, at least not immediately, with regard to Frankish-Roman civilization. Politically, however, the amazingly rapid development from being a kinglet of Tournai to becoming the ruler of the largest and, beside Theoderic's kingdom of the Ostrogoths, most important kingdom within some 20 years must be considered as a decisive caesura at least politically. Under Clovis, the Franks, for the first time in their history, became a political unit ruled by one king. No doubt, there were some "forerunners" or developments that supported a unification of Gaul, but, characteristically enough, they originated mainly on the "Roman" side: One may go back as far as the so-called "Gallic 'separate realm'" (*Gallisches Sonderreich*) of the third century from Postumus to Tetricus (260–274), or to Diocletian's system of tetrarchy with a decentralized imperial court in Trier. Moreover, Clovis's reign had been prepared by his father's, Childeric's, federal policy with Aegidius, the Roman governor, in the central parts of Gaul (around

Soissons and Paris). The conquest of this last Roman resort in Gaul under Aegidius and his son Syagrius no doubt has to be regarded as an important milestone in the course of Clovis's rise. But, of course, there were also the other "Germanic" kingdoms (of the Visigoths in Aquitania, the Burgundians in the Rhone area or the Ostrogoths in Italy) that might have served as models.

Compared to other realms, the establishment of the huge Frankish kingdom was a comparatively late "foundation", but it was achieved under one single king within one generation (disregarding later expansions under Clovis's successors), and it may be added here that, contrary to the other "Germanic" kingdoms, the Frankish realm never perished (which does not necessarily imply, however, that its "success" derived from its being different). Clovis himself as ruler was the central figure of this realm. His reign most probably stimulated a great deal of changes. First and foremost, the area of domination grew to an extent that made it larger than any other Germanic kingdom of that period. Moreover, Clovis managed to eliminate the other Frankish kings (some of whom, at least, were his relatives) one after the other until, probably towards the end of his reign, he finally even became king of the "Rhenish Franks" after having murdered their king Sigibert and his son Chloderic. The conquest of the remaining regions of the Roman Empire in Gaul, the province of Syagrius, made him leader and governor of a district not only inhabited by a population that was still predominantly Roman, but also of a region with a functioning Roman administration and with Roman law and habits. After (probably) two campaigns and victories against the Alamanni (who, as it seems, were not united either under one king before that time),⁵⁸ Clovis's realm expanded into the Upper Rhine region, and by his notorious victory at Vouillé (506) over the Visigoths he conquered a complete, huge kingdom which made him ruler of the whole of south-west Gaul south of the Loire (later on called Aquitania), a region that had been under Visigothic rulership, but remained Roman in faith, population and administrative structures. It is significant that Clovis (as is generally assumed) transferred his "capital", that is, his preferred *sedes regia*, first from Tournai to Soissons and, later on (about 508) further to Paris,⁵⁹ whereas, after

⁵⁸ Cf. D. Geuenich, "Chlodwigs Alemannenschlacht(en) und Taufe", *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 423-37.

⁵⁹ For Frankish (and other) residences cf. E. Ewig, "Résidence et capitale pen-

the conquest of the Visigothic realm, he did not move the “capital” further again to Tours, a town near the border between the two former kingdoms which, noted for the cult of Saint-Martin, he undoubtedly honoured as a significant sacred place: The “core” of Clovis’s Frankish realm was obviously not the regions of Frankish origin, but the Roman parts with their vast demesnes (around Paris) which remained the economic basis of all the Frankish and, later on, also of the French kings.

In the end, Clovis’s “Frankish” kingdom (whatever it may have been called at that time), from its substance and population, was far from being “Frankish” any more, but was an amalgamation of several (former) kingdoms including the small Frankish kingdoms of the north, an important Roman province, the huge Visigothic kingdom of southern Gaul and the territories of the Alamanni. Clovis himself obviously secured his position on the basis of several public functions (though we do not know the title he assumed for himself): He was king of the Franks as well as successor of the Roman province of Aegidius and Syagrius, ruling as a sovereign, but also in the name of the Emperor who, granting him the honour of an “honorary consulship” in 508, acknowledged his rule.⁶⁰ In addition he may well have perceived himself as king of the Visigoths since this kingdom was divided under his sons and was thus treated as a separate realm (a method that was continued later on with Burgundy and Provence, the former realms of the Burgundians and the remaining Visigoths). Thus, Clovis’s kingdom comprised several kingdoms (*Vielreichstaat*) and was composed of even more peoples (*Vielvölkerstaat*) among which the Franks were only one (and nowhere near the majority, probably not even in the north). We do not know the percentage of Franks in the population,⁶¹ but from the fact that the Romanic language not only survived, but, at least in the end, dominated we may conclude that the Franks always remained a minority, even in northern Gaul. The majority of the population was Roman or, rather, Romanized, having grown together, through a long process, primarily

dant le haut Moyen Age”, id., *Spätantikes und Fränkisches Gallien* 1, pp. 362–408, particularly pp. 383 ff.; A. Dierkens and P. Périn, “Les *sedes regiae* mérovingiennes entre Seine et Rhin”, *Sedes regiae (ann. 400–800)*, ed. G. Ripoll and J.M. Gurt with A. Charvria (Barcelona 2000) pp. 267–304.

⁶⁰ Cf. R. Mathisen, “Clovis, Anastase et Grégoire de Tours: consul, patrice et roi”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 395–407.

⁶¹ Estimates range from 2 to 25%. The percentage decreased, however, from the north farther to the south as well as to the west.

from "Romans" (from various provinces) and Celtic Gauls. Moreover, we may well ask how "Romanized" the Franks already were even under or before Clovis's reign! If the Franks before Clovis can be called a "people", even though they did not form a recognizable unit, the Frankish kingdom after Clovis was by no means an ethnic (or cultural) unit, but a kingdom made up of many peoples and of many kingdoms which in themselves consisted of mixed ethnic groups (*Völkergemisch*). This, however, was common in the "Germanic" world during and after the Migration period.

As a preliminary resume we may maintain that, though there was a Frankish people before Clovis (or at least a people who were called "Franks"), it is impossible to decide which bonds united them. There were kings, but no united kingdom. It was Clovis who founded the Frankish kingdom, but he did not establish the Frankish people which somehow survived (and expanded) under his reign. This seems a very important distinction: "Kingdom" and "people", though obviously related to each other, were distinct institutions. The wording *Francorum gens et regnum* in Gregory of Tours⁶² indicates a distinction as well as a relation between these two elements. The situation, however, is extremely complicated: Though a Frankish people had existed before Clovis's reign, it was not until Clovis's conquests that the Franks were politically united. Once they were united, however, they ruled a kingdom that incorporated many peoples, in a realm in which they, themselves, were a minority. In the final analysis, we cannot grasp the "ethnicity" of the Franks. On the one hand the establishment of the Frankish kingdom can be regarded as an important factor in this process. On the other hand it created a framework which, when regarding the Franks as a "people", makes it very probable (although it remains to be investigated) that there was also a development of the "Frankish people", that is, a change of its ethnicity under the new conditions of a Frankish kingdom.

III. *The Structure and Development of the Frankish Kingdom and People*

1. *Merovingian Kingship*: Under this premise, we can now pursue the elements and structure of the "Frankish" kingdom, considering particu-

⁶² For example, Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 5 prol., p. 193.

larly the relationship between the Frankish people and “its” kingdom: the political and social institutions, the relationship between Franks and Romans as well as between Franks and other “Germanic” peoples within the realm, the personal relationships and the Franks’ concepts of themselves. This vast new kingdom called for newly adapted structures. The political unification had not yet established an integrated realm. On the contrary, one may assume that the king himself, even if he was not the only factor, was, at least, the most important one in the process of integration.⁶³ It was not the Franks as a whole, but the Merovingian dynasty that formed that notorious “nucleus of tradition” (*Traditionskern*) which played such an important part in Wenskus’s and Wolfram’s theory of ethnogenesis (though recently the earlier opinions relating to a Germanic *Königsheil* have rightly been increasingly dismissed). The Merovingians monopolized political power and “sanctified” themselves by way of sacred customs (as “long-haired kings”) and through attitudes and myths (like the descent from a sea-beast).⁶⁴ However, they perceived themselves, or were perceived, as “kings of the Franks” in a *regnum Francorum*, in spite of their rule over many peoples. And yet, due to the lack of original charters and the vast amount of falsifications, we cannot tell exactly from what time on these denominations were used. In royal charters, the title *rex Francorum* is handed down for the first time in a copy of a charter of Theudebert II from 596⁶⁵ and in two original charters of Chlothar II, one issued between 584 and 628,⁶⁶ the other dating from 625.⁶⁷ Later on, the title was extremely

⁶³ Kingship can be regarded as an, or as the most important element of any ethnogenetical process, and it is not by chance that H. Wolfram, “Typen der Ethnogenese. Ein Versuch”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 608–27, recently defined different “types” of ethnogenesis primarily according to the monarchic or non-monarchic organisation of these peoples.

⁶⁴ These features should not be confused with a *Sakralkönigtum* which is more or less a construct of modern research; cf. A.C. Murray, “Fredegar, Merovech, and ‘Sacral Kingship’”, *After Rome’s Fall. Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. id. (Toronto-Buffalo-London 1998) pp. 121–51.

⁶⁵ *D. Merov.* 25, ed. T. Kölzer, MGH DD regum Francorum e stirpe Merovingica (Hannover 2001) vol. 1, p. 69. Cf. now also R. Schneider, “König und Königsherrschaft bei den Franken”, *Von Sacerdotium und Regnum. Geist und weltliche Gewalt im frühen und hohen Mittelalter. Festschrift für Egon Boshof zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. F.-R. Erkens and H. Wolff (Köln-Weimar-Wien 2002) pp. 11–26, here p. 15, who nevertheless believes that the title was used from the reign of Clovis.

⁶⁶ *D. Merov.* 22, p. 63.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 28, p. 76.

common, but it is impossible to say when it was used for the first time. The term *regnum Francorum*, however, was used very rarely: in a falsification dating from 639/42⁶⁸ and in an undisputed charter of Childeric II from 670.⁶⁹ In historiographical sources, however, the *regnum Francorum* was the kingdom of the Frankish king(s). Thus, it was the kings (and their court) that guaranteed not only political unification, but also warranted that this unified realm was perceived as a Frankish one. In fact, there was hardly any unity and uniformity (or conformity) inside this realm except through the king and perhaps the church (and even the church was an “amalgamation” of single bishops, each being responsible for his see,⁷⁰ and not infrequently quarrelling with their respective *comes*, as illustrated by Gregory of Tours’ famous quarrel with Count Leudastus of Tours).⁷¹

Yet, if we are accustomed to speaking about the Frankish kingdom of the Merovingians and, later on, the Carolingians, it seems necessary to emphasize a crucial point here. Although Clovis no doubt established a united realm and expanded it by huge conquests, his reign as a single king without colleagues was exceptional. It is well-known that the four sons of Clovis divided the paternal kingdom among themselves, and obviously this turned out to be the usual procedure throughout Merovingian history:⁷² Under Clovis’s successors, in the sixth and seventh centuries, there were only four more or less brief periods when the whole Frankish realm was equally united again under one king (Chlothar I, 558–561; Chlothar II, 613–623; Dagobert I, 629–639; Childeric II, 673–675): Although the Frankish kingdom was ruled either by one king (though this was seldom) or at least (and throughout) by one royal family, it was not really a political unity, even if the notion of one Frankish kingdom may still have been maintained. Curiously enough, the “divisions”, which possibly confirm the opinion of the kingdom being the prop-

⁶⁸ Ibid., 73, p. 188.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 108, p. 280.

⁷⁰ For the Merovingian bishops, see G. Scheibelreiter, *Der Bischof in merowingischer Zeit*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 27 (Wien-Köln-Graz 1983), and B. Basdevant-Gaudemet, “L’évêque, d’après la législation de quelques conciles mérovingiens”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 471–94.

⁷¹ Cf. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 5,48–49, pp. 257–63; 6,32, pp. 302–4.

⁷² Cf. E. Ewig, “Die fränkischen Teilungen und Teilreiche (511–613)”, id., *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien* 1, pp. 114–71.

erty of the Merovingian kings, are in themselves proof of such a notion. In reality, however, there is no doubt a discrepancy between the divisions and the concept of the existence of a single *regnum Francorum*. In Gregory of Tours, we can sense that strange relationship (obviously not felt as a contradiction by Gregory himself) between this ideal and the sovereignty of the single parts: For Gregory, all Merovingian kings were legitimate (though not all of them were good rulers). The Merovingians themselves claimed to be heirs by way of their birthright, thereby still treating the kingdom as a whole, and there were, in fact, numerous forms of royal inheritance patterns.⁷³ In practice, the Frankish kings never achieved complete integration of the different parts (and peoples) of their kingdom.

2. *Disunity*: If the Frankish kingdom, therefore, even as a political factor was a unit only in a limited, dynastic sense, internally it seemed to be even more heterogeneous, and its parts increasingly disintegrated. The vast expansions under Clovis (Aquitania, Alemannia) and his successors (Burgundy, Thuringia, Bavaria, and, for a short time, northern Italy) integrated not only external peoples (such as the Alamans and the Bavarians), but also former kingdoms (such as the kingdoms of the Visigoths, Burgundians and Thuringians) as well as former Roman territories: The Frankish kingdom remained, as it seems, a disorganized amalgamation of several (older) kingdoms, and it is well known that Gaul can easily be divided into a “Germanic” northern and a Romanized southern part (though this distinction, too, seems somewhat superficial); at the same time we may observe a comparable, though completely different distinction between the western and eastern parts of the Frankish territory (later on called *Niustria*, or *Neustria*, and *Austria*, or *Austrasia*).⁷⁴ When Clovis’s sons not only divided the paternal realm, but actually split up the two central parts of the kingdom, the Roman “*Niustria*” and the Gothic kingdom (later on called “*Aquitania*”), this action could indicate that they (and their successors) may never have aspired to achieve complete political integration.

⁷³ Cf. I.N. Wood, “Kings, Kingdoms and Consent”, *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds 1977) pp. 6–29.

⁷⁴ This is confirmed by the archaeological evidence; cf. Schmauder this volume, pp. 285–7.

Moreover, the numerous reports in Gregory of Tours and later chronicles about quarrels and wars between the Merovingian kings and about mutual invasions seriously contradict the impression of (political) unity. According to these chronicles, the Merovingians seemed to have fought one another throughout most of Merovingian history, and it is not by chance that Ian Wood, when writing on this subject, titles his chapter on the sixth-century kingdom “Stability in Disunity”⁷⁵ (though this can also be seen as typically contemporary and not as particularly “Merovingian”). Yet the struggles between the Merovingians were struggles between kings, not between peoples (or even between “Romanized” and “Germanic” parts):⁷⁶ According to Gregory, it was “the” Franks fighting on each side. We may doubt, therefore, whether the Frankish kingdoms after Clovis were ever a political, let alone a “gentile” (national) unit. We may even ask if contemporary historians have used Clovis’s realm too exclusively as a model when forming their judgments of later Frankish kingdoms.

Although the manner of dividing the realm changed during the next centuries, and accordingly the portions of the Frankish kingdoms did not remain the same, the habit of dividing the kingdom was maintained throughout these times. From the reign of the sons of Chlothar I, these parts tended to become independent kingdoms in their own right. It is obvious, therefore, that, under the later Merovingians, the four great parts of the realm, Neustria, Austrasia, Burgundia and Aquitania, became more and more important as structural factors.⁷⁷ (Later on, Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundia had a *maior domus* of its own.) In Merovingian times the new large regions vaguely corresponded to the boundaries of former realms, as in Aquitania or Burgundy. We must, however, admit that the parts which were to become independent kingdoms, did not correlate with the original boundaries, indicating that in the meantime fundamen-

⁷⁵ Wood, *The Merovingian kingdoms*, p. 88.

⁷⁶ Thus Ewig, “Die fränkischen Teilungen”, p. 171.

⁷⁷ Cf. E. Ewig, “Die fränkischen Teilreiche im 7. Jahrhundert (613–714)”, id., *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien* 1, pp. 172–230; for the later development: id., “Descriptio Franciae”, ibid., pp. 274–322. For the growth of these *regna*, cf. K.F. Werner, “Völker und Regna”, *Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Reichs- und Nationsbildung in Deutschland und Frankreich*, ed. C. Brühl and B. Schneidmüller, *Historische Zeitschrift Beiheft N.F.* 24 (München 1997) pp. 15–44, particularly pp. 18 ff.

tal changes must have occurred. By Carolingian times, these bonds had completely lost their impact.

Furthermore, the Frankish kingdom was not a legal unit, either. Whereas the *Lex Salica* encompassed laws concerning Franks and Romans, the different "Germanic" peoples lived, as it seems, under their own proper laws (although all of these were codified later, mainly in the seventh and eighth century, like the *Leges Alamannorum* and the *Lex Baiuvariorum*), and this situation continued under the Carolingian kings. These non-Frankish "Germanic" peoples inside the realm still preserved a specific legal system of their own though their laws were obviously codified under Merovingian influence. As is well known, there were even two Frankish laws, the *Lex Salica* and the *Lex Ribuaria*. Actually, there was not just one Salian law, as we know of at least eight different versions of the *Lex Salica*. Similarly, the *duces*, established as an element of Frankish (royal) administration (and therefore integration), developed, in some regions at least, into influential regional powers, which were based upon and tied to certain "gentile" structures, subkingdoms or traditional territories (such as Aquitania, Burgundy, Provence, Thuringia, Alemannia or Bavaria).

3. *Integration*: Thus, on the one hand, the Frankish kingdom was never more than an amalgamation of different parts. On the other hand, however, we cannot neglect the impression that the contemporary notion of a Frankish kingdom (or, later on, of Frankish kingdoms) increased constantly. Obviously, there had been a process of—more or less successful—integration. What, we may therefore ask, were the key factors of this process? In spite of the undoubtedly important political role of the king, it could not be the "monarchy" as such, since the periods characterized by the reign of a sole monarch turned out to be the rare exceptions to the rule in the Merovingian as well as in the Carolingian period. Taking this into consideration, we should not neglect the possibility of a growing homogeneity of a population that initially had had distinctly different origins, traditions, and (social) structures. The relationship between "Romans" and "Franks" (and other peoples) is a decisive factor here. In spite of an actual "mixed civilization"—a state that in many parts of northern Gaul might have been achieved long before Clovis—, and despite the legal differentiation between these groups, with the Romans being entitled to only half the *wergeld* of a Frank, there seems to have been not only a symbiosis, but even an increasing

“syncretism”⁷⁸ of ethnic groups and a growing similarity between the peoples and cultures. This can be observed in the fact that the same public functions (for example the offices of *comites* or bishops) were open to both groups almost from the beginning though in differing ratios.⁷⁹ The Gallo-Roman senatorial aristocracy emphatically supported the Frankish state, particularly in southern France. The histories of Gregory of Tours at the end of the sixth century provide one of the best examples to prove this statement. This holds true even though Gregory did not apply the term “Roman” to the “Roman” population of Gaul, but from his perspective distinguished, in a much more precise manner, between the different regions or territories of southern Gaul (and their respective population),⁸⁰ whereas the Franks were seen more as a whole. Even the social structures did not seem so different as they may appear at first sight (and distinctions become even fewer when we take into account the “Romanization” of the Germanic war-leaders long before Clovis’s time). There was some kind of Germanic aristocracy long before Clovis (and, in spite of a long controversy, it was not dissolved under Clovis’s reign, but survived).⁸¹ With regard to the ornate grave goods, archaeologists speak of “aristocratic graves” (*Adelsgräber*) or even of “hereditary aristocratic graves” (*adlige Erbgrabanlagen*).⁸² It has been claimed that, at least from the point of view of the Gallo-Roman

⁷⁸ Cf. F. Rexroth, “Culture”, Ament et al., “Franken”, p. 452.

⁷⁹ According to M. Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte der Merowingerzeit nach den Werken Gregors von Tours* (Mainz 1982) vol. 1, pp. 30 and 64, the majority of *comites* (27) mentioned in Gregory of Tours bore Roman names, only 12 had Germanic names. Among the *duces*, however, 19 had Germanic and only 11 Roman names.

⁸⁰ Gregory distinguishes only twice between a Frank (*Francus genere*) in contrast to someone from Arles (*Historiae* 10,2, p. 482) or from Clermont (*Historiae* 4,40, p. 173: *Arvernus*). It is also significant that not only the names of “peoples” were territorialized, but, for example in southern Gaul, territorial names were “gentilized” (such as *Turomici* or *Biturgici*); cf. W. Pohl, “Zur Bedeutung ethnischer Unterscheidungen in der frühen Karolingerzeit”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12, pp. 193–298, here p. 201.

⁸¹ Cf. F. Irsigler, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des frühfränkischen Adels*, *Rheinisches Archiv* 70 (Bonn 1969); cf. Schmauder this volume. It need not concern us here whether this political “elite”, whose existence as such is not disputed, may already be called an “aristocracy” or rather an upper class (*Oberschicht*); cf. the controversial statement of H. Grahn-Hoek, *Die fränkische Oberschicht im 6. Jahrhundert. Studien zu ihrer rechtlichen und politischen Stellung*, *Vorträge und Forschungen Sonderband 21* (Sigmaringen 1976).

⁸² Cf. H. Ament, “Archaeology”, id., “Franken”, pp. 400–1. For separate burial grounds of a Germanic leading class, cf. H.W. Böhme, “Adelsgräber im Frankenreich. Archäologische Zeugnisse zur Herausbildung einer Herrenschicht unter den mero-

senatorial aristocracy, there was still a difference between the Roman aristocracy and the Frankish leaders in Gregory's time, and that Gregory had a clear notion of these differences.⁸³ It is significant, though, that authors, such as Gregory of Tours and Fredegar, apparently did not perceive or certainly did not emphasize an (ethnic) contrast between the "Roman" and the "Germanic" population within the Frankish kingdom.⁸⁴

In his contemporary letter of congratulation on Clovis's baptism,⁸⁵ Avitus, the metropolitan bishop of Vienne, still sensed an "ethnic" difference between Romans and Franks addressing the latter as *vestra gens*.⁸⁶ A century and a half later, such distinctions and similar evidence of "ethnic" antagonism seem to have lost their impact, with both groups becoming more and more united, a fact which is also reflected in the process of namegiving: Whereas Roman and Germanic persons' names (anthroponyms) are regarded to have initially been an indicator of the "ethnic" origin of men and women, from the seventh century onwards it became increasingly difficult to infer one's descent in this way since Romans adopted Germanic names (and vice versa).⁸⁷ (It would be interesting to investigate this symbiosis further by research on changes in the naming of the Franks.)⁸⁸

Another element of integration was the administration of the kingdom. Although there were differences between the northern and southern parts of the realm, these sectors seem to have been fairly homogeneous as far as government and administration are concerned.

wingischen Königen", *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 40 (1993) pp. 397–534.

⁸³ Cf. Irsigler, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des frühfränkischen Adels*, pp. 84 ff.

⁸⁴ Cf. H.-W. Goetz, "Die germanisch-romanische (Kultur-)Synthese in der Wahrnehmung der merowingischen Geschichtsschreibung", *Akkulturation. Probleme einer germanisch-romanischen Kultursynthese in Spätantike und frühem Mittelalter*, ed. D. Hägermann, W. Haubrichs and J. Jarnut (forthcoming).

⁸⁵ See n. 97 below.

⁸⁶ When later on, however, Clovis, in his letter to the bishops from 507/511 (MGH Capit. 1, no. 1, ed. A. Boretius [Hannover 1883] pp. 1–2), speaks of *populus noster*, he may have been thinking of the Franks, but it is more probable that he referred to all his people as a political body, presumably including the Romans.

⁸⁷ Cf. H. Ebling, *Prosopographie der Amtsträger des Merowingerreiches. Von Chlothar II. (613) bis Karl Martell (714)*, Beihefte der Francia 2 (München 1974); id., J. Jarnut and G. Kampers, "Nomen et gens. Untersuchungen zu den Führungsschichten des Franken-, Langobarden- und Westgotenreiches im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert", *Francia* 8 (1980) pp. 687–745.

⁸⁸ This is one of the tasks of the interdisciplinary workgroup "Nomen et gens". Cf. n. 38 above.

If we may, for example, at all assume different origins for the offices of a Germanic *grafio* and a Gallo-Roman *comes*,⁸⁹ it seems to be impossible to perceive differences between these offices in Merovingian times.⁹⁰ Thus, on the whole, though there may have been both “Germanic” and/or Roman roots for the single administrative offices, the strongest impression that we get from the sources is their structural unity, so that the administration of the Frankish kingdom must be considered an important element of integration. It should not, however, be forgotten that the tendency towards a certain independence of individual officials, particularly the *duces* of the seventh and eighth centuries, favoured the disintegration of certain parts of the realm later on. On the whole, “Clovis’s kingdom from the beginning experienced a much more thorough mixture of Frankish and Roman traditions”, as Patrick Geary concludes,⁹¹ and what Walter Pohl infers rightly from a comparison of the Germanic states is true for the Frankish kingdom as well: “a clear distinction between Roman and Germanic origins [. . .] would not help to understand a process in which there was a continuum of solutions to problems that were common to ‘Romans’ and ‘barbarians’, who were becoming harder and harder to distinguish. The states were both Roman and barbarian, and so, in a sense, were most of their leading members.”⁹²

The strongest factor of integration, however, was the “Catholic” church because, after the baptism of Clovis—the long discussion about the exact date need not concern us here—,⁹³ Romans and Franks began to experience a common religious unity. The epochal importance of this event has always been acknowledged and emphasized,⁹⁴ though Christianizing *the* Franks actually turned out to

⁸⁹ For such a difference, cf. still T. Bauer, “Graf/Grafio (Historisches)”, *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 12 (2nd edn., 1999) pp. 532–55, particularly p. 540.

⁹⁰ Cf. strictly in this view: A.C. Murray, “The Position of the *Grafio* in the Constitutional History of Merovingian Gaul”, *Speculum* 61 (1986) pp. 787–805.

⁹¹ Geary, *Before France and Germany*, p. 89.

⁹² W. Pohl, “The Barbarian Successor States”, *The Transformation of the Roman World A.D. 400–900*, ed. L. Webster and M. Brown (London 1997) pp. 33–47, here p. 45.

⁹³ For Clovis’s baptism cf. now A. Dierkens, “Die Taufe Chlodwigs”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 183–91. For the liturgy of baptism, see V. Saxer, “Les rites du baptême de Clovis dans le cadre de la pratique paléochrétienne”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 229–41; for its political consequences, see A. Angenendt, “Le parrainage dans le haut Moyen Âge. Du rituel liturgique au cérémonial politique”, *ibid.*, pp. 243–54.

⁹⁴ Cf. Geuenich, “Chlodwigs Alemannenschlacht(en) und Taufe”; M. Rouche,

be a long process, and it was only gradually that stricter measures against heathens were taken and began to bear fruit. Again, the baptism of Clovis had been prepared not only by his wife Chrodechilde, as Gregory wants us to believe,⁹⁵ but also by his Roman-Catholic environment, including the bishops, and we may recall the fact that Bishop Remigius of Rheims congratulated Clovis on his succession to the “throne” long before his conversion.⁹⁶ Once Clovis and his followers were converted, Christianization promoted a symbiosis of Romans and Franks, there being, at least officially, no “religious dualism” between “Catholics” and “Arians” in the Frankish kingdom, as existed in the other “Germanic” realms of that epoch, but a confessional unity. The letter of congratulation written by Bishop Avitus of Vienne after Clovis’s conversion⁹⁷ reveals that religious unity at least facilitated royal government. According to Avitus, Clovis had not really gained a new function—as stated in Remigius’s letter on the occasion of Clovis’s succession to the “throne”, there had been, or should have been, cooperation between the king and the bishops even before his conversion—, but a (religious) strengthening of his kingship: Now Clovis would not only reign *in saeculo*, but also *in caelo*; and his *rigor armorum* would be strengthened by his belief because God had chosen the Franks to be “his people”, thus giving them the task to Christianize those foreign peoples who were still living in ignorance (the *externi populi paganorum*). In 511, Clovis consequently took over responsibility for the church by commanding the bishops of his entire kingdom to gather for the council of Orleans, and the bishops themselves conceded that the king’s consent granted a higher authority to the sentences of the priests.⁹⁸ The Frankish king was always “lord” of the church and of the bishops, who were not to be consecrated without his consent (the royal “decree of

“Die Bedeutung der Taufe Chlodwigs”, *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 192–9; B. Fauvarque, “Le baptême de Clovis, ouverture du millénaire des saints”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 271–86; F. Monfrin, “La conversion du roi et des siens”, *ibid.*, pp. 289–320.

⁹⁵ Cf. C. Nolte, *Conversio und Christianitas. Frauen in der Christianisierung vom 5. bis 8. Jahrhundert*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 41 (Stuttgart 1995) pp. 72–86.

⁹⁶ *Epistolae Austrasicae* 2, ed. W. Gundlach, MGH EE 3 (Berlin 1892) p. 113.

⁹⁷ Avitus of Vienne, *Epistolae* 46, ed. R. Peiper, MGH AA 6,2 (München 1883) pp. 75–6.

⁹⁸ Letter of the bishops to Clovis: MGH Conc. 1, ed. F. Maassen (Hannover 1893) pp. 2–3. For the council of Orleans, see J. Heuclin, “Le concile d’Orléans de 511, un premier concordat?”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 435–50.

consecration").⁹⁹ According to Gregory of Tours, he alone, in his defence of one of his colleagues, who was accused before King Chilperic, dared to criticize the king. But at the same time the author admits that his warning was a moral one because he had no legal right to officially disagree with the king.¹⁰⁰ Thus, as in this case, we find at least some evidence in Gregory's statement that the bishops of the whole Frankish realm stuck together over certain issues, but far more often we get the impression that they were primarily loyal to their respective king and consequently antagonistic towards "the church" of other, hostile Merovingian kingdoms.

4. *Roman elements/ "Romanization"*: We must not neglect the fact (as has been done in the past by German historians, but is now being increasingly emphasized again) that, although the Franks were the leading group in the Frankish kingdom, not only the Christian religion, but also decisive parts of the government had been adopted (with adaptations) from the Romans. The (later) kings conferred upon themselves the title of *rex Francorum*, but at the same time they adopted Roman epithets (such as *gloriosissimus* etc.). Accordingly, Clovis's reign was widely based on Roman elements:¹⁰¹ a Roman administration,¹⁰² Roman (or Gaulish) administrative territories (*civitates* and *pagi*),¹⁰³ imperial demesnes, the fisc, the monetary system, charters, written laws and last but not least the continuity of Roman legal practices.¹⁰⁴ Finally, it should not be forgotten either that the church, too,

⁹⁹ Cf. D. Claude, "Die Bestellung der Bischöfe im merowingischen Reiche", *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung* 49 (1963) pp. 1-75; C. Servatius, "'Per ordinationem principis ordinetur'. Zum Modus der Bischofs-ernennung im Edikt Chlothars II. vom Jahre 614", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 84 (1973) pp. 1-29.

¹⁰⁰ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 5,18, pp. 219-20, for the case of Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen.

¹⁰¹ Cf. K.F. Werner, "Die 'Franken'. Staat oder Volk?", *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 95-101; E. Ewig, "Das Fortleben römischer Institutionen in Gallien und Germanien", id., *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien* 1, pp. 409-34; I.N. Wood, "Die Franken und ihr Erbe—'Translatio Imperii'", *Die Franken—Wegbereiter Europas* 1, pp. 358-64.

¹⁰² Cf. U. Nonn, "Zur Verwaltungsorganisation in der nördlichen Galloromania", *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 82-94.

¹⁰³ Cf. S.T. Loseby, "Gregory's cities: Urban functions in sixth-century Gaul", *Franks and Alamanni*, pp. 239-70; 270-84.

¹⁰⁴ For this aspect, cf. now S. Esders, *Römische Rechtstradition und merowingisches Königtum. Zum Rechtscharakter politischer Herrschaft in Burgund im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert*,

was Roman in its character and administration (and contrary to former beliefs, as an element of continuity, it probably did not even prompt a complete topographical change in the towns).¹⁰⁵ In the sixth century, the vast majority of the bishops were still Roman,¹⁰⁶ and it was only in the course of time that Frankish noblemen became bishops. Contrary to former opinions, therefore, the political system of the Franks (as of all the “Germanic” kingdoms) seemed decisively characterized by political continuity. Clovis, undoubtedly, was leader of his people, but at the same time this was a federate people that had already been integrated into the Roman Empire for a long time, and he governed his realm by measures which he took over from his Roman predecessors. This continuity derived from the integration of the barbarians into the Empire; in fact, it was only this assimilation that enabled the barbarian leaders to rule parts of it.

The continuity of Roman elements, however, did not mean that there was no change. On the contrary, it was a characteristic feature that those Roman elements on which the Frankish government was based were transformed gradually, though we can only get a sketchy impression of these changes through a comparison with later situations. While the legal tradition, for example, followed the Roman model, it was not possible to adapt the “Germanic” legal tradition completely to this model; it was not even possible to translate all the legal expressions into Latin so that the *Lex Salica* abounds with

Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 134 (Göttingen 1997), who shows, with regard to the *Praeceptum* of Chlothar II of 613, that the surviving Roman legal traditions in Burgundy not only determined human life, but were acknowledged by the kings. For the Roman origin of the *Pactus legis Salicae*, see É. Magnou-Nortier, “Remarques sur la genèse du *Pactus legis Salicae* et sur le privilège d’immunité (IV^e–VII^e siècles)”, *Clovis* 1, pp. 495–538.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. N. Gauthier, “La topographie chrétienne entre idéologie et pragmatisme”, *The Idea and Ideal of the Town Between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. G.P. Brogiolo and B. Ward-Perkins, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 4 (Leiden-Boston-Köln 1999) pp. 195–209. The same is valid for funerals and burial grounds until the seventh century, except for the funerary basilicas over the graves of martyrs; it was not until the eighth century that cemeteries were moved from the periphery and graves were regrouped around the churches; cf. A. Dierkens and P. Périn, “Death and burial in Gaul and Germania, 4th–8th century”, *The Transformation of the Roman World A.D. 400–900*, ed. L. Webster and M. Brown (London 1997) pp. 79–95, here pp. 94–5.

¹⁰⁶ For the “image” of the bishops of Aquitania, as reflected in their funeral epitaphs, see M. Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien. Zur Kontinuität römischer Führungsschichten vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert. Soziale, prosopographische und bildungsgeschichtliche Aspekte*, Beihefte der Francia 5 (Zürich-München 1976).

Germanic terms, the so-called Malberg glosses.¹⁰⁷ Again, also in the field of government, law, and administration, we find a mixture of Roman and “Germanic” elements which soon developed into an integrated whole. “Germanic” elements may have been stronger in the “inner circle” of the “royal court”, and the Franks formed the core of the royal army. As Patrick Geary puts it bluntly: the army was Frankish, the culture was Roman(ized).¹⁰⁸ On the whole, however, the Franks were as much (or even more) “Romanized” than the Romans were “Germanized”, or, as Karl Ferdinand Werner remarks: “Not the Romans who kept their Church and their law, but the Franks experienced since 500 a revolution of their way of life: the submission under the Church and the *princeps-dominus*, to whom they owed *obsequium* in their *militia*.”¹⁰⁹ Therefore, if it was mainly the Franks who were subject to changes in the Frankish kingdom, this should have affected the concept of the *gens Francorum*.

5. *Concept and Development of the Frankish “people”*: As a further approach we should, therefore, investigate the role and meaning of the Frankish *people* inside this symbiotic kingdom.¹¹⁰ “The Franks’ is a term that has no absolute meaning, but one which changes according to time or circumstance.”¹¹¹ In Merovingian times, no doubt, in spite

¹⁰⁷ Cf. R. Schmidt-Wiegand, *Stammesrecht und Volkssprache. Ausgewählte Aufsätze zu den Leges barbarorum* (Weinheim 1991); ead., “Rechtsvorstellungen bei den Franken und Alemannen vor 500”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 545–57, again tries to trace back certain legal practices of the Franks to the time before the first codification of the *Lex Salica*.

¹⁰⁸ Geary, *Before France and Germany*, p. 93.

¹⁰⁹ Werner, “Die ‘Franken’”, p. 100.

¹¹⁰ Some enlightening remarks on a “gentile” consciousness of the Franks as a *gens* are made by I. Haselbach, *Aufstieg und Herrschaft der Karlinger in der Darstellung der sogenannten Annales Mettenses priores. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Ideen im Reiche Karls des Großen*, Historische Studien 412 (Lübeck-Hamburg 1970) pp. 133–7, in regard to the early Carolingian *Annales Mettenses priores*. Cf. now H.-W. Goetz, “Zur Wandlung des Frankennamens im Frühmittelalter”, *Integration und Herrschaft. Ethische Identitäten und soziale Organisation im Frühmittelalter*, ed. M. Diesenberger and W. Pohl (Vienna 2002) pp. 133–50; id., “Gens. Terminology and Perception of the Germanic Peoples from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages”, *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. R. Corradini, M. Diesenberger and H. Reimitz (forthcoming).

¹¹¹ Thus James, *The Franks*, p. 9. For the discrepancy between the modern and early medieval understanding of a *gens* and the changing of peoples’ names, cf. M. Springer, “Geschichtsbilder, Urteile und Vorurteile. Franken und Sachsen in den Vorstellungen unserer Zeit und in der Vergangenheit”, 799—*Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn. Beiträge zum Katalog der Ausstellung Paderborn 1999*, ed. C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff (Mainz 1999) pp. 224–32.

of the widespread “Romanization” of government, language, society, learning and culture, when one considers the role of the Franks in this newly established, vast kingdom, they were (and remained) the politically leading people in this realm, to a degree that for the authors of our chronicles it was “the” Franks who acted and made decisions in all important political questions. It is mainly in this context that “Franks” were mentioned in our sources (whereas only in a few cases was a man defined as being a Frank by birth).¹¹² Although, according to corresponding formulas, a *consensus fidelium* as the right of an aristocracy to participate in the king’s policy may have been a development of Carolingian rather than of Merovingian times,¹¹³ there can be no doubt about the participation of “Frankish” freemen (or rather the leading groups among them—who again may not have necessarily been “Franks” in the narrower ethnic sense). According to the chronicles, it was the *Franzi* who elected the king or met in assemblies or courts, who concluded peace treaties or contracts¹¹⁴ or who went to war: The Franks were considered as the politically decisive group in the kingdom, together with the king. Fredegar, when speaking of certain events, has a liking for the phrase “the king and *his* Franks”.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, the Franks were distinguished from the peoples outside the Frankish realm—Gregory mentions wars and peace treaties, interventions, legations and weddings between “Franks” and members of “foreign” peoples—, whereas they were hardly ever distinguished from other peoples inside this realm. For Gregory¹¹⁶ and Fredegar,¹¹⁷ the Franks were distinguishable from Romans,

¹¹² The terms *Francus genere* or *Francus natione* are only once used in Gregory of Tours’ Histories (*Historiae* 10,2, p. 482), but three times in Fredegar’s chronicle (*Chronicon* 4,18, p. 128; 4,24, p. 130; 4,34, p. 133, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 2 [Hannover 1888]).

¹¹³ Cf. J. Hannig, *Consensus fidelium. Frühfeudale Interpretationen des Verhältnisses von Königtum und Adel am Beispiel des Frankenreiches*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 27 (Stuttgart 1982).

¹¹⁴ According to Fredegar, *Chronicon* 3,19, p. 100, for example, Gundobad, the king of the Burgundians, made peace with “the Franks”.

¹¹⁵ Cf. for example Fredegar, *Chronicon* 2,58, p. 83: *Chlodovei regis et Francis*; 3,16, p. 99; 3,30, p. 103; 4,71, p. 156; 3,21, p. 101: *cum Francis meis*.

¹¹⁶ *Goths*: Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,7, p. 50; 2,18, p. 65; 10,31, p. 531; *Romans*: 2,9, p. 53; 2,18, p. 65; 2,19, p. 65; 10,31, p. 526; *Alamanni*: 2,9, p. 56; *Burgundians*: 2,9, p. 56; 2,23, p. 69; 3,6, p. 103; *Saxons*: 2,19, p. 65; 4,14, pp. 145–6; 4,16, pp. 149–50; *Thuringians*: 3,7, pp. 103 ff.; *Bretons*: 4,4, p. 137.

¹¹⁷ *Goths*: Fredegar, *Chronicon* 2,58, p. 82, in Alaric’s war against Clovis; 3,12, p. 98: war of the *Romani et Franci* against the Goths; *Alamanni*: 3,21, p. 101: the Alamans did not find a people (*gens*), that would have helped them against the Franks;

Goths, Burgundians, Alamans, Saxons, Thuringians and Bretons. All this may indicate that the Franks were regarded as the leading class inside a kingdom which was accordingly considered to be and was named “Frankish”: *Franci* corresponded with the *regnum* of the Merovingians, or with one part of the divided kingdom.¹¹⁸ When Chlothar and Childebert made war against the Burgundians, the Franks who were subject to Theudebert (*Franci vero, qui ad eum aspiciabant*), compelled their king to join his brothers.¹¹⁹ “Franks” lived in each of the divided kingdoms which all remained and were perceived as *regna Francorum*. Consequently, *Franci* increasingly became an expression used for the whole population of the Frankish realm. The *exercitus Francorum* was collected from the whole kingdom.¹²⁰ Therefore, “*gens*, the terminology of space and royal territory were never approximately identical.” The *gens Francorum* was at the same time “gentile” and “supragentile” and “made other *gentes* appear to be their part and their counterpart at the same time”.¹²¹

Regarding the terminology and the usage of *Franci* and *Francia*, therefore, it seems that in the end, that is already by the seventh

Burgundians: 3,35–36, p. 104; *Saxons*: 2,6, p. 46; 2,45, p. 68; 3,51, p. 107; *Bretons*: 4,11, p. 127.

¹¹⁸ The ambiguity of the term “Frankish” is now strongly emphasized by Pohl, “Zur Bedeutung ethnischer Unterscheidungen”, esp. pp. 199 ff. Cf. also Goetz, “Zur Wandlung des Frankennamens”. The evidence for the use of *Franci* and *Francia* already in E. Ewig, “Volkstum und Volksbewußtsein im Frankenreich des 7. Jahrhunderts”, id., *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien* 1, pp. 231–73, esp. pp. 259–70. For the later usage of political terms, see id., “Beobachtungen zur politisch-geographischen Terminologie des Fränkischen Großreiches und der Teilreiche des 9. Jahrhunderts”, *ibid.*, pp. 323–61. For Gregory of Tours, cf. also E. James, “Gregory of Tours and the Franks”, *After Rome’s Fall. Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. A.C. Murray (Toronto-Buffalo-London 1998) pp. 51–66.

¹¹⁹ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 3,11, p. 107. Cf. *ibid.*, 4,51, p. 188: The Franks who once had obeyed the older Childebert now sent legations to Sigibert.

¹²⁰ Cf. for example Fredegar, *Chronicon* 4,73, p. 158, regarding a campaign against Spain. According to another report, however, King Dagobert levied troops from all over the *regnum Burgundiae* for a campaign against the Basks. The leaders here were clearly distinguished according to their descent: eight were *ex genere Francorum*, one was Roman, one Burgundian, one Saxon.

¹²¹ Thus Pohl, “Zur Bedeutung ethnischer Unterscheidungen”, p. 205. H. Klein-schmidt, “The Geuissae and Bede: On the Innovations of Bede’s Concept of the *Gens*”, *The Community, the Family and the Saint. Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe, Selected Proceedings of the International Medieval Congress. University of Leeds, 4–7 July 1994, 10–13 July 1995*, ed. J. Hill and M. Swan, International Medieval Research 4 (Turnhout 1998) pp. 77–102, claims that the political concept of a *gens* was a secondary, post-migrational one.

century, “Frankish” had lost much of its former ethnic connotation and referred to legal, cultural and not least to political dimensions, namely to the very kingdom of the Franks:¹²² *Franci* expanded and developed from the people(s) on the northern margins of the former Roman Empire to the inhabitants of the Frankish kingdom of the Merovingians,¹²³ though it was not until the ninth century that these meanings became prevalent.¹²⁴ Due to the growth of the Merovingian realm, its name-giving people, the Franks, gained a new meaning. This may be considered as an indication of a shift from a more or less ethnic to a political association. It may also be a sign of successful integration of peoples into the Frankish realm or, in this respect, even of a new phase in the ethnogenesis of these peoples under “Frankish” influence.¹²⁵ If the last assumption is true, by looking at the terminology of the *Franci*, we can detect here not only a decisive shift of the usage of terms, but also of the everchanging ethnogenetical process of the formation and re-formation of “the” Franks.

It is not by chance that a territorial term *Francia* was, sometimes but not frequently, used parallel to *Franci* from which it was derived. Like *Franci*, it had a double meaning, referring to the region of the Franks (as opposed, for example, to Burgundy or Aquitania) as well as to the whole kingdom. In both respects, it is evidence of an increasing territorial understanding, an interpretation that is supported by frequent expressions such as *fines*, *confinia*, *limes*, *termini*, *terra*, *regio* or *partes Francorum*. However, whereas in Merovingian times the “Franks” were most frequently associated with the whole kingdom, in the course of the ninth century they tended to become more and more restricted to the “Frankish” territories inside the realm, namely to *Francia* around the Ile-de-France in the west (that is, a territory which

¹²² Cf. P.J. Fouracre, “The Nature of Frankish Political Institutions in the Seventh Century”, *Franks and Alamanni*, pp. 285–301; 301–16. *Ibid.*, p. 297: “but what being a Frank amounted to in the seventh century, apart from claiming certain legal privileges, we cannot tell. The term ‘Frankish’ has a much wider application as the adjective derived from the kingdom of the Franks, the inhabitants of which were, of course, mostly non-Franks. It is not, therefore, a term of ethnic designation, but covers the plurality of laws and customs we have been discussing [.]”

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

¹²⁴ For the evidence from chosen authors, see Goetz, “Zur Wandlung des Frankennamens”.

¹²⁵ Cf. H.J. Hummer, “Franks and Alamanni: a discontinuous ethnogenesis”, *Franks and Alamanni*, pp. 9–21; 21–32, here p. 32.

was originally Roman[!], but the central region of the Merovingian kingdom) and, in the east, to Franconia around the river Main region (a territory that had originally been partly Alamannic, partly Thuringian or even Slavic!): By then, as it seems, the term had adopted a completely altered meaning; it had been totally separated from its “ethnic” origins and assumed a predominantly territorial connotation! Thus, in the course of the four centuries from 500 to 900, the terms *Franci* and *Francia* had changed their meanings twice: first from “people” to kingdom, and afterwards to regional territories.

6. “Gentile” or political consciousness? Finally, one of the most difficult problems of gaining some insight into Frankish “ethnicity” is the question of the existence of a conscious ethnic identity (*Stammesbewußtsein*) as an important element of ethnogenesis, of its possible changes after the establishment of the Frankish kingdom and of its relation to the structural development as well as to the terminology dealt with above. This aspect has been emphatically reiterated by Reinhard Wenskus and Herwig Wolfram, but questioned recently by Patrick Amory with regard to the Ostrogoths.¹²⁶ Since we cannot presume or discover anything like an ethnic identity before Clovis (or Gregory) beyond the term *Franci*, we consequently are not able to point to explicit changes, but have to be content with searching for indications of a consciousness of “ethnic” identity in the course of Frankish history and—this is the decisive point—of its relation to a consciousness of belonging to the same “nation” or rather the same “kingdom”. Although the Franks were perceived as a *gens* throughout the period considered here¹²⁷ (though we have to admit that *gens Francorum* is fairly seldom found in the sources),¹²⁸ the terminology

¹²⁶ P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge 1997).

¹²⁷ Cf. for example Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,12, p. 61; 6,2, p. 266; Fredegar, *Chronicon* 2,6, p. 46 (*nulla gens* was able to overwhelm the Franks); 3,9, pp. 94–5; 3,11, p. 96: *Modo est gens Francorum tuae disciplinae perdomita* (the Franks had submitted themselves under Aegidius’ reign). Cf. Goetz, “Zur Wandlung des Frankennamens”.

¹²⁸ Gregory and Fredegar do not use the term *gens Francorum* too frequently (see note 62); more often, Fredegar’s successors speak of a *gens Francorum*. Later on, cf. also *Annales regni Francorum* ad a. 787, p. 76; ad a. 811, p. 134, ed. F. Kurze, MGH SSrG 6 (Hannover 1895); *Annales Fuldenses* ad a. 841, p. 32; ad a. 873, p. 79; ad a. 884, p. 101, ed. F. Kurze, MGH SSrG 7 (Hannover 1891). According to the wording, the authors sometimes use just the term *gens* after having related an action

favours a political rather than an ethnic consciousness since the term, as has already been emphasized above, is much more frequently used with reference to the Frankish kingdom than to the people. Nevertheless, there are at least a few indications of a “gentile consciousness”. According to the famous (later) prologue to the *Pactus legis Salicae* probably dating from the late seventh or early eighth century, the Franks and their magnates (*proceres*) had come together to warrant the peace by preserving the laws.¹²⁹ This may be understood as proof of the existence of a Frankish sense of identity and a consciousness of their eminent status among (and above) “the other peoples” (*ceteris gentibus*). It is true, that in this (legal) context, the Franks were no more than just one people among others in the kingdom, but, in the concept they had of themselves, they excelled all the others by their strength (*brachium fortitudinis*) and their legal authority (*auctoritas legalis*).

It is the so-called *Origines gentium* which are usually considered as the clearest indicator of a “gentile” consciousness.¹³⁰ Thus, the famous Trojan myth, as it was passed on by Fredegar (with Priam as the first king of the Franks and, after several divisions of this people, with Francio as the first and namegiving king of a branch that wandered from Phrygia to Europe, namely to the region between the rivers Rhine and Danube), is an important factor indeed. It is significant, however, that whilst it must be granted that this legend was handed down at a fairly late period, there must have been forerunners reaching back as far as the Late Roman times of Ammianus Marcellinus. The latter reports that the inhabitants of the region near the mouth of the river Rhine (he assumed that they were Celts) may have been indigenous to that area, but according to some writers they had come there as dispersed troops after the destruction of Troy.¹³¹ It is

of “the Franks” immediately before. Cf., for example, Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,9, pp. 56–8; 8,16, p. 383 (*in gente sua*); Fredegar, *Chronicon* 3,11, p. 96; 3,22, p. 102; 4,38, p. 139; Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon* ad a. 880, ed. F. Kurze, MGH SSrG 50 (Hannover 1890) p. 116.

¹²⁹ *Lex Salica* prol., ed. K.A. Eckhardt, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 4,2 (Hannover 1969) pp. 2 ff. Cf. R. Schmidt-Wiegand, “‘Gens Francorum inclita’. Zu Gestalt und Inhalt des längeren Prologes der Lex Salica”, *Festschrift Adolf Hofmeister zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. U. Scheil (Halle 1955) pp. 233–50.

¹³⁰ Cf. H. Wolfram, “*Origo et religio*. Ethnic traditions and literature in early medieval texts”, *Early Medieval Europe* 3 (1994) pp. 19–38.

¹³¹ Amm. Marc. 15,9,3–5, vol. 1, p. 61.

even more significant that there were several myths concerning the origin of the Franks—Gregory of Tours, for example, favoured their arrival from Pannonia¹³²—and, even more remarkable, we find two different versions in Fredegar himself¹³³ which later on were both adapted and somehow “combined” by the *Liber historiae Francorum*:¹³⁴ The Franks were obviously trying to acquire a conscious identity derived from a concept of common descent and origin. They did not, however, have only one unique belief in a common origin, but were still searching for it. Moreover, the *Origines gentium* were obviously more or less scholarly constructions. What is even more interesting: nothing could display more clearly than this Trojan myth how far from being “ethnic” in our sense “ethnic thinking” was in those times: The myth proves the importance of migrations as well as of remote origins for the early medieval mind, the importance of kings (from the very beginning), the enormous relevance of belief in a common descent (*Herkunftsbewußtsein*) and the emphasis on the equality of the Franks with the Romans, both stemming from Troy—according to Fredegar, who explicitly refers to Vergil,¹³⁵ from the abolishment of Roman subjugation under Pompeius up to the present day, *nulla gens* could overwhelm the Franks.¹³⁶ At the same time, however, it shows the complete irrelevance of a “Germanic” descent.¹³⁷ It is no less significant that all these Frankish *Origines gentis*

¹³² Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,9, pp. 52–8, esp. p. 57: *Tradunt enim multi, eosdem de Pannonia fuisse degressus.*

¹³³ Fredegar, *Chronicon* 2,4–6, pp. 45–6; 3,2, p. 93.

¹³⁴ *Liber historiae Francorum* 1 and 4, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 2 (Hannover 1888) pp. 241–4: Under the sons of Priam (Marcomir) and Antenor (Sunno), the Franks went from Pannonia to *Sicambria* and further to the cities of Germania in the Lower Rhine region where they elected Faramund, the son of Marcomir, as their (long-haired) king. For these different versions, see now E. Ewig, “Troiamythos und fränkische Frühgeschichte”, *Die Franken und die Alemannen*, pp. 1–30, and H.H. Anton, “Troja-Herkunft, origo gentis und frühe Verfaßtheit der Franken in der gallisch-fränkischen Tradition des 5. bis 8. Jahrhunderts”, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 108 (2000) pp. 1–30; cf. also J. Barlow, “Gregory of Tours and the Myth of the Trojan Origins of the Franks”, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1995) pp. 86–95. For the *Liber historiae Francorum*, see R.A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford 1987) pp. 11–30.

¹³⁵ Fredegar, *Chronicon* 3,2, p. 93.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2,6, p. 46.

¹³⁷ Cf. also I.N. Wood, “Defining the Franks: Frankish Origins in Early Medieval Historiography”, *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. S. Forde, L. Johnson and A.V. Murray, Leeds Texts and Monographs. New Series 14 (Leeds 1995)

presuppose a strong relationship with the origins of kingship, as it is expressively said in the *Liber historiae Francorum: Principium regum Francorum eorumque origine vel gentium illarum ac gesta proferamus*.¹³⁸ The consciousness of an “ethnic” identity was at the same time a consciousness of a “royal” identity linking the Franks and their “long-haired kings”.¹³⁹ Again, it is not easy, and would contradict early medieval thinking, to distinguish between the “people” and the kings (or kingdoms) of the Franks.

When asking, therefore, what may be called “Frankish” in Frankish “national” identity and in Frankish political consciousness (*Reichsbewußtsein*), one finds that this phenomenon tends to be much more a collective identity of (all) the *gentes* in the Frankish kingdom, under the rulership of a name-giving *gens*, rather than a collective identity of this *gens*. It increasingly included all the realm’s peoples, as far as their *populus*, the politically influential classes, were concerned. This identity, however, concentrated on the royal dynasty. In some sources, at least, such as the early Carolingian *Annales Mettenses priores, rex, gens* and *terra* formed an indivisible unity.¹⁴⁰

IV. Conclusion

When summarizing the elements that characterize the relationship between the Frankish “people” and the Frankish kingdom, and suggesting some answers to the leading questions of this volume, we may tentatively come to the conclusion that the Frankish ethnogenesis was a long and continuous process of almost imperceptible developments, but that its progression was also subject to occasional caesuras (for example Clovis’s reign). Before Clovis, there had been kings, but neither great kingdoms nor a clearly definable, homogeneous

pp. 47–57, here pp. 50 ff. Whereas the former research emphasized the *origo*’s function of equalizing Franks and Romans, Wood regards it as an instrument to explain and strengthen the existing ties between these groups in Gaul by believing in the theory of a common descent.

¹³⁸ *Liber historiae Francorum* 1, p. 241.

¹³⁹ Due to Gregory of Tours’ inability to discern the early kings of the Franks who were initially governed by *duces* (cf. note 27 above), in his opinion the Frankish kingship was bound to the “long-haired” kings, the Merovingians, from the beginning.

¹⁴⁰ Thus Haselbach, *Aufstieg und Herrschaft*, p. 137.

people. Nevertheless there had been a *gens Francorum* before Clovis which had already been ruled by kings, though completely un-united in a political sense. It seems comparatively clear, therefore, that, on the one hand, the formation of the Frankish kingdom was not the achievement of an "established" *gens*, but of its Merovingian kings, that is, of Clovis and his successors. In the relationship of *gens* and *regnum* in the process of the development of a Frankish kingdom the central impact was a political one. "Kingdom", therefore, need not be conceived in ethnic terms¹⁴¹ whereas, after Clovis, the "Franks" were perceived as a political group. On the other hand, although the formation of the Frankish kingdom brought about enormous changes, it did not immediately constitute a new "people". At least, we lack sufficient indications that the symbiosis of Romans and Franks created a new "people", or that it "transformed" the Frankish people (or the various peoples under Frankish rule) into a new *gens* (at least not in the centuries considered here). But it obviously altered the character and gradually changed the meaning of being a Frank which increasingly denoted the members of the Frankish kingdom disregarding their "ethnic" origin (and it is almost exclusively this connotation which enables us to grasp these changes). Clovis, therefore, did not "create" the Frankish people, but he laid the foundation for a new, and different, ethnogenesis, as it was only through the expansion and unification of a "Frankish" kingdom that the *gens* (and therefore also that ethnogenesis) acquired a new dimension which was mainly political. After Clovis, there was a united kingdom (notwithstanding the partitions), with a considerable amount of integration, which survived the partitioning, although its borders included far more than the (former) Frankish people. The question, therefore, is neither how Clovis's reign changed the Frankish kingdom nor if it was only under his reign that the Frankish people came into existence, but, rather: what part this people played in the new realm, and, above all, what effect this political alteration had on the Frankish people who henceforth formed only (one) part of this kingdom. It remains extremely difficult to answer this question. It seems, however, that by royal power, with the support of other integrative forces (such as the church, Roman heritage, and a uniform administration), the many peoples in this realm, and not

¹⁴¹ Thus Beisel, *Studien zu den fränkisch-römischen Beziehungen*, p. 49.

least the Germanic and the Roman population, “grew together” within a comparatively short period of about one century into one integrative and syncretistic (political) body, in a process of considerable “ethnic syncretism”. In addition they all increasingly considered themselves as being “Franks”, a term that shifted in its significance from the members of a *gens* to the members or population of the realm. The kings obviously had a most decisive role in establishing this realm. Whereas personally the Roman—or “Greek”—Emperor had no part in it at all, it seems to have been crucial for the new kingdom that a considerable proportion of the Roman structures survived. The Frankish kings’ power was absolutely equal to that of the emperors, whereas Rome increasingly turned into a Christian myth.¹⁴² We may also recall that kingship as such, as well as the Merovingian dynasty as *stirps regia*, was completely undisputed until the eighth century. And yet at the same time, and significantly enough, through the constant divisions of this realm, under the Merovingians as well as under the Carolingians, “Frankish” unity began to dissolve. This created first, new *regna* (or, in some cases, given certain modifications, re-established older ones). Similarly, by and by, this process created new peoples within the realm or, rather, within the new kingdoms which at least in some of their aspects bore some resemblance to the original realms and peoples.

To come back to Ian Wood’s statement that has been quoted above, we may completely agree, therefore, that through Clovis, the Franks became an influential people in the wider world of politics, but possibly this is not the most important perspective. Franks, rather, became the leading people in a new realm. The formation of a new *gens*, however, was a long-term development. As long as the Frankish kingdom(s) existed, they always remained kingdoms of several peoples (under Frankish rulership), which never turned into a real “ethnic” group. They did, however, soon become a political unit whose population as a whole perceived itself as being “Frankish”, thus creating a new, political as well as territorial, meaning of this term. It was not until centuries later that they became “nations”. Before such a process could come to an end, the Frankish kingdom was divided continuously, creating different conditions respectively: first, in Merovingian times, into Neustria (with Burgundy) and Austrasia, and,

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 205.

afterwards, into the West and East Frankish kingdoms, Italy and Burgundy. And yet, even the perception of the (old) Franks developing into a new kingdom, may pertain purely to modern thinking whereas medieval authors made no sharp distinction between ethnic and political categories. It is probable that a significant shift can be ascribed to the fact that *Francus* adopted a double meaning: it could mean a Frank by birth *or* a member of the Frankish kingdom. In the east, the Franks were still only one *gens* within this realm (in Franconia) *and* the inhabitants of the East Frankish kingdom (or even of all the Frankish kingdoms). In this sense, however, being a “Frank” had become something completely different because the peoples in the Frankish kingdoms (east and west) gradually all became Franks although, at the the same time, they retained (or revived, or developed) an ethnic identity that was also politically and territorially motivated. This should be considered a significant factor in the transformation of the Roman world.

THE BRITONS: FROM ROMANS TO BARBARIANS

Alex Woolf

If the theme of this volume is to explore the development of *gentes* into *regna* then the history of the Britons in Late Antiquity has, in some senses, no place in it. Perhaps the best known fact about the Britons, from the days of Gildas (mid sixth century) to those of Llywelyn the Last († 1282), was that they were never able to unite and, through constant civil strife, allowed the Island of Britain to be eaten up by the English. Nevertheless an investigation of a portion of the former Roman West which lost its sovereignty to local magnates rather than to barbarian warlords may well prove instructive to those who might otherwise be tempted to see the establishment of Germanic *regna* as an inevitable consequence of the collapse of imperial control. Perhaps the most vexing question of the Late Antique transition on the Continent is why no Gallic or Hispanic polities ruled by native dynasties emerged. In the fifth century the activities of Didymus and Verinianus in Spain,¹ of Ecdicius among the Arverni² and of the shadowy Syagrius amongst the Suessiones,³ demonstrate that autochthonous military-political action amongst the native aristocracy of the West was not impossible but in each of these cases there were no long term polities or dynasties established.⁴ It is probably alongside such fifth century figures that we should place the British leader Ambrosius Aurelianus, the *vir modestus* whose parents “had worn the purple and were slain in it”.⁵ The commonality of experience in the various provinces of the Continental Empire is in

¹ Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* 7,40, ed. K. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna 1882; repr. Hildesheim 1967) [henceforth: Orosius].

² Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems and Letters: Epistulae* 3,3,3 ff., ed. W.B. Anderson (Cambridge Mass. 1936).

³ Gregory of Tours, *Zehn Bücher Geschichten* 2,27, ed. R. Buchner (Berlin 1955).

⁴ There is also the suggestion that independent native resistance against the Goths took place in Tarraconensis c. 470 in Isidore of Seville, *History of the Kings of the Goths* 34, transl. K.B. Wolf [*Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*] (Liverpool 1990).

⁵ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 25,3, ed. and transl. M. Winterbottom (London-Chichester 1978).

sharp contrast to the very different experiences of the British territories in which native non-imperial resistance appears to have led to the establishment of enduring *regna*.

Difficulties arise, however, when we attempt to understand the processes by which the British *regna* were established. Following the departure of the usurper Constantine for the Continent in 406/7 the narrative history of fifth-century Britain is fragmentary and obscure and can only be pieced together with the greatest difficulty. In an attempt to summarise and elucidate this narrative it is perhaps best to go through our source materials one by one.

Olympiodorus of Thebes (preserved in Sozomen and Zosimus)

Olympiodorus of Thebes was born in or around the year 380, he was an imperial official from 407 until at least 425. His *History* survives only in fragments but it is the source for two later works, the last part of Book IX of Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History* and the second half of Book V and what remains of Book VI of Zosimus' *New History*. The former was composed in the mid fifth century and the latter probably in the early sixth.⁶

The most famous passage from this body of evidence to refer to Britain is the so called "Honorian Rescript". In the midst of a passage describing the measures taken against the Goth Alaric in Italy by the Emperor Honorius, Zosimus, following Olympiodorus, writes "Honorius sending letters to the *poleis* of *Brettania* [sic] ordering them to defend themselves".⁷ It has been pointed out that Olympiodorus regularly calls Bruttium in southern Italy *Brettia* and suggested that in the context of the chapter this is what is meant here, the expansion to *Brettania* being a slip on the part of Zosimus or a copyist.⁸ E.A. Thompson argues, against this interpretation, that Bruttium is actually not much nearer Liguria and Ravenna (where our sources

⁶ See J.F. Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes and the history of the west (A.D. 407–425)", *Journal of Roman Studies* 60 (1970) pp. 79–97, and P. Bartholomew, "Fifth-century facts", *Britannia* 13 (1982) pp. 261–70. For editions see Sozomen, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. J. Bidez (Berlin 1960) and Zosimus, *Historia Nova: the decline of Rome*, ed. J.J. Buchanan and H.T. Davis (San Antonio 1967).

⁷ Zosimus, *Historia Nova* 6,10,2.

⁸ Bartholomew, "Fifth-century facts", p. 262.

place Alaric and Honorius, the protagonists in this passage) than Britain is, and that Alaric had made no effort to march south at this stage so the cities there were not under threat. Why, Thompson also asks, should Honorius address the *civitates* individually and not the provincial governor? He also cites Gildas as an independent corroborator of the reading "Britain". We should perhaps reserve judgement on this issue, which is not proven either way beyond reasonable doubt, unless further evidence is produced. The letters were sent, wherever they went, in the early summer of 410.⁹

The next passage in Zosimus we should turn to is 6,5,3, in which he writes "The barbarians above the Rhine, assaulting everything at their pleasure, reduced both the inhabitants of Britain and some of the Celtic peoples [i.e. the population of Celtica, the north-western region of Gaul] to defecting from the Roman rule and living their own lives disassociated from the Roman law. The Britons, therefore, taking up arms and fighting on their own behalf, freed the *poleis* from the barbarians who were pressing upon them: and the whole of Armorica and other provinces of Gaul, imitating the Britons, freed themselves in the same way, expelling the Roman officials and establishing a sovereign constitution on their own authority." Worried by the fact that the Britons were fighting against barbarians and the Armoricans against Romans (Constantine III's regime), Bartholomew suggested that the Greek word translated "pressing upon", *επικειμενον*, *epikeimenon*, should be read "billeted upon".¹⁰ Thompson refuted this by pointing out that Zosimus used this word at least twenty-eight times and always either impersonally as "situated upon (a river, a roof etc.)" or personally meaning "menacing", "threatening" and so forth. To summarise then, several *civitates* in Britain were simultaneously oppressed by barbarians and their defence by the local citizens was so impressive that it inspired the Armoricans *en masse*, to confront the regime that dominated Gaul and Spain. The British event was clearly not a local skirmish with a couple of boatloads of pirates. These events are dated to 409 or 410.

⁹ E.A. Thompson, "Zosimus 6.10.2 and the letters of Honorius", *Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982) pp. 445-62.

¹⁰ Bartholomew, "Fifth-century facts".

The Chronicle of 452

The *Chronicle of 452* is a difficult text. For most of the last century it was regarded as genuine and broadly accurate, if a little shaky in places, but in 1978 Molly Miller suggested that it had been seriously re-edited in the Carolingian period and that the second reference to Britain (§ 126) was an interpolation.¹¹ Four main factors effected her thesis. Firstly the re-editing of the early part of Jerome's *Chronicle*, which precedes it in all the manuscripts, secondly the usage of the term *Britanniae* which she considered anachronistic, thirdly the apparent coincidence of the date of § 126 with Bede's date for the *Adventus Saxonum* (always assumed to be calculated from Gildas), and lastly the fact that the entry apparently runs across two annals. Muhlberger and Wood have defended the veracity of the entry.¹²

Muhlberger points out that the earlier sections of Jerome had originally followed Eusebius' model of parallel *fila* relating contemporary events in different kingdoms. After the universal *imperium* of Rome emerged only one *filum* was necessary and from A.D. 70 the chronicles take on a single thread. According to Muhlberger it was the parallel columns that annoyed the Carolingian scribes and these which were removed and that editing in the latter part of the text was unnecessary and minimal. Similarly Jerome frequently spread his entries over two years, particular if they concerned processes rather than tight events.

Wood questions whether the use of *Britanniae*, probably technically anachronistic in the fifth century, really casts doubt on the authenticity of the *Chronicle* since Prosper and Constantius, both undisputed fifth-century sources, also use it, as does Saint Patrick. This, Wood argues, is Gallo-Roman literary usage not civil service jargon.¹³ Similarly Miller relates the date of § 126 with reference to a four-year Olympiad scheme, which cannot be as precise as she claims

¹¹ M. Miller, "The last British entry in the 'Gallic Chronicles'", *Britannia* 9 (1978) pp. 315–8.

¹² S. Muhlberger, "The Gallic Chronicle for 452 and its Authority for British Events", *Britannia* 14 (1983) pp. 23–33. Muhlberger's views are re-iterated and expanded in his volume *The Fifth-century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius and the Gallic Chronicle of 452* (Leeds 1990) and in I.N. Wood, "The Fall of the Western Empire and the End of Roman Britain", *Britannia* 18 (1987) pp. 251–62.

¹³ Wood, "The Fall of the Western Empire", p. 253.

and in any case has been shown to be totally unreliable within the *Chronicle of 452* (and which in the earliest, British Museum, manuscript may have been added by a later hand).¹⁴ Mommsen himself pointed this out and declared a preference for the regnal dates which Muhlberger has shown to be accurate from the death of Honorius. In regnal terms § 126 is located at 441–2 and not 445–6. This earlier date is confirmed by the *Chronicle of 511* which records the same British event as taking place under the year 440, probably indicating that we should date the event to 440/1.¹⁵

Exact dating within the *Chronicle of 452* is not perfect until after 446, events often appearing up to four years too late if they take place outside of Gaul. The author was probably based in the south of Gaul and may have been, or been connected to, Faustus abbot of Lérins (c. 433–60), later bishop of Riez, himself a Briton.¹⁶ It can be assumed with some certainty that the event cannot be predated by much, if at all, as many have argued, for the piece was written in 452 and no chronological errors occur after 446. Almost certainly the event can be secured to within the previous decade. The entry reads: “The Britains [sic], having up to this time suffered various defeats and catastrophes, were reduced to Saxon rule.” One other entry, § 62, refers to Britain; dated to 408–9 it reads: “The Britains devastated by an incursion of the Saxons”. So early in the *Chronicle* its date cannot alone be trusted but since it is linked with the Suevi and Vandal invasions of Gaul and Spain and with Constantine’s usurpation it is usual to identify this event with the coming of the barbarians whom Zosimus and, one assumes, Olympiodorus have oppressing the *poleis* of Britain in 409. Whatever the truth of this equation it is unlikely to be more than five years out.

In 1988 Jones and Casey produced a lengthy paper in which they claimed to explain all the major chronological lapses of the *Chronicle* and to prove that all the interpolated material was incidental to the annals themselves.¹⁷ They then attempted to claim a chronological

¹⁴ M.E. Jones and P.J. Casey, “The Gallic Chronicle Restored: A Chronology for the Anglo-Saxon Invasions and the End of Roman Britain”, *Britannia* 19 (1988) pp. 367–98.

¹⁵ Wood, “The Fall of the Western Empire”, pp. 255–6.

¹⁶ I.N. Wood, “Continuity of calamity?: the constraints of literary models”, *Fifth-century Gaul: a crisis of identity*, ed. J.F. Drinkwater and H. Elton (Cambridge 1992) pp. 9–18, here p. 14.

¹⁷ See note 14.

precision which seems a little too optimistic. They conclude their thesis with a fatal and erroneous assumption: “the Saxon *adventus* and settlement were clearly earlier than the dates presented by Bede or inferred from Gildas. The British defeat appears surprisingly compressed in time, catastrophic [. . .]”. What they have forgotten is that their chronicler wrote all this only in 452, and that the long period covered by the narrative of Gildas leaves plenty of opportunity for a British recovery subsequent to that date, indeed *De Excidio* 24 seems to describe just such a period of Saxon dominion preceding the recovery which led to the British victory of *Mons Badonicus*.¹⁸

Jones’ and Casey’s confidence in the source and of their ability to amend of scribal errors has been questioned by Burgess.¹⁹ The two separate hands that they saw in the British Museum manuscript are denied as is the primacy of that manuscript. Burgess’s bottom line is that the *Chronicle*’s errors are real and original and not the result of either scribal bungling or unsympathetic modern editing.²⁰ With regard to the two “Saxons in Britain” entries Burgess suggests that the first, being so distant in time from the author is not reliable and conflates the British revolt of c. 409, which he thinks of as a loss of Britain by Rome, with the beginning of the Saxon wars which led to the event recorded in c. 441. Because in most of the West the loss of a province to Rome was the result of barbarian invasion the chronicler, we are told, assumed this to be the case in Britain. The second entry, § 126, he is convinced is correct, backed up as it is by the *Chronicle of 511* (“The Britains, deserted by the Romans, fall under the authority of the Saxons”), and being located only eleven years before the compilation of the *Chronicle of 452*, clearly within living memory. Burgess, however, avoids the certitude of Jones and Casey and prefers to state, wisely in my view, that in 452 it was believed, in southern Gaul, that Britain had fallen to the Saxons about ten years previously.

¹⁸ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 25.

¹⁹ R.W. Burgess, “The Dark Ages Return to Fifth-Century Britain: the ‘restored’ Gallic Chronicle exploded”, *Britannia* 21 (1990) pp. 185–95.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Gildas

We must now examine the value of Gildas' *De Excidio Britanniae* as a witness to fifth-century events and to the extent of Saxon military activity in the fifth century. The text of *De Excidio* appears to carry no clear dating information and we do not know when it was composed. One statement is clear, however, that Gildas was born in the same year as the siege of Mons Badonicus which was almost the last battle in the war between the Saxons and the Britons which he records.²¹ Wherever one wishes to date either his authorship, or Badonicus, it is an inescapable conclusion that his parents' generation was at its prime at the time of the closing stages of the conflict. His reliability as a source thus rests upon the length of the war before Mons Badonicus. If it was five years he will have grown up surrounded by eye witnesses who will have been able to give him all sorts of information (perhaps not technical strategic details but those are not our concern) if the war went on for more than fifty years then we might become very sceptical of his account of the early stages. What we must not do, however, is to use his poor knowledge of much earlier events, the Roman Walls, Boudica and even Magnus Maximus to devalue his knowledge of the more recent past. Gildas could easily have been reliably informed of events stretching back twenty or thirty years before Badon and possibly have had quite a good idea of what things were like before that. Gildas is not a precise historian, he makes no claims to be, but for the thirty or forty years before his birth he has every right to be relied upon, partly because he is claiming no precision.

Unfortunately, without anchor dates we cannot tell how long the war was. Gildas clearly says, however, that "the fire of vengeance, justly kindled by former crimes, spread from sea to sea, fed by the hands of our enemies in the East, and did not cease until, destroying the neighbouring towns and lands, it reached the other side of the island and dipped its red and savage tongue in the western sea".²² Although much of the way in which he describes the brutality of the Saxon onslaught is obviously rhetorical he clearly states twice in this sentence that they overran the country from coast to coast and

²¹ Ibid.

²² Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 24.

elsewhere, with reference to fleeing bishops and overseas refugees it is apparent he is not describing a local phenomenon.

Discussion of the sources

Admittedly the source material for the Saxon invasions of Britain is spread pretty thinly, but it is consistent. Each of our sources views the Saxon invasions as national calamities. It is true that we are not talking about a *coup d'état* of the sort executed by the Goths in Italy, but it is clear that most people in most parts of the country must have felt threatened by them. They were no mere raids by a couple of ship loads. Gildas' account of the first Saxons arriving in "three keels" appear to be folkloric and, in any case, in the next sentence he says that they were immediately followed by "a larger company of [Germania's] wolfish offspring".²³ An apt Continental parallel might be the Suevi who entered Gaul and Spain in 406. Unlike the Goths in Italy or Clovis' Franks they did not seize the imperial administration but rampaged about the provinces living from plunder.

The evidence of these sources is evidence for warfare and should not be confused with the separate issue of Germanic settlement or Germanicization of indigenous communities—these are three very distinct processes. One wonders what definite archaeological evidence survives of the Suevic campaigns in Spain, or even the far more settled Goths in Aquitaine. These points have been raised by Sims-Williams, who also stresses the distinction between conquest and settlement and argues in support of a literal reading of the *Gallic Chronicles*.²⁴

The appeal to Aëtius, "thrice consul", cited in § 20 of *De Excidio*, is often used to date Gildas' narrative and it formed the basis of Bede's computation, how does it fit in with the evidence presented here? Gildas claims that the Saxons were invited in only after Aëtius failed to send help but clearly, if the Saxons were already in the

²³ Ibid. 23. See P. Sims-Williams, "Gildas and the Anglo-Saxons", *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 6 (1983) pp. 1–30, for a discussion of the folkloric nature of the "three keels" episode.

²⁴ Ibid.

dominant position by 441, as the *Gallic Chronicles* appear to imply, then there is a fault in Gildas' narrative if it demands that the Saxons did not arrive until after 446 (the year of Aëtius' third consulship). Earlier it was argued that it was his lack of any attempt at precision that guaranteed Gildas' usefulness. At this point, in his only attempt to quote from a recent historical document, he slips up. Aëtius became consul for the third time in 446 and was murdered in 454, so the letter, addressed to "Aëtius, thrice consul" must date to this period, when the Britons ought to be "under the authority of the Saxons".

Patrick Sims-Williams has suggested a solution. Gildas is quoting a real document from c. 450, but his contextualising of it is not correct.²⁵ In the last century both Skene²⁶ and Thurneysen²⁷ had held that the nameless barbarians of the letter must have been the Saxons, on the basis of the *Gallic Chronicles*, and that Gildas had misplaced the letter. Sims-Williams restated that position, arguing that the description of the Britons being caught between the barbarians and the sea fits much better with conflict with the Saxons than with the northern barbarians. For our current purpose we should note that the letter to Aëtius is addressed *gemitus Britannorum*, or possibly *Britanniarum*; the "sigh of the Britons [or Britains]." A national appeal in the face of a national threat that required the desperate remedy of surrendering national independence, which is what Aëtius' expedition would have meant if it had come off.

Taking all the sources together we are left with the impression of a national war c. 410, a Saxon conquest in c. 441 and a war of resistance (which the archaeological evidence might suggest extended to c. 520), with an appeal to the *Magister Militias per Gallias* in the middle of it.

²⁵ P. Sims-Williams, "The settlement of England in Bede and the *Chronicle*", *Anglo-Saxon England* 12 (1983) pp. 1–41.

²⁶ W.F. Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales containing the Cymric poems attributed to the bards of the sixth century*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh 1868) pp. 35–7.

²⁷ R. Thurneysen, "Wann sind die Germanen nach England gekommen?", *Englische Studien* 22 (1896) pp. 163–79.

Tentative historical narrative

An attempt to pull all the surviving narratives together makes most sense if we recall that Gildas believed Magnus Maximus to be the last Emperor to rule in Britain.²⁸ Keeping this in mind we are in a position to accept that much of his “post-Roman” history may actually have occurred between 388 and 409. We know that Gildas used Orosius whose narrative continued up to the time of Constantine III and included an account of the raising up and murder of the British usurpers Marcus and Gratianus in 405–6,²⁹ and it is possible that he summarises it in his own account of the raising up and as quickly casting down of usurpers he describes as the first *post-Roman* stage of British history.³⁰ Since we have seen from our Continental sources that there were Saxons in Britain as early as c. 409 when the Britons rebelled against Constantine it seems that we could most easily reconcile them with Gildas’ narrative by presuming that the tyrant who invited the Saxons in was in fact Constantine III. Gildas refers to this tyrant (not identified with Vortigern until Bede’s day) as *infausto tyranno*³¹—ill-fated tyrant—which suggests that he knew that this ruler was to come to a sticky end.³²

Such a short chronology would also help to solve the problem of Ambrosius Aurelianus. We are told that his parents had worn the purple and been slain in the previous anarchy and that he was a Roman. Both Marcus and Gratianus had assumed the imperial title and are thus candidates for his paternity.³³ Ambrosius may then be taken as the leader of the uprising of 409 and the liberator of the British *poleis*. A long period of warfare may be presumed to have followed in which the Saxons had obtained the upper hand by the 440s, prompting the appeal to Aëtius, with some kind of peace finally emerging in the first quarter of the sixth century. Unfortunately, a short chronology of this sort, putting Ambrosius into the first quar-

²⁸ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 15,2.

²⁹ Orosius 7,40.

³⁰ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 21,4.

³¹ *Ibid.* 23,4.

³² Cf. the account of Constantine’s demise in Orosius 7,42.

³³ Marcus may be the better candidate for two reasons. Firstly we are told that he was a Roman whilst Gratian was a Briton and Gildas describes Ambrosius as a Roman and secondly because the name Marcus in late Antiquity was frequently paired with Aurelius.

ter of the fifth century, leaves us with even less evidence for the development of political structures between his day and that of Gildas writing, it is presumed, in the mid sixth century.

The “sub-Roman” period

Moving from fifth-century events to the processes of kingdom formation we are forced to re-focus our attention on the sixth century which appears to be a very different world from the Roman West of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. The world Gildas wrote in is one illuminated almost entirely by his own text, by epigraphic evidence and by the preservation of contemporary elements in much later texts (be it poetry or charter material), the veracity of which is hotly debated by scholars. The leap from Roman Britain, often presumed to be well understood, to this “Celtic Heroic Age” has proved to be a gymnastic feat which has defeated the most tenacious of scholars. One question that has perhaps not been investigated as deeply as it should is whether or not the concept of a homogenous “sub-Roman” culture is truly valid. Within the Roman period there is an oft-noted, though somewhat simplistic dichotomy drawn between a “civil”, “lowland” zone and a “military”, “highland” zone, the latter largely in the North and West and the former in the South and East. Its continuity into the post-Roman period, when a lazier dichotomy between the British and English zones of the island seems more natural has rarely been investigated.

Cultural division in “sub-Roman” Britain

This “highland” and “lowland” zone division is, however, recognisable in the post-Roman period, even within the British controlled parts of the island. About two hundred and forty-two inscribed stones survive from western Britain which have been dated, on palaeographic grounds, to between A.D. 400 and 700 (or, less cautiously, between 450–650). Twenty-eight of these are bilingual inscriptions in Primitive Irish and Latin and the rest simply in Latin.³⁴ These

³⁴ M.A. Handley, *The Inscribed Charters of Early Medieval Wales* (unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, University of Cambridge 1995) pp. 1–2.

monuments are, perhaps, the most characteristic landscape feature surviving from Late Antiquity in this region. The period during which these inscribed stones were being erected coincides fairly exactly with the period in which so called “pagan” Anglo-Saxon burials of various sorts were taking place in the east of the country.

If one plots the distribution of inscribed stones against the distribution of “pagan” Anglo-Saxon burials one is left with a broad band of territory in which neither class of site is found, running north from the stretch of coast between Dartmoor and the Hampshire Avon,³⁵ comprising east and north Devon, most of Dorset and Somerset, most of Gwent and a large part of Glamorgan, western Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, much of Powys, Shropshire, most of Worcestershire, Cheshire and most of Staffordshire and Derbyshire as well as most of the north of England outside of East Yorkshire. In addition to this broad band one might, tentatively, add the area immediately north and north-east of London.³⁶ The extreme south of Scotland contains a few inscribed stones with one or two outliers in the far north of England.³⁷ There are of course a few stones and burials, such as the Maiden Castle warrior-burial, which lie outside the main distribution.³⁸

While a large part of what had been the “lowland” or “civil” zone seems to have fallen under the political control of Germanic-speaking groups with their distinctive burial practices, the boundary between those parts of this zone which remained in British hands and the “highland” or “military” zone seems to have been marked by the transition between the regions in which the inscribed stone tradition took root and that in which it did not.

Interestingly, this division seems to be reflected in our one literary source for the period, the *De Excidio Britanniae* of Gildas. *De Excidio*

³⁵ There is, however, a small group of late stones at Lady St. Mary’s, Wareham (see D. Hinton, “The Inscribed Stones in Lady St Mary Church, Wareham”, *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* 114 [1992] p. 260, and B.A.E. Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* [London 1995] pp. 69–72), to which we shall return later.

³⁶ K.R. Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom* (Leicester 1994) pp. 86–9.

³⁷ C. Thomas, “The Early Christian Inscriptions of Southern Scotland”, *Glasgow Archaeological Journal* 17 (1992) pp. 1–10; K.R. Dark, “A sub-Roman defence of Hadrian’s Wall?”, *Britannia* 22 (1992) pp. 111–20.

³⁸ A. Meaney, *A Gazetteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* (London 1964) p. 81 n. 602.

takes the form of a letter addressed by Gildas to the leaders of British society, possibly modelled on the speech attributed to the deacon Stephen at his trial before the Sanhedrin in *Acts* 7.³⁹ This letter attributes the decline of British national fortunes to its recipients' poor leadership and sinful personal lives. It almost certainly dates from the mid-sixth century.⁴⁰ Gildas' lament is addressed to the secular and ecclesiastical leaders of the Britons, but the only individuals amongst his audience whom he names are five kings. The kings named are, in order, Constantinus, Aurelius Caninus, Vortiporix, Cuneglasus and Maglocunus.⁴¹ Various attempts have been made to identify these kings both with figures recorded in later Welsh pedigrees and legends and with territories. An element of consensus has emerged and the most scholarly summary of this remains David Dumville's "Gildas and Maelgwn".⁴²

Constantinus is specifically stated to be "the usurping whelp of the foul lioness of Damnonia".⁴³ "Damnonia", here, is usually taken to be the Dumnonian *civitas* or its successor state, and this Constantine may be the Custennin Gorneu ("of Cornwall") of later Welsh tradition⁴⁴ and perhaps the Custennin who appears in various pedigrees to have been the son of one Cynfawr,⁴⁵ who in turn may be the "Quonomorus" mentioned in Wrmonoc's ninth-century *Life of Paul Aurelian* and in the, possibly seventh-century, *Vita Samsonis*.⁴⁶

Aurelius Caninus, the second king, bears an entirely Latin name but Jackson has argued that the "caninus" part is a Latinizing pun on a British name formed of the element *cuno-* "hound".⁴⁷ Converting this to Latin, Jackson argued, allowed Gildas to play on the negative associations that dog imagery has in the Bible, in contrast to the positive associations of hound imagery in traditional Celtic society.

³⁹ R. Gardner, "Gildas' New Testament Models", *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 30 (1995) pp. 1–12.

⁴⁰ D.N. Dumville, "Gildas and Maelgwn: problems of dating", *Gildas: New Approaches*, ed. id. and M. Lapidge (Woodbridge 1984) pp. 51–60.

⁴¹ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 28–36, discussed by K.H. Jackson, "Varia II: Gildas and the names of the British Princes", *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 3 (1982) pp. 30–40.

⁴² See note 40.

⁴³ Translation from Jackson, "Varia II", p. 30.

⁴⁴ *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*, ed. R. Bromwich (Cardiff 1978) pp. 314–5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 355–60.

⁴⁶ Both *vitae* are edited in *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae*, ed. A.W. Wade-Evans (Cardiff 1944).

⁴⁷ Jackson, "Varia II", p. 31.

Jackson followed, albeit cautiously, by Dumville, identified the underlying British name as Cunignos, which would give Middle Welsh Cynin.⁴⁸ This choice is informed largely by the presence of *i* as the second vowel in Gildas' form, but as this spelling is constrained by the requirements of the Latin then an alternative "Cynan" is also possible. A Cynin and a Cynan both appear in approximately the correct place in the pedigrees of ninth century kings of Powys. Cynin appears in the pedigree of Hesselis in Harley Genealogy 23 [henceforth: HG], and Cynan in the pedigree of Cynan ap Cadell in HG 27.⁴⁹

The extent of Powys has varied greatly over the last fourteen-hundred years. The modern county, created in 1974, bears little relationship to any of its medieval incarnations. The kingdom disappeared in the ninth century, conquered first by Mercia⁵⁰ before being absorbed by Gwynedd, as Mercia herself succumbed to the Great Army later in the century.⁵¹ Powys reappeared as a kingdom in the final years of the eleventh century when Cadwgan ap Bleddyn divided Gwynedd with his cousin Gruffudd ap Cynan, but this kingdom bore little resemblance to its predecessors.⁵² Locating Powys, or at least the dynasty of the Cadelling, in Late Antiquity is no less fraught, but it seems likely to have been centred upon the valley of the Dee.⁵³

Vorteporix is the easiest of the kings to locate. Gildas explicitly calls him tyrant of the Demetae (the people of Dyfed),⁵⁴ and not only does someone of this name appear in the Demetian pedigree in about the right generation,⁵⁵ but a memorial stone in primitive Irish and Latin commemorating a "Vorteporix" survives at Castell Dwyran, near Carmarthen.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ Dumville, "Gildas and Maelgwn", pp. 56–7.

⁴⁹ *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, ed. P.C. Bartrum (Cardiff 1966).

⁵⁰ *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 822, ed. J. Morris (Chichester 1980).

⁵¹ W. Davies, *Patterns of Power in Early Wales* (Oxford 1990) pp. 34–5.

⁵² *Brut y Tywysogion or the Chronicle of the Princes. Peniarth MS 20 Version* s.a. 1097–99, ed. T. Jones (Cardiff 1952); *Brut y Tywysogion or the Chronicle of the Princes. Red Book of Hergest Version* s.a. 1097–99, ed. T. Jones (Cardiff 1955).

⁵³ The full arguments for this location would be too digressive at this stage. I hope to publish them elsewhere.

⁵⁴ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 31.

⁵⁵ *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, p. 4.

⁵⁶ V.E. Nash-Williams, *Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (Cardiff 1950) p. 107 n. 138.

The fourth king addressed by Gildas is the most problematic. The name Cuneglasus would give the Middle Welsh “Cynlas”.⁵⁷ According to HG 3 there was a Cynlas who was a first cousin of Maglocunus⁵⁸ (see below), but, since he would seem to be a dynastic rival of Maglocunus who is himself addressed by Gildas in terms which suggest that he has overthrown rivals (one explicitly his father’s brother),⁵⁹ it is hard to imagine the two ruling together.⁶⁰ Dumville has suggested that Cynlas’ descendants may have originally ruled a kingdom in north-east Wales which was clearly separate from Gwynedd (Maglocunus’ kingdom), based on Rhos (the area between the Conwy and the Clwyd), and that they falsified their pedigree to create a descent from the progenitor of the Gwynedd dynasty (Maglocunus’ grandfather Einion Yrth) when they seized the kingship of Gwynedd in the late eighth century.⁶¹ Charles Thomas has suggested that Cuneglasus, since he appears between Vortiporix and Maglocunus in Gildas’ text, must have been located between them geographically. He suggests that Ceredigion, on the west coast of Wales, might be the appropriate location for him.⁶² The existence of a sixth-century polity coterminous with eighth-century Ceredigion seems unlikely, however, given that the southern part of the kingdom seems, on the basis of a very high density of bilingual Irish and Latin inscriptions, to have been part of whatever unit the “Irish” zone of western Dyfed fell into, while north of the river Aeron, which bisects Ceredigion, Irish inscriptions are completely absent.⁶³

The last of Gildas’ kings, Maglocunus, has been identified since the early middle ages with the Venedotian dynast Maelgwn the Tall and not even the sceptical Professor Dumville seems inclined to challenge this identification. Gildas refers to Maglocunus as “Dragon of the Island”⁶⁴ and later traditions firmly link him with Anglesey and its immediate environs.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ Jackson, “*Varia II*”, pp. 32–3.

⁵⁸ *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, p. 10.

⁵⁹ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 33.4.

⁶⁰ Dumville, “Gildas and Maelgwn”, p. 58.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58–9.

⁶² C. Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to A.D. 500* (London 1981) p. 251.

⁶³ C. Thomas, *And Shall these Mute Stones Speak* (Cardiff 1994) pp. 89–112; Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom*, p. 83.

⁶⁴ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 33.

⁶⁵ *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*, pp. 437–41.

The purpose of this digression on the identification of Gildas' kings has been to make the point that the rulers he addresses occupy those territories which are characterised archaeologically by the presence of Class I inscribed stones. Within southern Britain the only region with a concentration of stones whose ruler he does not appear to address is the tiny land-locked realm of Brycheiniog. At the same time Gildas addresses by name no rulers of any of the other regions which seem to have remained under British control during the sixth century but which do not have significant concentrations of Class I stones; that is to say, central and south-eastern Wales and western England.

Apart from concentrations of stones around Whithorn and Kirkmadrine, which may bear witness to direct contacts with Gaul and stand somewhat outside the Class I tradition, there are very few Class I stones in the North.⁶⁶ The most northerly Class I stone is the Catstane at Edinburgh Airport and the most southerly at Chesterholm (Vindolanda) on the Stanegate, but all the others lie between the Lammermuir/Lowther watershed and the line of Hadrian's Wall. Since Vindolanda was part of the Wall complex it is probably safe to conclude that here too the distribution of Class I stones coincides with the "military" zone. One point worth noting is the absence of any Class I stones from Lancashire, the Pennines or the Lake District, probably all regions controlled by Britons into the seventh century and traditionally viewed by Romanists as part of the "military" or "highland" zone.

The implications of this analysis for the present study should be to alert us to the fact that there were two kinds of Britons in Late Antiquity. Most of the territory conquered by Germanic-speaking groups prior to the ninth century was occupied at the time of conquest by the "lowland", "civil" British, who did not erect inscribed stone memorials and who did not possess kings who were either addressed by Gildas or whose deeds were remembered in Welsh poetry. One must be aware that it is not simply the fact of their disappearance that led them to be forgotten, for the kings of the Old North were remembered in Wales and, indeed, were the ideal models of heroic kingship.⁶⁷ This may suggest that kings, and by

⁶⁶ C. Thomas, *Whithorn's Christian beginnings* (Whithorn 1992) and cf. note 35.

⁶⁷ K.H. Jackson, "The Britons of Southern Scotland", *Antiquity* 29 (1955) pp. 77–

extension *regna*, analogous to those of Wales, Dumnonia and the Old North, did not exist in the “lowland” zone. Indeed the different kind of relationship between Angles and Britons in Bernicia, with more emphasis on British ideas and culture influencing the incomers, postulated, on the basis of archaeological and geographical evidence, by modern scholars, may owe something to the different nature of the Britons encountered in this region.⁶⁸

The lowland British have proved notoriously difficult to identify in the archaeological record. The main problem in identifying and quantifying their material remains is that while the bulk of the population seems, in terms of agrarian and domestic practice, to have continued to enjoy fourth-century life-styles, coinage and mass-produced ceramics, the cornerstones of Romano-British chronology, ceased to circulate in Britain, or at least to be produced.⁶⁹ The lowland British are best known from cemetery evidence. The dominant mortuary rite continued late Roman practice and comprised extended inhumation accompanied by few or no grave goods.⁷⁰ There is little evidence for social stratification within these cemeteries even though some of them are very large; Cannington, in Somerset, for example is thought to contain some two thousand burials, only a quarter of which have been excavated, dating from the second to the eighth century.⁷¹ Further east similar cemeteries are also known, though they rarely seem to have stayed in use so late. At Queensford Farm, near Dorchester-on-Thames, a cemetery, also containing about

88; L. Alcock, “*Gwyr y Gogledd*: an archaeological appraisal”, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 132 (1983) pp. 1–18.

⁶⁸ For this mixed culture see P.H. Sawyer, *From Roman Britain to Norman England* (London 1978) pp. 88–91; L. Alcock, *Economy, Society and Warfare Among the Britons and Saxons* (Cardiff 1987) pp. 264–6; R. Miket, “A re-statement of evidence for Bernician Anglo-Saxon burials”, *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries 1979: the fourth Anglo-Saxon Symposium at Oxford*, ed. P.A. Rahtz, T. Dickinson and L. Watt (Oxford 1980) pp. 289–305.

⁶⁹ Ken Dark (*Civitas to Kingdom*, pp. 200–6) suggests that the coinage in circulation in the first quarter of the fifth century would have been sufficient to maintain a partially monetarised economy for several generations thereafter. This is an unorthodox view, but if proved right would mean that many occupation sites dated to the fourth or early fifth centuries on the basis of coinage might well have continued into a much later period.

⁷⁰ P.A. Rahtz, “Celtic Society in Somerset, A.D. 400–700”, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 30 (1982) pp. 176–200, here p. 187.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

two thousand graves, was in use from the late fourth to, at least, the mid-sixth centuries, and perhaps even into the seventh.⁷²

The other major archaeological phenomenon associated with the lowland British is the re-occupation of Iron Age hill-forts;⁷³ most famously South Cadbury⁷⁴ and Cadbury-Congresbury.⁷⁵ Many of these sites had remained in some kind of use through the Roman period, but this was mainly of a ritual nature.⁷⁶ In the fifth and sixth centuries refortification took place and domestic occupation was re-established. At the larger sites, including the two just mentioned, imported Mediterranean pottery has been recovered. The re-emergence of hill-fort settlement coincides with the disappearance of evidence for occupation on *villa* sites and it is fairly safe to assume that the former replaced the latter as centres of elite residence, albeit for a more restricted elite.⁷⁷ It is not clear, however, that the adoption of such sites should be seen as a conscious militarization of the elite rather than as part of a simple desire for greater personal security and the appropriation of dominant places within the landscape.⁷⁸ One should certainly be cautious of crying “continuity” from the Iron Age; reoccupation after several hundred years of abandonment as residence sites may reflect conscious archaism but this is not the same as continuity.⁷⁹ Whilst the *villa*, an Italianate country house, symbolised its owners’ links to the affluent, yet remote, society in which the god-like emperor and the imperial court existed, the hill-fort served as a cruder reminder of exactly what the sources of social power were.

What can be said with some conviction is that urban life certainly came to an end at some point in the fifth century: although some occupation of town sites may have continued this occupation was

⁷² R.A. Chambers, “The Late- and Sub-Roman Cemetery at Queensford Farm, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxon.”, *Oxoniensia* 52 (1987) pp. 35–69.

⁷³ A.S. Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain* (London 1989) p. 179.

⁷⁴ L. Alcock, *Cadbury Castle, Somerset: the Early Medieval Archaeology* (Cardiff 1995).

⁷⁵ P.A. Rahtz, *Cadbury-Congresbury 1968–73: a Late/Post Roman Hilltop Settlement in Somerset* (Oxford 1992).

⁷⁶ P.A. Rahtz and L. Watt, “The End of Roman Temples in the West of Britain”, *The End of Roman Britain*, ed. P.J. Casey, British Archaeological Reports, British series 71 (Oxford 1979) pp. 183–210.

⁷⁷ Esmonde Cleary, *Ending of Roman Britain*, p. 158.

⁷⁸ Cf. Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom*, pp. 40–44.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

not urban in character. At Wroxeter⁸⁰ and Verulamium large timber structures do seem to have been built in the mid- to later fifth century, but these seem to have been the dwellings of high status individuals,⁸¹ perhaps using the enclosed urban area much as some of their contemporaries used the ancient hill-fort ramparts. With the disappearance of towns and coinage, craft specialisation and mass production also came to an end.

Circumstantial evidence for the character of “sub-Roman” British material culture can be found in Ireland. As long ago as 1950 Hugh Hencken drew attention to the Romano-British character of many of the finds from Lagore crannog.⁸² This artificial island was the chief residence of the kings of Southern Brega and its initial phase of construction has been dated through documentary references, radio-carbon and the presence of E-ware to the mid-seventh century. Lloyd Laing reviewed the evidence for the “Romanization of Ireland” in 1985. He argued that while some of the influences may date back to the fourth century, others probably reflect continued links into the post-Roman period. The pursuit of late Romano-British influences upon Irish metalworking styles, particularly with reference to penannular brooches, has been taken up by Ragnall Ó Floinn.⁸³ He argues convincingly for a transmission of first artefacts and then skills from the middle and lower Severn region to Mag Brega and thence a secondary spread into the rest of the Gaelic World. This Irish evidence suggests that forms of material culture which cannot be demonstrated to have continued in production in Britain beyond the beginning of the fifth century, due to the absence of datable associations, may indeed have continued in production into the sixth and seventh centuries.

Turning to documentary sources there is very little that survives relating to the lowland zone. A potentially useful, yet very complex,

⁸⁰ R. White and P. Barker, *Wroxeter: the Life and Death of a Roman City* (Stroud 1998).

⁸¹ Esmonde Cleary, *Ending of Roman Britain*, p. 153.

⁸² H. Hencken, “Lagore: a royal residence of the seventh to tenth centuries”, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* (C) 42 (1950) pp. 1–76, here pp. 15–6. Cf. E. Rynne, “An important seventh-century sword from Co. Roscommon”, *Journal of the Old Athlone Society* 2 (1985) pp. 148–51.

⁸³ R.Ó Floinn, “Artefacts in Context: personal ornament in early medieval Ireland—a case study” (paper presented at the Society of Medieval Archaeology Conference *Expressions of Cultural Identity*, April 1997 Glasgow).

group of sources are the collections of “charters” from south-east Wales, principally those preserved in the *Liber Landavensis*, which record land grants to various churches between the mid-sixth and the late eleventh centuries.⁸⁴ The text is a complicated one and Wendy Davies has identified at least six separate stages of copying of the early charter material after its original composition, which, in turn, may well have taken place at as many as nine separate centres.⁸⁵ The absolute veracity of the material from the early charters is therefore doubly in doubt. Firstly, the final collection was made as part of a political campaign by Bishop Urban of Llandaff to establish the superiority of his see in the mid-twelfth century, and thus the motivation to produce fraudulent documents, or to amend existing ones, was certainly there.⁸⁶ Secondly, six redactions allow plenty of opportunity for scribal error or innocent, but inauthentic, clarification to alter the text considerably. This said, there is still enough evidence within the extant texts, such as archaic spelling of names, Latin usage appropriate to Late Antiquity and so forth, to suggest that real documents, perhaps even a handful dating to the sixth century, do lie behind the twelfth-century text. While some scholars⁸⁷ would be more cautious than Davies in identifying precisely what is archaic most would agree that the witness borne by these texts is, nevertheless, valuable.

For the present purpose, we need not concern ourselves with questions of the absolute accuracy of individual land grants, but need only look at some of the general distinguishing features which mark out the material purporting to come from Late Antiquity from that belonging to later periods. First of all we should note that before the mid- to late seventh century there was no centralised kingdom, but instead the territory of the old Silurian *civitas* was shared between “a number of minute kingdoms” in which “[k]ingship was sometimes shared between sons, and very occasionally cousins, [. . .] but

⁸⁴ W. Davies, *The Llandaff Charters* (Aberystwyth 1979).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 23–8.

⁸⁶ J.R. Davies, “*Liber Landavensis*: Its Date and the Identity of its Editor”, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 35 (1998) pp. 1–12.

⁸⁷ E.g. P. Sims-Williams, “Review of W. Davies, *The Llandaff Charters*”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982) pp. 124–9, and Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom*, pp. 140–8. It should be noted that Sims-Williams (pers. comm.) claims that his original review was not intended to be as negative as Dark and others seem to have believed.

these do not appear to have been associated with any exclusively defined territories".⁸⁸ Another feature of the early period, defined by Davies as pre-740, is the large size of the land-grants, these being "of the order of 500–1,000 acres".⁸⁹ From c. 760 to the eleventh century there were only six grants larger than two-hundred and fifty acres. Up to the early eighth century estates were termed *agri*, after about 720 the term *villae* and its Welsh equivalent *trefi* are used.⁹⁰ Davies also points out that whilst many of the *villae* can be traced in the medieval and modern settlement patterns the *agri* have left no trace on the landscape. Davies has some further interesting comments to make:

As I have indicated above, there were nearly always several kings. The political organisation engendered was of an unusual type, for there was little to suggest that these kings had any governmental function, any responsibility for law and order, or any role in arbitration. The kings appear to have treated the kingship as property, and shared it just as property would have been shared. [...] On the other hand, in the seventh and eighth centuries there were local assemblies, meetings of elders (*seniores*) and "better men" (*meliores*) with distinct regional identities, existing apart from the king.⁹¹

Society in south-eastern Wales seems to have changed considerably in the course of the eighth to eleventh centuries, and the new social formation resembles that apparent in the later medieval law-codes. As well as the changes noted above, kin groups begin to emerge, consenting to the alienation of land, and taking part in decision making, but only from the tenth century.⁹² Davies speculated on why it was that only kings granted land in the earlier period and came to no firm conclusions.⁹³ Given the lack of evidence that these early donors had any of the attributes of kings, however, we might ask whether or not their elevation to the kingship might not have been part of the editorial process. Either through conscious fraud, churches not wishing to rely upon the donation of long dead commoners with

⁸⁸ W. Davies, "Land and Power in Early Medieval Wales", *Past and Present* 81 (1978) pp. 3–23, here pp. 8–9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13–4.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

no surviving kin to legitimise their tenure, or through genuine confusion given the problematic terminology for rulership in Welsh tradition⁹⁴ early donors may have been granted the title king by subsequent redactors of the material; the essential continuity of kingship making any subsequent king the heir, in some sense, of all previous kings. Certainly these “kings” do not sound like Gildas’ western tyrants.⁹⁵

If we free ourselves from the terminology of kingship what we seem to be observing in the Llandaff material is a tenurial system remarkably similar to that which existed in the later Roman West.⁹⁶ This system seems to survive almost intact into the early eighth century, and, thereafter, begins to be assimilated into the kin-based tenurial system of the more barbaric “highland” zone.⁹⁷

We might hypothesise, then, that, for all its limitations, the Llandaff material may give us a clue as to how lowland British society was organised. Returning to Gildas we should perhaps note that his address to the secular rulers of Britain begins; *Reges habet Britannia, sed tyrannos; iudices habet, sed impios*—“kings Britain has, but tyrants; judges she has, but wicked ones”.⁹⁸ As Paul Schaffner has shown, the term *iudex* can, in a Late Antique context, mean simply a ruler, or it can mean some sort of magistrate elected from amongst the *seniores* of a region.⁹⁹ The ambiguity of the text makes it impossible to tell whether Gildas intends his *reges* and *iudices* to be taken as two terms for the same individuals or not. Given the distinctions we have identified between “highland” and “lowland” society, however, it is perfectly possible that he is using this term to castigate the leading members of “lowland” society, too numerous and ephemeral in their greatness to warrant singling out.

Dumville, inspired by Fanning’s discussion of Aegidius and Syagrius in Gaul, has recently raised the spectre of an *imperium* (or more than one) in sixth-century Britain.¹⁰⁰ Might there have been a supreme

⁹⁴ Davies, *Patterns of Power*, pp. 10–5.

⁹⁵ Or should we be looking to the Burgundians for parallels?

⁹⁶ A.H.M. Jones, *The Decline of the Ancient World* (London 1966) pp. 302–4.

⁹⁷ For which see T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford 1993) pp. 274–304.

⁹⁸ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 27.

⁹⁹ P. Schaffner, “Britain’s *Iudices*”, *Gildas: New Approaches*, ed. M. Lapidge and D.N. Dumville (Woodbridge 1984) pp. 151–5.

¹⁰⁰ D.N. Dumville, “The idea of government in sub-Roman Britain”, *After Empire*.

overlord based in the lowland British community? It is, at first glance, hard to see why such a ruler did not emerge. Britain had had emperors before, up until Constantine III's regime was expelled in 409, and Gildas' "proud tyrant"¹⁰¹ may have been one such in the succeeding generation (if, indeed, he is not Constantine III, as argued above). The evidence for the existence of such an individual after the middle of the fifth century, however, is entirely lacking, and the acephalous nature of political society in lowland Britain may well have contributed to the success of Germanic conquest and cultural survival. The absence of convincing historical, archaeological, or even literary evidence for any kind of British Empire suggests that lowland Britain remained relatively fragmented in terms of formal political structure. The broadly co-extensive frontiers of some Romano-British *civitates* and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of the seventh and eighth centuries (e.g. Icenia and East Anglia, Parisia and Deira or Essex and Trinovantia) may well suggest that the *civitates*, or large blocks within them, retained some sort of identity, and perhaps groups of *seniores* might have ruled, or tyrannised, their republics corporately in much the same way as the *principales* described by Salvian dominated the *civitates* of southern Gaul in his day.¹⁰²

The social origins of the rulers of the "lowland" British have been debated of late. Edward Thompson, and latterly Ken Dark, have both argued for a peasants' revolt being instrumental in the ending of Roman Britain.¹⁰³ The latter even suggested that rural proletarian revolution was the force which led Christianity to supersede paganism as the dominant religion. Dark's equation of agrarian revolution with Christian fundamentalism (*non pagani sed pagani?*), seems bizarre and is based on inappropriate parallels with militant monasticism in contemporary Egypt. The motivation in seeking such an explanation for the radical transformation of material conditions

Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians, ed. G. Ausenda, Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology (Woodbridge 1995) pp. 177–216, here p. 183; S. Fanning, "Emperors and Empires in fifth-century Gaul", *Fifth-century Gaul: a crisis of identity?*, ed. J.F. Drinkwater and H. Elton (Cambridge 1992) pp. 288–97.

¹⁰¹ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 23.

¹⁰² M. Maas, "Ethnicity, Orthodoxy and Community in Salvian of Marseilles", *Fifth-century Gaul: a crisis of identity?*, ed. J.F. Drinkwater and H. Elton (Cambridge 1992) pp. 275–84.

¹⁰³ E.A. Thompson, *Saint Germanus of Auxerre and the End of Roman Britain* (Woodbridge 1984) pp. 34–8; Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom*, pp. 55–64.

seems to lie in the modern commentators' incomprehension as to why "civilised" people would choose to give up town life. Such incomprehension, however, does not manifest itself in the minds of economic historians and archaeologists who are prepared to recognise that phenomena such as urbanism are parts of complex inter-regional systems. Esmonde Cleary has presented a perfectly acceptable account of the collapse of the material fabric of late Roman Britain,¹⁰⁴ and this has been neatly summarised by John Blair:

The most obvious fact of the early fifth century is that towns and villas became irrelevancies, so that to look for "continuity" in the modes of life which served them is to chase a will-o-the-wisp. Complex government, bureaucracy, coinage and long-distance trade simply could not survive the secession of Britain from the Empire. "Civilisation", manifested in urbanism, specialised industry, plumbing, central heating, mosaics and all that was distinctively Roman, depended on these things, though occasional Roman structures succumbed to the oblivion slightly later than others.¹⁰⁵

There is no need to appeal to social revolution to explain the collapse of the infrastructure of early fifth-century Britain and, since the peasant character of the *bacaudae* rebels in contemporary Gaul, the paradigm which Thompson invoked, has been seriously questioned, such appeals should best be abandoned.¹⁰⁶

Up to this point, a contrast has been emphasised between the "highland" zone with its kings, inscribed stones and kin-based society on the one hand and the "lowland" zone with its civil (if no longer civilised) government and highly stratified society, preserving much of what was fundamental to Roman self-perceptions, (despite lacking the ability to maintain the material fabric which usually encased them). Such a distinction must be made, the more so because generations of scholars (most recently Dark) have sought to characterise British society in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries as an homogenous entity typified by the images presented in the *gwarchanau* of the *Gododdin*, despite the fact that the Uotadini, whose heroes are

¹⁰⁴ Esmonde Cleary, *Ending of Roman Britain*, pp. 131–61.

¹⁰⁵ J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Oxford-Stroud 1994) p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ See for new thoughts on the *bacaudae* R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley 1985) pp. 25–56, and J.F. Drinkwater, "The *Bacaudae* of Fifth-Century Gaul", *Fifth-century Gaul: a crisis of identity?*, ed. id. and H. Elton (Cambridge 1992) pp. 208–17.

celebrated in the *Gododdin*, lived in Lothian, beyond the “highland” zone, and may well have been regarded as *Picti* by the *Brittones* of the South.¹⁰⁷ This said, however, it would be wrong to fall into the trap of creating a very sharp division between a Romanized zone and a “Celtic” zone.

Before moving on to investigate the evidence for Romanizing traits in “highland” culture we should briefly note the evidence for a native “Celtic” renaissance amongst the lowland Britons. This is extremely slight and confined to personal names. Six personal names of British origin attributed to sixth-century individuals are recorded in the ninth-century *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: Cerdic, Cynric, Ceawlin, Conmæg, Condidan and Farinmæg. Of these six names five appear to be of British-Celtic origin and the sixth, Condidan, may be, or may, alternatively, be a rather peculiar development from Latin Constantinus.¹⁰⁸ Two of these names appear with what might be contemporary or near contemporary spelling (and apparently, it should be noted, using British orthography).¹⁰⁹ Cerdic, Cynric and Ceawlin seem to have been modified during oral transmission.¹¹⁰ Unless Condidan is a form of Constantinus there are no Roman names here. This is not conclusive evidence (the sample is far too small), but it does suggest a community as aware of their British heritage as of their Roman.

More than twenty-five years ago John Ward discussed the re-appearance of British names in fifth-century Britain, using as his source material Welsh pedigrees and the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum*.¹¹¹ He pointed to the fact that the genealogical tradition

¹⁰⁷ For the latest edition of the *Gododdin*, a collection of verses preserved in medieval Wales which purport to be original elegies composed for warriors from southern Scotland in the decades around 600 see *The Gododdin of Aneirin: Text and Context from Dark Age North Britain*, ed. J.T. Koch (Cardiff 1997). Koch’s edition is accompanied by extensive introductory material and a full bibliography.

¹⁰⁸ K.H. Jackson discusses the name but does not commit himself in his *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh 1953) p. 677.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, but cf. P. Sims-Williams, “Dating the Transition to Neo-Brittonic”, *Britain 400–600: Language and History*, ed. A. Bammesberger and A. Wollmann (Heidelberg 1990) pp. 217–61, here p. 245 with n. 104. Conmæg and Farinmæg are the names in question, reproduced here in their most conservative forms from the “C” text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

¹¹⁰ R. Coates, “On some controversy surrounding *Gewissae/Gewissei, Cerdic and Ceawlin*”, *Nomina* 13 (1990) pp. 1–11; D. Parsons, “British **Caraticos*, Old English *Cerdic*”, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 33 (1997) pp. 1–8.

¹¹¹ J. Ward, “Vortigern and the End of Roman Britain”, *Britannia* 3 (1972) pp. 277–89.

frequently recorded pedigrees which began with Roman names and went on, lower down, to use British names, noting, on the basis of dead-reckoning, that the generation with British names but Roman-named fathers appeared to have been born in the mid- to late fourth century. His conclusion was that a “nativist” ideology had come into being at that point amongst the British elite as a result of dissatisfaction with the protection the Empire afforded Britain. In the light of Dumville’s devastating critique of the value of central- and late-medieval literary material for the elucidating of the sub-Roman period,¹¹² Ward’s findings must be viewed with the greatest of scepticism, but his original question, “why did native names come back into fashion?”, deserves consideration.

On the other hand, the “highland” zone was not entirely devoid of Romanizing, or Romancing, traits. The inscribed stones do, after all, almost all bear inscriptions in Latin. Some also bear inscriptions in Irish but only one, at Tywyn,¹¹³ and that very late in the sequence, bears an inscription in British (or rather Old Welsh by this stage). “Moreover,” as Thomas Charles-Edwards writes, “the character of the Latin used in the inscriptions shows that it was a spoken language, not merely a language of the quill and chisel.”¹¹⁴ Charles-Edwards goes on to argue that the epigraphic evidence can be used to show how long Latin, or rather Romance, was “used in a wide variety of styles and registers”,¹¹⁵ in contrast to its later medieval use as a formal scholarly argot:

It is characteristic of the spoken Latin of Late Antiquity that the quantitative distinction between long and short vowels, to which differences in the point of articulation were ancillary, disappeared. Instead, differences in the point of articulation, formerly secondary, were now crucial. So *vivo* gives Italian *vivo* but *bibo* gives Italian *bevo*, because a Latin short *i* was more open than a long *i* and hence $i > e$, but $i > i$.¹¹⁶ The way in which this worked itself out varied between the individual Romance languages, but the direction of change was fundamentally the same.

¹¹² D.N. Dumville, “Sub-Roman Britain: History and Legend”, *History* 62 (1977) pp. 173–92.

¹¹³ V.E. Nash-Williams, *Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (Cardiff 1950), no. 287.

¹¹⁴ T.M. Charles-Edwards, “Language and society among the insular Celts, A.D. 400–1000”, *The Celtic World*, ed. M. Green (London 1995) pp. 703–36, here p. 704.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 716.

¹¹⁶ Here Charles-Edwards cites V. Väänänen, *Introduction au Latin vulgaire* (Paris 1963) at §§ 42–6.

At a rather earlier period the diphthongs, *ae*, *oe*, had become simple vowels.¹¹⁷ Among the changes to the consonants is the disappearance of final *-m* (very early) and *-s* (late and only in some areas of Romance, including British Latin).¹¹⁸ The consequences for morphology were far-reaching: there was no distinction between, for example, *Petrus*, *Petrum*, *Petro* (all > *Petro* or *Pedro*). All these changes are attested in the British Latin inscriptions of the fifth and sixth centuries:

VASSO for *vassus*, ADQUAE for *atque*¹¹⁹

CONGERIES for *congerie*¹²⁰

CIVE for *civis*, CONSOBRINO for *consobrinus*¹²¹

MULTITUDINEM for *multitudine*¹²²

[Charles-Edwards]¹²³

A further example of Romance interference in the epigraphers' Latin is the indiscriminate use of second declension genitive singular ending, without regard to syntax.¹²⁴ Professor Charles-Edwards goes on to contrast these kinds of flaws in the Latin of the Class I stones with the types of mistakes made by medieval authors whose native tongue was not Romance and who learned their Latin from grammar-books, pointing out that while they may make mistakes in their use of Latin cases, "many of those responsible for the texts of the inscriptions were unaware of any case system at all. They had not learnt their Latin from grammar" he goes on, and "Latin was, therefore, in the time of Voteporix [the mid-sixth century], a spoken language alongside Welsh".¹²⁵

A much more widely discussed area of evidence for the existence of Insular Romance lies in the relationship observable between Latin, on the one hand, and Irish and Welsh on the other. The peculiar orthography adopted to write these two languages, probably in the sixth or seventh centuries, almost certainly reflects the way written Latin was pronounced in Britain in this period.¹²⁶ Thus, because

¹¹⁷ Ibid., § 59.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., §§ 127–9; Charles-Edwards also cites C. Smith, "Vulgar Latin in Roman Britain: epigraphic and other evidence", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 29,2, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin 1983) pp. 893–948, here pp. 925–6.

¹¹⁹ Nash-Williams, *Early Christian Monuments*, no. 33.

¹²⁰ Ibid., no. 101.

¹²¹ Ibid., no. 103.

¹²² Ibid., no. 78.

¹²³ Charles-Edwards, "Language and society", p. 716.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 717.

¹²⁶ See for example, J. Stevenson, "The beginning of literacy in Ireland", *Proceedings*

Latin *d* had undergone spirantization to become /ð/ in Insular Romance, in certain medial and terminal positions, *d* was used to render the phoneme /ð/ in medial and terminal positions in Old Welsh and Old Irish where “original /d/” had never existed; e.g. Middle Welsh *mynydd* from British **monijo*-.¹²⁷ The last twenty years have seen a great deal of work carried out in this area,¹²⁸ prefigured by two seminal articles by David Greene,¹²⁹ although we have yet to see an accessible volume explaining the full implications of the evidence for Insular Romance to non-linguists.

That the evidence does not simply indicate poor scholarly Latin is apparent in the discussions produced by the various scholars whose work has been cited. Were more evidence called for, we might indicate Gildas’ *De Excidio*, written in fine literary language, and obviously intended to be understood by a secular and a lay audience.¹³⁰ The one concession that Gildas may be making to Romance speakers is his spelling of the name of the *Magister Militum* Aëtius, which he renders “Agitius”, presumably expecting anyone reading the text aloud to spirantize the *g* and render the name /Ahidius/ thus reproducing an approximation of the value of the cluster *ae*, which is extremely rare and might, perhaps, have been mistaken for the com-

of the Royal Irish Academy (C) 89 (1989) pp. 127–65; J.T. Koch, “When Was Welsh Literature First Written Down?”, *Studia Celtica* 20/21 (1986) pp. 43–66; P. Sims-Williams, “The Emergence of Old Welsh, Cornish and Breton orthography, 600–800: the Evidence of Archaic Old Welsh”, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 38 (1991) pp. 20–86. The subject is reviewed by Damian McManus in “*Linguarum Diversitas: Latin and the Vernaculars in Early Medieval Britain*”, *Peritia* 3 (1984) pp. 151–88.

¹²⁷ Sims-Williams, “Dating the Transition”, p. 223 n. 22. Spirantization also happened within the Insular Celtic languages and so *d* standing for /ð/ sometimes represents a development from an original /d/ and sometimes does not.

¹²⁸ Most significantly A.S. Gratwick, “*Latinitas Britannica: Was British Latin Archaic?*”, *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. N. Brooks (Leicester 1982) pp. 1–79; D.E. Evans, “Language Contact in pre-Roman and Roman Britain”, *Aufstieg und Niedergang des Römischen Welt* II 29,2, ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase (Berlin 1983) pp. 948–87; Smith, “Vulgar Latin”; D. McManus, “A Chronology of Latin loan-words in early Irish”, *Ériu* 34 (1983) pp. 21–71; id., “*Linguarum Diversitas*”; A. Harvey, “The Significance of *Cothraige*”, *Ériu* 36 (1985) pp. 1–9; P. Russell, “Recent Work on British Latin”, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 9 (1985) pp. 19–29.

¹²⁹ D. Greene, “The Making of Insular Celtic”, *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Celtic Studies* (Cardiff 1966) pp. 121–36; id., “Some Linguistic Evidence Relating to the British Church”, *Christianity in Roman Britain*, ed. M.W. Barley and R.P.C. Hanson (Leicester 1968) pp. 75–86.

¹³⁰ M. Lapidge, “Gildas’ Education and the Latin culture of sub-Roman Britain”, *Gildas: New Approaches*, ed. id. and D.N. Dumville (Woodbridge 1984) pp. 27–50; N. Wright, “Gildas’ prose style and its origins”, *ibid.*, pp. 107–28.

mon diphthong *ae*. The implication of this is that formal educated Latin, at least as a written standard, existed alongside Insular Romance and this implies that the Romance-speaking community was relatively large, even in the West. We are not to imagine that Latin usage was an affectation of a tiny number of kings and clerics but that Insular Romance was the normal language of intercourse for a significant proportion of the population. Perhaps we should imagine a linguistic divide similar to that apparent in twelfth-century England with Insular Romance playing the part of Old French.

Welsh Ethnogenesis

When considering the establishment of barbarian kingdoms on the Continent one finds oneself musing on the survival of Germanic language and the rate at which it was replaced by Romance as the medium for elite discourse in the Western provinces. In Britain, paradoxically, the decline of Romance and the adoption of British Celtic by the elites is the parallel phenomena. In the present context we might also consider that this transition is in some way related to the establishment of a recognisably British *gens* separate from *Gens Romanorum*. Thomas Charles-Edwards evades this thorny problem, pointing out merely that by the ninth century the neo-Brittonic languages (principally Welsh) were certainly the languages of the elites in the British World.¹³¹ Evidence for the exact timing of the death of Insular Romance has not, so far, been identified, but this need not mean that this evidence does not exist. One place in which we might look for this evidence is in the literary and linguistic forms that supplanted the Latin and Insular Romance traditions, and the most likely location of those traditions is in early Welsh verse.

Historia Brittonum, after describing the taking of the fortress of Bamburgh by the apical figure of the Bernician dynasty, Ida,¹³² goes on to name five poets who were at that time “simultaneously famed in British verse” (*simul uno tempore in poemate Brittanico claruerunt*): Talhaearn, Aneirin, Taliesin, Bluchbard and Cian.¹³³ It is presumed from

¹³¹ Charles-Edwards, “Language and society”, p. 718.

¹³² *Historia Brittonum* 61, ed. J. Morris (Chichester 1980) p. 78.

¹³³ *Ibid.* 62, p. 78.

the context that these poets were northerners and that the time in which they were famed was the time of Ida's campaigns in and around Bamburgh.¹³⁴ Of the poetry of Talhaearn, Bluchbard and Cian nothing now survives, but poetry ascribed to Aneirin and Taliesin is still extant. The veracity of that ascription is problematic. The poems survive only in late medieval manuscripts and some modernising of the text has certainly taken place. While the poems are clearly older than the manuscripts it is less clear how much older they need be. A recent bold attempt at reconstructing the text of *Canu Aneirin* (the *Gododdin*) has been undertaken by John Koch¹³⁵ and whilst his discussion of the historical context has come in for some criticism¹³⁶ there seems to be a willingness amongst most scholars to believe that some kind of sixth- or seventh-century composition lies at the core of this work.¹³⁷ The supposed work of Taliesin has not generated so much discussion in recent years and we are still very much dependent upon the standard edition.¹³⁸ Sir Ifor Williams identified twelve poems, out of the myriad ascribed to Taliesin by later medieval compilers, which he believed could be genuine sixth- or seventh-century pieces. Dumville has contested the possibility that three of these poems (I, II and VII) could be that old, but on contentious historical grounds rather than on the basis of linguistic or literary analysis.¹³⁹

In a sense, the absolute dating and authenticity of the surviving poetry, the *hengerdd*, of these earliest poets, the *cynfeirdd*, is not of paramount importance to the argument that follows. What is significant is that it was believed that the earliest poets in the Welsh tradition were northerners and that those poems which have some claim to being their work concern the north and were almost certainly composed there. Only one of this group of poems seems to have been

¹³⁴ But see now P. Sims-Williams, "The Death of Urien", *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 32 (1996) pp. 25–56.

¹³⁵ *The Gododdin of Aneirin*.

¹³⁶ E.g. O.J. Padel, "A New Study of the Gododdin", *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 35 (1998) pp. 45–56.

¹³⁷ See the various papers collected in *Early Welsh Poetry: Studies in the Book of Aneirin*, ed. B.F. Roberts (Aberystwyth 1988).

¹³⁸ *The Poems of Taliesin*, ed. I. Williams (Dublin 1987). In fact this is a translation of the Welsh-language *Canu Taliesin* first published in 1960.

¹³⁹ D.N. Dumville, "Early Welsh Poetry: Problems of Historicity", *Early Welsh Poetry: Studies in the Book of Aneirin*, pp. 1–16.

composed for a southern king; the panegyric to Cynan Garwyn of Powys. Cynan lived in the generation before 613 if we are to trust the annalistic references to his son's death at the battle of Chester in that year.¹⁴⁰ After this, the two earliest poems dealing with specifically Welsh subjects, in the geographical sense, appear to be *Moliant Cadwallon*, not composed before 632, and *Marwnad Cynddylan*, perhaps a decade or so later.¹⁴¹ From this time forth the Old North, as it became known, provided the heroic ideal and model for subsequent praise-poetry and *englynion*.¹⁴²

Gildas describes, in unflattering terms, poets at the court of Maglocunus,¹⁴³ and it has always been assumed that these poets sang the king's praises in British.¹⁴⁴ In the light of the foregoing discussion of Insular Romance it is perfectly possible, however, that they recited Latin panegyrics. Indeed Patrick Sims-Williams has demonstrated the influence of Latin panegyric diction and form on early Welsh and, less certainly, on early Irish praise poetry, a phenomenon which almost certainly requires composition and recitation of Latin poetry to have taken place in sixth-century Britain.¹⁴⁵ If court poetry in the south was composed in Latin, for a largely Insular Romance speaking audience, it could explain why, when the switch to the vernacular as the language of court took place, northern models, and perhaps even northern bards were called upon. It seems incredible that no verses survive in praise of Maglocunus, even if only in fragmentary form or in citation in other works, if such poetry, in the style of that ascribed to Taliesin and Aneirin, had existed. The poetry of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Venedotian court poets contain no allusions to verse celebrating sixth-century kings of Gwynedd, yet are self-consciously modelled upon the verses ascribed to Taliesin, suggesting that the sixth-century Venedotian poetry did not

¹⁴⁰ *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 613; *Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)* 613,3, ed. S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill (Dublin 1983).

¹⁴¹ M. Haycock, "Metrical models for the poems in the Book of Taliesin", *Early Welsh Poetry: Studies in the Book of Aneirin*, pp. 155–78, here p. 171.

¹⁴² J. Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry: a Study and Edition of the Englynion* (Woodbridge 1990).

¹⁴³ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 34,6; 35,3.

¹⁴⁴ Charles-Edwards, "Language and Society", p. 734.

¹⁴⁵ P. Sims-Williams, "Gildas and vernacular poetry", *Gildas: New Approaches*, ed. M. Lapidge and D.N. Dumville (Woodbridge 1984) pp. 169–90.

survive in their day. Maglocunus' position in *De Excidio* and his prominent role in subsequent Welsh tradition, and as the apical figure of the Venedotian dynasty down to the end of the eighth century,¹⁴⁶ make him the most famous of all Welsh kings before Rhodri Mawr († 878). Had praise poetry composed for him in Welsh existed we might have expected some hint of it to survive.

In broad terms, then, the switch from Insular Romance as the preferred language of a Romanizing elite to the language of the country, *Cymraeg*,¹⁴⁷ will have taken place in the period between the emergence of the earliest vernacular praise poetry and its adoption throughout the British-speaking world. In absolute terms we should probably think of a transition starting in the North c. 550,¹⁴⁸ taking root in Wales before the middle of the seventh century and reaching Dumnonia by the early eighth at the very latest.¹⁴⁹

Seen in this chronological context, the impetus for the abandonment of Insular Romance in the West can be seen to coincide with the conquest of the majority of the eastern, lowland, Britons by the Anglo-Saxons in the same time-period (c. 550–700). In these terms the long survival of Insular Romance in the West, for some two hundred years after the disappearance of effective Roman power and centralised government, can be re-assessed. The western and northern kingdoms maintained their Romanizing character so long as they lay adjacent to a large contiguous zone in which Romance culture thrived. To some extent, the kings and their courts must have seen themselves as peripheral to and dependent upon, in cultural terms

¹⁴⁶ Dumville, "Gildas and Maelgwn", p. 58.

¹⁴⁷ Charles-Edwards, "Language and Society", pp. 710–5.

¹⁴⁸ Dumville, "Early Welsh Poetry"; J.T. Koch, "The *Cynfeirdd* poetry and the language of the sixth century", *Early Welsh Poetry: Studies in the Book of Aneirin*, pp. 17–42.

¹⁴⁹ The latter date is reached on the assumption of the authenticity of poem 21 in the Black Book of Carmarthen, an elegy to Geraint fil Erbin, a king of Dumnonia (*Dyfnaint*). This may be the Geraint to whom Aldhelm wrote and against whom Ine fought (Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages*, p. 179 and 65 respectively). Alternatively, given the poem's account of Geraint's death at *Llongborth* (Langport, on the river Parret in Somerset), he may have been the leader of the force against whom Cenwealh of the Gewisse fought (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* 658, ed. C. Plummer [Oxford 1899] when he drove the Britons to the Parret. This latter identification would fit better with the pedigrees, which make Geraint the grandson of Custennin son of Cynfawr, who may, as we have seen, been a contemporary of Gildas (*Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, p. 45).

at least, the lowlands. This should not surprise us. Despite the absence, as yet, of a rich material culture emanating from amongst the lowland British, their land was far more productive and the density of affluent, educated aristocrats must have been much higher. Watching this world collapse before them, and finding the new rulers of the lowlands uninspiring, the kings of the West must have turned towards their own countrymen and to the language of local people for cultural comfort.

This reorganisation of identity will not have happened overnight. At the time it may well have seemed almost imperceptible. For the most part people capable of speaking both languages well will have simply begun to switch their preference from the one to the other. After a generation or two children would have grown up without sufficient exposure to Insular Romance to perpetuate it. An interesting question to consider is whether this switch had any effect on the character of the Welsh language.

Kenneth Jackson, in 1953, thought that most of the borrowings from Latin into British (between 500 and 900 items) had occurred prior to A.D. 400.¹⁵⁰ Subsequent scholarship in his own and adjacent fields has, however, shown that he was imposing needless constraints upon the data.¹⁵¹ Recognition that British Latin (Insular Romance) developed, at least in part, in tandem with British Celtic,¹⁵² has at once freed us from such constraints and left us somewhat at a loss for chronological markers in the development of either British or Insular Romance historical phonology. Going beyond lexical borrowings, David Greene noted “a number of vague parallels between Vulgar Latin [Romance] and British (but not, significantly, Irish) [. . .] and there may be some connection [. . .]. If so, it would be an ‘areal’ development, not a matter of Vulgar Latin loan words”.¹⁵³ Unfortunately no systematic research has been carried out in this area.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 76–121.

¹⁵¹ Sims-Williams, “Dating the Transition”, pp. 223–36.

¹⁵² E.g. Koch, “The *Cynfeirdd* poetry”, pp. 23–5.

¹⁵³ Greene’s original comments were in “The Making of Insular Celtic” but they are summarised here by Sims-Williams in “Dating the Transition”, at pp. 218–9.

¹⁵⁴ The revised position outlined in this paragraph would seem to allow for Peter Schrijver’s claims for British phonological interference in North Sea Germanic, (outlined in his “The Celtic Contribution to the Development of the North Sea Germanic Vowel System”, *North-Western European language evolution* 35 [1999] pp. 3–47), to be derived from either British Celtic or British Latin.

If we compare the development of British and Irish, however, we can note some very basic features that may arise out of a superstrate situation. The neo-Brittonic transition, during which British was transformed into Old Welsh, Cornish, Cumbric and Breton, comprised a number of stages; lenition (the softening of medial and terminal consonants), apocope (the loss of final syllables), syncope of medial vowels, spirantization and the development of a new quantity system, in that order.¹⁵⁵ Sims-Williams would modify this slightly, dividing “lenition” into two stages “first spirantization” of *b*, *d*, *g* and *m*, and then “voicing” of *p*, *t* and *k*.¹⁵⁶ Similar, though not in all cases identical, changes occurred in the transition from Primitive Irish (the language of the bulk of ogham inscriptions) to Old Irish (the language of the earliest manuscripts). The transformations in Irish probably occurred at a slightly later date than the comparable ones in British, although the two sequences seem to have overlapped.¹⁵⁷

Despite the similarity of the phonological transformation of the two languages, however, the morpho-syntactical structures failed to keep pace with one another. In Welsh the neo-Brittonic transition is characterised by the complete collapse of the case system and a massive simplification of the verbal system. This has been ascribed to the effects of apocope,¹⁵⁸ but since apocope occurred also in Irish which retained much of its grammatical complexity this seems insufficient explanation in itself.¹⁵⁹ One possibility, though at present unprovable, is that this was, in part at least, the result of a massive switch to Old Welsh by preferential Romance speakers who, as the social elite, exerted influence on subsequent development of the language in disproportion to their numbers.

Turning to the archaeological record it is interesting to note that the switch from Insular Romance to Welsh as the language of the elite coincides with the falling off of imported ceramics from the Mediterranean and western Gaul.¹⁶⁰ Ewen Campbell has suggested

¹⁵⁵ Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 695–6.

¹⁵⁶ Sims-Williams, “Dating the Transition”, pp. 220–1.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 230–6.

¹⁵⁸ Jackson, *Language and History*, p. 691.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. D.E. Evans, “Insular Celtic and the Emergence of Welsh”, *Britain 400–600: Language and History*, ed. A. Bammesberger and A. Wollmann (Heidelberg 1990) pp. 149–77.

¹⁶⁰ A. Lane, “Trade, Gifts and Cultural Exchange in Dark Age Western Scotland”,

that it is the ending of this exchange which causes various transformations in the archaeological record of western Britain, such as the abandonment of central fortified sites in Cornwall, and perhaps Wales, and widespread changes in ecclesiastical art and architecture.¹⁶¹ An alternative scenario might locate agency with the Britons, since in the Gaelic World these overseas contacts continued and even expanded, suggesting that there was no problem with supply.¹⁶² If supply was not in issue then it is perhaps demand that we should consider.

The adoption of a vernacular identity may also, as noted when discussing the Llandaff material, represent a shift in ideology. Distinctive sociolects, and even more so language differentiation on the basis of class, bespeaks a highly stratified society in which the aristocracy are primarily exploitative. This is probably one reason why the bulk of the lowland British population are so hard to identify in the archaeological record; their land-lords did not leave them with much to leave us. The social transformation in the West, c. 550–650, can be seen as the replacement of an exploitative consuming aristocracy, which had developed under the aegis of the Empire, by a series of localised, kin-based, redistributive chieftaincies, much like those which were simultaneously transforming themselves into stratified societies in Anglo-Saxon England.

Conclusion

Thomas Charles-Edwards has pointed out that the position of Irish in Dyfed may well have been analogous to that of Insular Romance throughout the highland zone.¹⁶³ He points to the fact that the Class I stones are mostly in Latin, but that a few, principally in western Dyfed, southern Ceredigion and Brycheiniog, were also in Primitive Irish. This is in stark contrast to the absence of British inscriptions. He infers from this, and from the failure of Irish to survive as the

Scotland in Dark Age Britain, ed. B.E. Crawford (St Andrews 1994) pp. 103–15, here p. 107.

¹⁶¹ E. Campbell, “Trade in the Dark Age West: a Peripheral Activity”, *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, ed. B.E. Crawford (St Andrews 1996) pp. 79–93, here pp. 86–7.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁶³ Charles-Edwards, “Language and Society”, p. 704.

language of south-west Wales, despite the retention of a royal dynasty of Irish origin, that the position of Irish was similar to that of Latin or Romance. This linguistic history of the Demetian kingdom is of course typical of the histories of the barbarian kingdoms of Late Antiquity: a military aristocracy takes over the government of a region and whilst maintaining their separate identity and language for a generation or two they gradually assimilated with the local population, adopting their language and belief systems.¹⁶⁴ The same thing happened with the Franks in most of Gaul, the Goths in Spain and the Langobards in Italy. In much of western and northern Britain the native Roman aristocracies seem to have undergone a similar process so that in many respects, material, sociological and linguistic, the ethnogenesis of the Britons and the establishment of British *regna* can be seen as a descent in barbarism.

¹⁶⁴ For a fuller discussion of the Demetian kingdom see Thomas, *Mute Stones*, pp. 51–112, and Charles-Edwards, “Language and Society”, pp. 717–36.

ANGLO-SAXON *GENTES* AND *REGNA*

Barbara Yorke

Problems and sources

A century ago the question of the circumstances surrounding the emergence of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms appeared to be quite adequately answered by Gildas's account of the *adventus Saxonum* with some additions by Bede.¹ According to a combined account from these writers, after Britain's ties with Rome had been severed, Vortigern and his council hired Saxons who were attacking the east coast to fight for them, but the Saxon forces eventually grew strong enough to seize power for themselves. Bede located these events in c. 450, and claimed that the first kingdom founded as an immediate result of the coup was that of Kent. At the beginning of the twentieth century this appeared to be a believable, straightforward account, and one with possible parallels in other areas of the former Roman Empire in the west. Unfortunately not one aspect of it has emerged unscathed in more recent historiography,² and it is no longer generally seen as an adequate explanation for the changes that occurred in eastern Britain during the fifth and sixth centuries, let alone for the emergence of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Even though it has been generally accepted that Gildas's account must have some validity, uncertainty about when and where he wrote, and over whether events he described took place in one part of the country consecutively or contemporaneously in different parts of the country, not to mention the problems in interpreting his highly rhetorical style and exhortatory reasons for writing, have all tended to cast doubt over the wisdom

¹ Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and other works*, ed. and transl. M. Winterbottom (London-Chichester 1978) pp. 97–8; Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* 1,15, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors [*Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*] (Oxford 1969) pp. 49–53.

² P. Sims-Williams, "Gildas and the Anglo-Saxons", *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 6 (1983) pp. 1–30; id., "The settlement of England in Bede and the *Chronicle*", *Anglo-Saxon England* 12 (1983) pp. 1–41.

of placing too much reliance on his relatively brief narrative passage concerning the Saxon *adventus*.³ Bede stands suspected of promoting Kentish and archiepiscopal interests in assigning the leadership of events to the supposed Kentish founding fathers, Hengist and Horsa,⁴ or of furthering the idea of an united Christian *gens Anglorum* through an account that assigned a common origin to all the Anglo-Saxon peoples of Britain.⁵ With other written references to events in eastern Britain between c. 450 and 590 being only brief, and so throwing little light on what had occurred,⁶ the onus for studying this period has fallen on archaeology with claims that in the absence of adequate written records fifth- and sixth-century Britain should be treated as a “prehistoric” period.⁷ The result has been to suggest that the immediate post-Roman history of eastern Britain followed a very different trajectory from that of other former provinces of the Roman Empire. In the initial planning of the symposium that gave rise to this volume, there was some doubt over whether the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms qualified for inclusion, so deep-rooted is the current assumption that the severance of Britain from the empire in c. 410 was a decisive cut-off point so that when Anglo-Saxon kingdoms finally emerged at the end of the seventh century it was in a context that owed little or nothing to Britain’s Roman heritage.

Behind much archaeological interpretation one can trace the influence of a model that assumes a complete systems collapse of the former Roman Empire and its supporting structures in eastern Britain.⁸ Through explicit or implicit use of this model it has been possible to assume that a new society emerged, composed of some Germanic incomers (the scale of immigration is still hotly debated) and of formerly oppressed British farmers, that lived for a while

³ See, for instance, discussions within *Gildas: New Approaches*, ed. M. Lapidge and D.N. Dumville (Woodbridge 1984) and N. Higham, *The English Conquest. Gildas and Britain in the Fifth Century* (Manchester 1994).

⁴ M. Miller, “Bede’s use of Gildas”, *English Historical Review* 90 (1975) pp. 241–61, here p. 254.

⁵ N. Brooks, *Bede and the English* (Jarrow 1999) pp. 4–5.

⁶ D.N. Dumville, “Sub-Roman Britain: History and Legend”, *History* 62 (1977) pp. 173–92.

⁷ C. Arnold, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (2nd edn., London 1997).

⁸ C. Renfrew, “Post collapse resurgence: culture process in the Dark Ages”, *Ranking, Resource and Exchange. Aspects of the Archaeology of Early European Society*, ed. C. Renfrew and S. Shennan (Cambridge 1982) pp. 113–5.

without hierarchies beyond those that could be found in individual households. What the archaeological evidence seems to show is that the bulk of the population lived in rural hamlets where the individual farmsteads were characteristically uniform in size and form.⁹ Cemeteries were organised into burial plots based around these households where differential burial might reflect variations in status due to age, gender and economic role within the farmstead unit.¹⁰ A clear change occurs in the character of the evidence in the latter part of the sixth century, with a much more marked demonstration of hierarchy in both settlement sites and cemeteries,¹¹ that seems to coincide with the point at which the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms known from written sources of the seventh and eighth centuries appear on the historical horizon.¹² An influential archaeological model used to explain how kingdoms could have emerged from the starting-point of scattered farmstead units is that of peer-polity interaction.¹³ It is a model that ultimately derives from anthropological study of very diverse groups from outside the western European world.¹⁴

Archaeology can undoubtedly reveal much about society in the eastern half of England in the fifth and sixth centuries, but there

⁹ D. Powlesland, "Early Anglo-Saxon settlements, structures, form and layout", *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. J. Hines (Woodbridge 1997) pp. 101–24; H. Hamerow, "The earliest Anglo-Saxon kingdoms", *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1: c. 500–700 (Cambridge forthcoming).

¹⁰ H. Härke, "Early Anglo-Saxon social structure", *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, pp. 125–60; N. Stoodley, *The Spindle and the Spear: A Critical Enquiry into the Construction and Meaning of Gender in the Early Anglo-Saxon Inhumation Burial Rite*, British Archaeological Reports, British series 288 (Oxford 1999).

¹¹ J. Shephard, "The social identity of the individual in isolated barrows and barrow cemeteries in Anglo-Saxon England", *Space, Hierarchy and Society*, ed. B. Burnham and J. Kingsbury, British Archaeological Reports, International series 59 (Oxford 1979) pp. 47–79; C. Scull, "Social archaeology and Anglo-Saxon kingdom origins", *The Making of Kingdoms*, ed. T. Dickinson and D. Griffiths, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 10 (Oxford 1999) pp. 7–24.

¹² For instance, the evidence of the royal genealogies is apparently consistent with the first royal houses coming into existence in the latter half of the sixth century; D.N. Dumville, "Kingship, genealogies and regnal lists", *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds 1977) pp. 72–104, here p. 91.

¹³ For a clear, balanced account of how the model might have worked in Anglo-Saxon England see C. Scull, "Archaeology, early Anglo-Saxon society and the origins of kingdoms", *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 6 (1993) pp. 65–82.

¹⁴ See, for instance, T. Earle, "Chieftdoms in archaeological and historical perspective", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1987) pp. 279–308.

are grounds for asking whether it is capable of providing the whole story. One of the advantages of the type of comparative study that has given rise to this volume is that it provides an opportunity to review aspects of the emergence of Germanic kingdoms in eastern Britain in the context of potentially comparable developments in other areas of the western empire, and so to reopen the question of a link between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the late Roman diocese of Britain. Historians have on the whole been more concerned than archaeologists about an apparent divergence between the history of Britain and that of other former Roman provinces in the fifth and sixth centuries, and with the concept of an apparent power vacuum between c. 450–c. 550.¹⁵ The picture drawn from the archaeological evidence can also begin to sound dangerously like the Tacitean society of Germanic free peasants so in vogue in the nineteenth century, and the competition for power in the peer-polity model like a Darwinian battle for the survival of the fittest compressed into a relatively short time-span. The furnished cemeteries of the late fifth and sixth centuries have been a natural focus of research, especially in the last two decades, but they do not necessarily represent the practices of the whole of society. For instance, not only are there unfurnished burials within these cemeteries, but also entire cemeteries without grave-goods in the eastern half of England that seem to have been in use during the same period, suggesting that modes of life (and death) were not as uniform as is sometimes implied.¹⁶ It may be that archaeology shows us only a partial picture, and it is a moot point whether political systems always have an impact that is discernible in the archaeological record. How much of the com-

¹⁵ E. James, “The origins of barbarian kingdoms: the continental evidence”, *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. S. Bassett (Leicester 1989) pp. 40–52; G. Halsall, “The origins of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms: a Merovingianist speaks out” (unpublished lecture, Institute of Historical Research, London 1995).

¹⁶ R.A. Chambers, “The Late- and Sub-Roman Cemetery at Queensford Farm, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxon.”, *Oxoniensia* 52 (1987) pp. 35–69; T. Williamson, *The Origins of Hertfordshire* (Manchester 2000) p. 70 (Verulamium). Such unfurnished cemeteries are, of course, difficult to date without recourse to scientific techniques like radio carbon dating (used at Queensford farm) and so many similar cemeteries may have failed to be assigned to the correct period or before the twentieth century may not even have been recorded. Similarly there is evidence for occupation dating to fifth and sixth centuries at late Roman villas and other Romano-British sites which has produced little that is distinctively “Germanic”—see, for instance, K.R. Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire* (Stroud 2000) pp. 62–9.

plexities of Frankish history in the late fifth and sixth centuries could have been constructed from the archaeological record alone? The lack of detailed written accounts is something that means there will always be uncertainty over many of the aspects surrounding the emergence of Anglo-Saxon *gentes* and *regna*, and that some of the questions posed by the organisers of the symposium will have to go unanswered. The issue of some of the general assumptions about developments in the eastern half of Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries, fuelled by recent archaeological studies, will be central to the discussions that follow.

Angles, Saxons and Jutes: gentes before and after migration to Britain

Bede's gloss on Gildas's description of the Anglo-Saxon *adventus* described the new arrivals as coming *de tribus Germaniae populis fortioribus, id est Saxonibus, Anglis, Iutis*.¹⁷ It has been noted that Bede's Latin vocabulary in this passage differs in a number of respects from that he customarily used in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, leading to the suggestion that it represents an addition he received, perhaps from Canterbury, at a relatively late stage in the work's composition.¹⁸ Nevertheless *populi* is a word that he employed, together with *natio*, as a synonym for *gens*.¹⁹ Whether Bede composed the passage or not, we can take it that he accepted that the Angles, Saxons and Jutes could be identified as distinct *gentes*. Indeed, earlier in the same chapter he wrote of the *Anglorum sive Saxonum gens* when adapting Gildas's text. The existence of peoples called Angles, Saxons and Jutes on the North Sea littoral, in what is now northern Germany and southern Denmark,²⁰ as well as in Britain naturally led in early studies of the fifth and sixth centuries to the expectation that there had been a simple migration of *gentes*.²¹ However, more recent considerations

¹⁷ Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 1,15, pp. 50–1.

¹⁸ E. John, "The point of Woden", *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 5 (1992) pp. 127–34, here p. 129; Brooks, *Bede and the English*, pp. 11–2.

¹⁹ P.F. Jones, *A Concordance to the Historia Ecclesiastica of Bede* (Cambridge Mass. 1929) pp. 311–2; 403–4; J. Campbell, *Bede's Reges et Principes* (Jarrow 1979) pp. 3–4.

²⁰ I.N. Wood, "Before and after migration to Britain", *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, pp. 41–64.

²¹ See, for instance, J.N.L. Myres, "The Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 56 (1970) pp. 1–32.

have suggested that matters were not so straightforward and that, as seems to have been the case with several other Germanic peoples discussed in this volume, continuity of name may conceal major changes in the constitution of a *gens* after migration from the homeland and settlement in a Roman province.

Archaeological evidence from the fifth century, in the form of artefacts, funeral rituals and building traditions, shows without doubt that there was migration to eastern and southern England from the traditional homelands of the Anglo-Saxons in north Germany and southern Scandinavia, even if the scale of migration is still a matter of debate.²² Language change in the eastern half of England whereby Old English dialects appear to have totally replaced Latin and Celtic as the *lingua franca* also supports the idea of significant migration even if there is also debate over the scale and social level of migration needed to bring about such change.²³ In the eastern (Anglian) districts of England there was a predominance of people who appear to have come from continental Angeln in modern Schleswig-Holstein, and even some archaeological and environmental support for Bede's claim that the area was heavily depopulated as a result.²⁴ But Angles were not the only Germanic migrants into the area. Böhme's mapping of brooches from the Saxon homelands shows a wide distribution throughout eastern and southern England, and that they were not confined to the areas that were identified as "Saxon" in later kingdom names.²⁵ A broader span of archaeological evidence sug-

²² J. Hines, "The becoming of the English: identity, material culture and language in early Anglo-Saxon England", *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 7 (1994) pp. 49–59; C. Scull, "Approaches to material culture and social dynamics of the migration period of eastern England", *Europe Between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Bintliff and H. Hamerow, British Archaeological Reports, International series 617 (Oxford 1995) pp. 71–83; Hamerow, "The earliest Anglo-Saxon kingdoms".

²³ J. Hines, "Philology, archaeology and the *adventus Saxonum vel Anglorum*", *Britain 400–600: Language and History*, ed. A. Bammesberger and A. Wollmann (Heidelberg 1990) pp. 17–36; M. Gelling, "Why aren't we speaking Welsh?", *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 6 (1993) pp. 51–6; T.M. Charles-Edwards, "Language and society among the insular Celts, A.D. 400–1000", *The Celtic World*, ed. M. Green (London 1995) pp. 703–36.

²⁴ M. Gebühr, "Angulus desertus?", *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 11, ed. H.-J. Häbeler (Oldenburg 1998) pp. 43–8; Hamerow, "The earliest Anglo-Saxon kingdoms".

²⁵ H.W. Böhme, "Das Ende der Römerherrschaft in Britannien und die angelsächsische Besiedlung Englands im 5. Jahrhundert", *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 33 (1986) pp. 469–574.

gests that people were migrating to Britain in the fifth century from other Germanic areas besides those of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. Franks, Frisians and Norwegians are among those who appear to have entered the country.²⁶ Bede also seems to have been aware that many different Germanic people may have migrated to Britain for in a later chapter he wrote, of an individual involved in sending missions to Germania, that *in Germania plurimas noverat esse nationes, a quibus Angli vel Saxones, qui nunc Britanniam incolunt, genus et originem duxisse noscuntur*.²⁷ There has been much debate about problems involved in the interpretation and validity of the list that Bede provides which names Frisians, Rugians, Danes, Huns, Old Saxons and Bructeri.²⁸ Whether the peoples have been correctly identified or not, what is of central interest is that Bede appears to claim that Anglian and Saxon identities in Britain emerged as a secondary development as a result of various different Germanic *nationes* migrating to the province.

Archaeological evidence from the sixth century seems to be broadly in agreement with this claim. Material culture and traditions of building and burial do not seem to have been translated wholesale from any one area of Germany to eastern Britain.²⁹ Rather former ways of doing things were adapted and new hybridised forms emerged that drew not only on disparate North Sea backgrounds, but also probably on Romano-British skills and practices, though there are differing views on the Romano-British contributions to such aspects as the Anglo-Saxon building tradition or the quoit brooch style.³⁰

²⁶ Hines, "The becoming of the English"; H. Hamerow, "Migration theory and the Anglo-Saxon 'identity crisis'", *Migrations and Invasion in Archaeological Explanation*, ed. J. Chapman and H. Hamerow, British Archaeological Reports, International series 664 (1997) pp. 33–44.

²⁷ "He knew that there were very many peoples in Germany from whom the Angles and Saxons, who now live in Britain, derive their descent and origin"; Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 5,9, pp. 476–7.

²⁸ W. Pohl, "Ethnic names and identities in the British Isles: a comparative perspective", *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, pp. 7–40, here pp. 14–6; Wood, "Before and after migration to Britain", pp. 44–5; 55–8.

²⁹ P. Sørensen, "Jutes in Kent? Considerations of the problem of ethnicity in southern Scandinavia and Kent in the migration period", *Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology—Papers of the Medieval Brugge 1997 Conference*, ed. G. de Boe and F. Verhaeghe (Zellik 1997) pp. 165–73; C. Hills, "Did the people of Spong Hill come from Schleswig-Holstein?", *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 11, pp. 145–54.

³⁰ A. Marshall and G. Marshall, "Differentiation, change and continuity in Anglo-

These trends are exemplified by what had emerged by the sixth century as the dominant female dress-set for wealthier women in the Anglian areas of eastern England (as broadly identified by the later Anglian kingdom names). It built upon continental Anglian forms, but with modifications and additions drawn from traditions of dress from other Germanic areas, such as wrist-clasps which were apparently otherwise only a regular female dress accessory at this time in western Norway.³¹ Not all individual aspects of the Anglian dress-set were restricted to areas within the later Anglian borders, but wrist-clasps are largely confined to it, and the combination and arrangement of items is also distinctive.³² Jutish areas also favoured their own forms of female dress and had grave-assemblages that included items rarely found elsewhere, including items of southern Scandinavian and Frankish origin that influenced the development of distinctive local forms.³³ Women of the Saxon areas of southern England also seem to have had preferences that went back to ancestral forms, but Saxon female costume was more understated in its Germanness than that in Anglian or Jutish areas and its brooches may have been more indebted to Romano-British prototypes.³⁴ It is not the case, of course, that all female burials conformed uniformly to provincial dress-codes. Many more localised variations in patterns of dress and wearing of jewellery can be identified, and individual cemeteries might have

Saxon buildings”, *The Archaeological Journal* 150 (1994) pp. 366–402; H. Hamerow, “The archaeology of rural settlements in early medieval Europe”, *Early Medieval Europe* 3 (1994) pp. 167–79; B. Ager, “The alternative quoit brooch: an update”, *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries: A Reappraisal*, ed. E. Southworth (Stroud 1990) pp. 153–61; G. Harrison, “Quoit brooches and the Roman-Medieval transition”, *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, ed. P. Baker (Oxford 1999) pp. 108–20.

³¹ J. Hines, *The Scandinavian Character of Anglian England in the Pre-Viking Period*, British Archaeological Reports, British series 124 (Oxford 1984); id., “The Scandinavian character of Anglian England: an update”, *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, ed. M. Carver (Woodbridge 1992) pp. 315–29.

³² S. Lucy, *The Anglo-Saxon Way of Death* (Stroud 2000) pp. 133–9.

³³ B. Brugmann, “Britons, Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Franks”, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery on Mill Hill, Deal, Kent*, ed. K. Parfitt and B. Brugmann, Society for Medieval Archaeology, Monograph series 14 (London 1997) pp. 110–24; C. Behr, “The origins of kingship in early medieval Kent”, *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000) pp. 25–52; N. Stoodley, “Female assemblages from southern Hampshire” (unpublished seminar paper, Institute of Archaeology, London 2001).

³⁴ T. Dickinson, “Early Saxon saucer brooches: a preliminary overview”, *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 6 (1993) pp. 11–44; ed., “Material culture as social expression: the case of Saxon saucer brooches with running spiral decoration”, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 7, ed. H.-J. Häbler (Hildesheim 1991) pp. 39–70.

their own distinctive burial rituals.³⁵ Many women were buried without any indications of specific dress-forms that have survived to the present day, and it would appear that it was only certain women of certain households who wore the more elaborate forms of *Tracht* including the distinctive paired brooches on the shoulders of a pinafore-type dress. But with these provisos we can say that there were broad principles in variations of dress between the Anglian, Saxon and Jutish areas through which elites of local households appear to have been signalling some form of commonality. Similar results emerge from the study of language. Bede noted dialectical differences between the Anglian and Saxon areas, and arguments have been advanced for a distinctive Jutish dialect as well.³⁶ But Old English generally does not seem to represent a simple importation of language from one area of Germany, but a more complex amalgam caused by the type of intermingling of North Sea Germanic-speaking peoples that has already been discussed.³⁷

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes therefore fit into a pattern observable elsewhere in this volume. It seems likely that there existed *gentes* with these names before settlement in Britain, but that the process of migration with its intermingling of Germanic peoples of diverse origin (not forgetting the encounters with Romano-British which remain a largely unknown entity) led to the emergence of newly defined peoples bearing these names in the eastern half of England. Their history is one strand in a constantly evolving pattern of *gentes* that characterises the early middle ages.³⁸ By the end of the sixth century new identities as *gentes* appear to have been developing in eastern England with the appearance among the broader Anglian, Saxon and Jutish groupings of individual kingdoms that were each characterised as a *gens*.³⁹ This development seems to have been accompanied by abandonment of some of the forms of costume and choice

³⁵ G. Fisher, "Kingdom and community in early Anglo-Saxon eastern England", *Regional Approaches to Mortuary Analysis*, ed. L. Anderson Beck (New York 1995) pp. 147–66; S. Lucy, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of Eastern Yorkshire. An Analysis and Re-interpretation*, British Archaeological Reports, British series 272 (Oxford 1998); Stoodley, *The Spindle and the Spear*.

³⁶ E. Seebold, "Was ist jütisch? Was ist kentish?" *Britain 400–600: Language and History*, pp. 335–52.

³⁷ Hines, "Philology, archaeology and the *adventus*".

³⁸ S. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300* (Cambridge 1984).

³⁹ B.A.E. Yorke, "Political and ethnic identity: a case study of Anglo-Saxon

of grave-furnishings that it has been argued characterised the earlier *gentes* in favour of forms that can be described in broad terms as more Romanised.⁴⁰ In particular, the rulers of the new kingdoms drew upon ways of signalling royal power drawn ultimately from late Antique society, though the choice of items from different facets and periods of the late Antique world, often combined with “Germanic” symbols of power produced idiosyncratic assemblages of material.⁴¹ The eclecticism of the new Anglo-Saxon elite culture ultimately opened the way for the adoption of Christianity that proved most effective in underpinning the new regimes, including through the recording of versions of their early history.⁴²

The role of the king in the establishment of gens and regnum

In the kingdoms established in the eastern half of Britain in the latter part of the sixth century the written evidence suggests that the concepts of royal house, *regnum* and *gens* were closely entwined. The vocabulary of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* shows that when writing of the twelve or so kingdoms (*provinciae* or *regna*) of the seventh century Bede assumed that they could be equated with *gentes*.⁴³ To refine matters further, the natural order to Bede, following conversion, was an equation of *gens*, *regnum* and bishopric, and he was particularly exercised by the problem of *gentes* who did not have their own bishop. He clearly believed that the Jutes of Wight, whom he identified as inhabiting a distinct *provincia* and as having their own royal line, were entitled to their own bishopric, even after the royal house was annihilated and the province incorporated into Wessex in 686, and he twice

practice”, *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. B. Frazer and A.J. Tyrell (London 2000) pp. 69–89.

⁴⁰ H. Geake, *The Use of Grave-Goods in Conversion-Period England c. 600–c. 850*, British Archaeological Reports, British series 261 (Oxford 1997).

⁴¹ W. Filmer-Sankey, “The ‘Roman Emperor’ in the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial”, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 149 (1996) pp. 1–9; M. Archibald, M. Brown and L. Webster, “Heirs of Rome: the shaping of Britain A.D. 400–900”, *The Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. L. Webster and M. Brown (London 1997) pp. 208–48.

⁴² B.A.E. Yorke, “The reception of Christianity at the Anglo-Saxon royal courts”, *St Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. R. Gameson (Stroud 1999) pp. 152–73.

⁴³ Campbell, *Bede’s Reges*, pp. 3–4; Yorke, “Political and ethnic identity”, pp. 73–6.

remarks on the failure of the West Saxons to provide it.⁴⁴ To Bede's mind a *gens* was intimately connected with its royal house, and though he believed identity as a *gens* might survive the disappearance of its ruling family, he does not seem to have envisaged a *gens*, in the context of the seventh-century kingdoms, which had never had its own royal house.

Now it could be argued that as a well-educated and polemical author Bede's terminology might reflect his own reinterpretation of the Anglo-Saxon situation. Bede did not, of course, work in a vacuum. His political vocabulary can be seen to have been derived from other late Antique or early medieval writers, with the usage of Isidore of Seville likely to have been particularly influential.⁴⁵ But that Bede's equation of *gens* and *regnum* reflected how such matters were perceived at the Anglo-Saxon royal courts is suggested by the evidence of genealogies and origin myths. In the latter, kings are presented as the embodiment of their people and their ancestors represented as leading their people to a new land and creating a new *gens*. One of the fullest foundation accounts, that of Cerdic and Cynric in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, records their arrival in 495 with three ships, but in the duplication of this entry in 514 it is said to be the *West Saxons* who arrived in three ships.⁴⁶ Cerdic and Cynric could stand for the West Saxons as a whole. The thinking represented here may embody Isidore's definition of a *gens* "as a multitude sprung from one principle", that is king and people could be envisaged as having a common descent.⁴⁷ Felix, author of the eighth-century *Life of St Guthlac*, may have been intending to convey something similar when he described Penwalh, ancestor of the Mercian royal prince Guthlac, as being *de egregia stirpe Merciorum* ("of the distinguished stock of the Mercians") and of King Æthelbald of Mercia as *de inclita Merciorum*

⁴⁴ Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 4,16, pp. 382–5; 5,23, pp. 556–61; B.A.E. Yorke, "The Jutes of Hampshire and Wight and the origins of Wessex", *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. S. Bassett (Leicester 1989) pp. 84–96.

⁴⁵ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, pp. 250–5.

⁴⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* 1, ed. C. Plummer, 2 vols. (Oxford 1899) pp. 14–5; K. Harrison, "Early Wessex annals in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle", *English Historical Review* 86 (1971) pp. 527–33.

⁴⁷ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX* 9,2,1, ed. W.M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford 1911); G. Loud, "The *Gens Normannorum*—myth or reality?", *Proceedings of the Battle Conference of Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1981) pp. 104–16, here p. 109.

prole (“of the celebrated stock of the Mercians”).⁴⁸ The distinguished nature of this stock was guaranteed by the descent of the kings from a variety of gods and heroes of the northern Germanic world incorporated into their genealogies.⁴⁹ Of course, we only know such things because they were recorded in the literate, post-conversion period and the presentation of genealogies and foundation myths was no doubt shaped by men who came from the same educated Christian milieu as Bede.⁵⁰ But that need not mean that the basic claims within them were only created at the point when they were written down. For instance, the Jutish links and descent from Woden in the Kentish genealogy and origin traditions could be seen as a written manifestation of what archaeological and iconographic evidence suggests was already being claimed in sixth-century Kent,⁵¹ and parallels between the Sutton Hoo ship-burial and some of its finds with southern Sweden may echo claims of Scandinavian descent made in the East Anglian genealogy.⁵²

There is increasing acceptance for the idea that as new dynasties came to power in the sixth and early seventh centuries they sought to buttress their parvenu status by appeals to divine and heroic descent that can be traced in both the archaeological and early written sources.⁵³ In particular, they claimed that their ancestors had founded both *gens* and *regnum* by leading an army from the Germanic homelands. Bede’s identification of Hengist and Horsa with Gildas’s Saxon leaders can be seen as one literary stage in the development of such traditions. Parallels can be found with many other Germanic kingdoms studied in this volume, and elsewhere,⁵⁴ for this type of

⁴⁸ Felix, *Life of St Guthlac* 1, pp. 72–3; 40, pp. 124–7, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge 1956).

⁴⁹ K. Sisam, “Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies”, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 39 (1953) pp. 287–348; Dumville, “Kingship, genealogies”; H. Moisl, “Anglo-Saxon genealogies and Germanic oral tradition”, *Journal of Medieval History* 7 (1981) pp. 215–48.

⁵⁰ N. Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (Yale 1989).

⁵¹ Brugmann, “Britons, Angles, Saxons”; for possible evidence for the cult of Woden in Kent, see S.C. Hawkes, H.R.E. Davidson and C. Hawkes, “The Finglesham man”, *Antiquity* 39 (1965) pp. 17–32; Behr, “Origins of kingship”, pp. 39–52.

⁵² R. Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial II: Arms, Armour and Regalia* (London 1978) pp. 186–220; S. Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and Pre-Viking East Anglia* (Woodbridge 1993).

⁵³ Archibald, Brown and Webster, “Heirs of Rome”; M. Carver, *Sutton Hoo: Burial Ground of Kings* (London 1998).

⁵⁴ Loud, “*Gens Normannorum*”; S. Reynolds, “Medieval *origines gentium* and the

self-conscious construction of myths of ethnogenesis, often with some basis in reality, in order to underpin the development of *regna*.

This much is relatively uncontroversial. Much more difficult to answer is what may have lain behind the construction of the late-fifth- and early-sixth-century Anglian, Saxon and Jutish identities as *gentes* as defined by Bede and seemingly supported by archaeological evidence. Were these earlier *gentes* also linked with the development of kingship, or, failing adequate evidence for that, can they be construed in any broader sense as “political” entities? It is an issue that has received surprisingly little exploration, and there has been little discussion of what it meant to be Anglian, Saxon or Jutish in sixth-century Britain or of what provided the context for the formation of their identities as *gentes*. It has been suggested tentatively that cult practices might be significant in forming separate Anglian and Saxon identities,⁵⁵ but that need not rule out a political identification as well, and, indeed, cults could have been utilised to support the latter’s formation.⁵⁶

We can begin further discussion with the Jutes who retained a common political identity into the time covered by Bede’s informants whereas any earlier Anglian or Saxon confederations appear to have been superseded in the circumstances that led to the formation of individual Anglian and Saxon kingdoms of the seventh century. The name of the Jutes is not preserved in a later kingdom name, but Bede explains that the people of Kent (*Cantuari*), the *gens* of the Isle of Wight and “also that (*gens*) opposite the Isle of Wight, that part of the kingdom of the West Saxons which is still today called *Iutarum natio*” were all of Jutish origin.⁵⁷ Place-names from southern Hampshire

community of the realm”, *History* (1983) pp. 375–90; I.N. Wood, “Ethnicity and the ethnogenesis of the Burgundians”, *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 1, ed. W. Pohl and H. Wolfram, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 201. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 12 (Wien 1990) pp. 53–69.

⁵⁵ C. Hills, “Spong Hill and the Adventus Saxonum”, *Spaces of the Living and Dead: an Archaeological Dialogue*, ed. C.E. Karkov, K.M. Wickham-Crowley and B.K. Young, *American Early Medieval Studies* 3 (Oxford 1999) pp. 15–26.

⁵⁶ As the cult of Woden may have done in the later sixth and seventh centuries. For arguments for cult underpinning kingdom formation in Scandinavia see L. Hedeager, “Myth and art: a passport to political authority in Scandinavia during the migration period”, *The Making of Kingdoms*, pp. 151–6.

⁵⁷ Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 1,15, pp. 50–1.

incorporating the name “Jute” appear to confirm the latter part of Bede’s claim.⁵⁸ By the seventh century the common Jutish identity claimed by Kent and Wight was encapsulated by a claim that their ruling houses shared ancestors and that they led a migration of Jutish people to their respective provinces.⁵⁹ What may lie behind the links between Kent, Wight and southern Hampshire is that these areas controlled the shortest crossings between Britain and Francia.⁶⁰ One of the ways in which the Kentish cemeteries differ from others in Anglo-Saxon England is through their greater inclusion of imported material that came from Francia.⁶¹ Elite burials of Kentish type are known from the Isle of Wight, though unfortunately mostly through inadequately recorded excavations of the nineteenth century,⁶² and recent metal-detector finds are producing more Kentish and Frankish material from the island.⁶³ But Francia may have been more than just a trading partner, and Ian Wood has argued for substantial Frankish political influence in Kent (and this might also mean in the other Jutish areas) for much of the sixth century.⁶⁴

Tracing and dating the origins of the shared Jutish identity of these three areas is no easy matter, but the archaeological evidence suggests that it could be older than the establishment of the royal house of Kent. This too cannot be dated exactly. The first Kentish king who is known to have ruled is Eormenric, who, on the evidence provided by Gregory of Tours on the marriage of his son Æthelbert to a daughter of King Charibert of the Franks, was ruling by c. 580.⁶⁵ The Kentish royal genealogy swiftly plunges into

⁵⁸ Yorke, “Jutes”, pp. 90–1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 84–96. A foundation legend is also recorded for the southern Hampshire Jutes in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which has stylistic features in common with the accounts of the supposed ancestors of the royal houses of Wight and Kent.

⁶⁰ B.A.E. Yorke, “Gregory of Tours and sixth-century Anglo-Saxon England”, *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I.N. Wood (Leiden 2002) pp. 113–30.

⁶¹ J. Huggett, “Imported grave goods and the early Anglo-Saxon economy”, *Medieval Archaeology* 32 (1988) pp. 63–96.

⁶² C. Arnold, *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of the Isle of Wight* (London 1982), especially pp. 50–72, a rich female burial from Chessell Down.

⁶³ K. Ulmschneider, “Archaeology, History and the Isle of Wight in the Middle Saxon period”, *Medieval Archaeology* 43 (1999) pp. 19–44. Less Kentish and Frankish material is known from the cemeteries of southern Hampshire, but here too metal-detectorists are making significant new discoveries; Stoodley, “Female assemblages”.

⁶⁴ I.N. Wood, *The Merovingian North Sea* (Alingsås 1983).

⁶⁵ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 4,26, pp. 157–9; 9,26, p. 445, ed. B. Krusch and

the world of myth and divine ancestors beyond Eormenric,⁶⁶ though that need not, of course, mean there were not kings before him, either of his dynasty or another, for all we may be seeing here are the limits of individual memory at the time the genealogies were first written down, presumably in the seventh century. But it would be possible also to interpret the Kentish genealogical material as evidence for the concept of a Jutish *gens* existing before its individual provinces became kingdoms. Whether comparable histories should be inferred for the Angles and the Saxons in the sixth century is a more complex issue to which we can return after examining another of the key questions of this volume—the role of the Roman Empire in the process of the formation of kingdom and *gentes*.

*The role of the Roman Empire and the remains of its administration
in Britain*

One of the ways in which the diocese of Britain differed from other former Roman provinces studied in this volume is that its links with the Roman Empire had been formally severed before Germanic peoples began to settle within its borders. Although there have been doubts about whether the account transmitted by Zosimus of a revolt and expulsion of imperial officials in 409, leading to a letter from Emperor Honorius to the “cities” (*poleis*), actually refers to Britain,⁶⁷ it would appear to fit with Gildas’s account of the British *civitates* being informed by Rome that they must manage their own affairs in future and with the sudden cessation of Roman coin issues within

W. Levison, MGH SSrM 1,1 (2nd edn., Hannover 1951); N. Brooks, “The creation and structure of the kingdom of Kent”, *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. S. Bassett (Leicester 1989) pp. 55–74, here pp. 64–7; I.N. Wood, “The mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English”, *Speculum* 69 (1994) pp. 1–17, here pp. 10–1.

⁶⁶ Brooks, “Kingdom of Kent”, pp. 58–64.

⁶⁷ Zosimus, *Histoire Nouvelle* VI,10,2, ed. and transl. F. Paschoud, vol. 3 (Paris 1989) p. 13; J.F. Matthews, “Olympidorus of Thebes and the history of the west (A.D. 407–425)”, *Journal of Roman Studies* 60 (1970) pp. 79–97; E.A. Thompson, “Britain A.D. 406–10”, *Britannia* 8 (1977) pp. 303–18; id., “Fifth-century facts”, *Britannia* 14 (1983) pp. 272–4; P. Bartholomew, “Fifth-century facts”, *Britannia* 13 (1982) pp. 261–70; I.N. Wood, “The fall of the western empire and the end of Roman Britain”, *Britannia* 18 (1987) pp. 251–62. See also A. Woolf (this volume).

Britain.⁶⁸ As we have seen, the standard interpretation of recent years has favoured the collapse and disappearance of Roman institutions in eastern England, but there is evidence that points in a different direction and which could mean, even if the Roman Empire had no direct involvement in affairs in Britain after the beginning of the fifth century, that there was a significant legacy to its subRoman heirs. At the risk of appearing simplistic, one can begin by observing that the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of the early seventh century, especially those of the southern and eastern coastal areas, were not dissimilar in size and geographical extent to the Roman *civitates* on which power apparently devolved in c. 410. The kingdom of Kent actually retained the name of the former Roman *civitas* that occupied much the same area,⁶⁹ while the name of the kingdom of Lindsey derives from that of the former provincial capital of Lincoln.⁷⁰ Other east coast kingdoms appear to have had boundaries broadly corresponding with those of former *civitates*. The kingdoms of the East Angles, East and South Saxons seem to have occupied territories broadly comparable to those of the *civitates* of the Iceni, Trinovantes and Regni respectively. Key subdivisions of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were the *regiones* that would seem to be units with much in common with the *pagi*, the administrative subdivisions of the *civitates* that may often have been based on significant Iron Age settlement districts. *Vici*, small Roman towns, were often the centres from which *pagi* were administered and both name, and possibly function, may be preserved in the *wicham* place-names of early Anglo-Saxon England.⁷¹ Although in the absence of any survival of administrative records from Roman Britain the actual extent of any *pagus* or *vicus* territory has to remain uncertain, nevertheless evidence for continuity with a later *regio* can sometimes be suggestive.⁷² The early medieval

⁶⁸ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 18, p. 94; J. Kent, "The end of Roman Britain: the literary and numismatic evidence reviewed", *The End of Roman Britain*, ed. P.J. Casey, British Archaeological Reports, British series 71 (Oxford 1979) pp. 15–27.

⁶⁹ Brooks, "Kingdom of Kent", pp. 57–8; the detailed account of the Kentish foundation legend preserved in the *Historia Brittonum* purports to record how the province passed from subRoman to Saxon hands.

⁷⁰ S. Bassett, "Lincoln and the Anglo-Saxon see of Lindsey", *Anglo-Saxon England* 18 (1989) pp. 1–32.

⁷¹ M. Gelling, "English place-names from the compound *wicham*", *Medieval Archaeology* 12 (1967) pp. 87–104; C.J. Balkwill, "Old English *wic* and the origins of the hundred", *Landscape History* 15 (1993) pp. 5–11.

⁷² B. Eagles, "The archaeological evidence for settlement in the fifth to seventh

landscape can be seen to have evolved out of the late Roman without having to resort to arguments for radical change having occurred,⁷³ and the detection in certain areas of what would appear to be a coincidence of the territories of major Anglo-Saxon cemeteries with areas dependent on Roman villas may also point to some continuity not only in the use of the Roman landscape,⁷⁴ but also of aspects of the organisational structures which were an integral part of it. The major Anglo-Saxon unit of measurement for land, the hide, on which liability for public services and royal dues was made, has also been proposed as having its ultimate origin in the Roman period.⁷⁵ If such arguments are accepted, the evidence goes beyond survival of settlement districts to an implication of their continuing use as taxable units throughout the fifth and sixth centuries, but to many that would seem a big “if”.

The accounts of Gildas and Zosimus imply that the *civitates* may have become the unit around which subRoman government of Britain was organised, a proposition which receives additional support from the fact that *civitas* territories seem to have become the basis of the British kingdoms known to Gildas in the west of Britain.⁷⁶ It may even have been the case, as Martin Millet has suggested that the *pagi* served as the powerbases of local magnates who were councillors of the *civitas*.⁷⁷ But there is an additional factor that has to be taken into account when assessing how affairs in subRoman Britain

centuries A.D.”, *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex*, ed. M. Aston and C. Lewis (Oxford 1994) pp. 13–32, here p. 24; Williamson, *Origins of Hertfordshire*, pp. 66–74, though admittedly these examples are from an inland area away from the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlements and with very few “Germanic” finds of fifth or sixth centuries.

⁷³ Powlesland, “Early Anglo-Saxon settlements”, pp. 101–24.

⁷⁴ For example, T. Williamson, *The Origins of Norfolk* (Manchester 1993) pp. 58–69.

⁷⁵ P.S. Barnwell, “*Hlafeta, ceorl, hid* and *scir*: Celtic, Roman or Germanic?”, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Archaeology and History* 9 (1996) pp. 58–61. The problem over issues such as these, in the absence of documentary records, is whether there is a genuine institutional continuity or one dictated by the natural geography and by the impact of earthworks, or other structures made in Roman or earlier times, on the natural landscape. Bede saw the hide as a distinctively “English” form of assessment; see Brooks, *Bede and the English*, p. 10.

⁷⁶ W. Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester 1982) pp. 85–102; B.A.E. Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (London 1995) pp. 12–24; A. Woolf (this volume) suggests that in parts of lowland Britain *civitates* may have remained units of government controlled by *judices* without making the transition to becoming kingdoms—an argument with analogies for what is proposed here for eastern England. See also K.R. Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire* (Stroud 2000) pp. 144–9.

⁷⁷ M. Millet, *The Romanization of Britain* (Cambridge 1990) pp. 149–51.

may have been organised and that is the late Roman reorganisation of the diocese of Britain into four, or possibly five, provinces each with its own capital city and governor (*praeses* or *rector*) responsible to the *vicarius Britannorum*.⁷⁸ How far this provincial organisation survived beyond 410 is, of course, unknown, but initial survival of the provinces as the major units of political administration in fifth-century Britain might help to explain how areas of the country came to have such different histories in the later fifth and sixth centuries. The western province of Britannia Prima, dependent on Cirencester, can be seen as having taken a line of development that led it in a quite different direction from the provinces of south and east. Ultimately its orientation turned westwards rather than eastwards so that it came to have more in common with other Irish Sea and western Atlantic areas.⁷⁹ The two eastern provinces of Flavia Caesariensis and Maxima Caesariensis may also have operated as separate units which could explain the broad Anglian and Saxon divisions in the eastern half of England. The rough boundary that can be drawn from archaeological and written evidence between Anglian and Saxon areas broadly corresponds with the boundary suggested for these two late Roman provinces.⁸⁰ If this explanation is acceptable—and that may be another big “if”—one could postulate that Anglian and Saxon identities began to form among the Germanic settlers of two areas that were distinct in part because they had different subRoman governments. We need not assume that the two provinces had identical histories even though ultimately they both came to be dominated by rulers who claimed a Germanic origin—nor that they were necessarily allies bearing in mind Gildas’s analysis of civil war as one of the major weaknesses of the British polities;⁸¹ indeed, warfare between the two provinces might help to explain the circumstances in which Germanic leaders with warbands became the dominant

⁷⁸ P. Salway, *Roman Britain* (Oxford 1981) pp. 316–9; 505–38; C.A. Snyder, *An Age of Tyrants: Britain and the Britons, A.D. 400–600* (Stroud 1998) pp. 3–25.

⁷⁹ See A. Woolf this volume, but the distinction he draws between developments in the “highland” areas of western Britain and its “lowland” areas should be noted; see also Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire*.

⁸⁰ As suggested by Alan Vince in discussion at the 47th *Sachsen Symposium* in York in 1996. For the boundaries see Salway, *Roman Britain*, map 7.

⁸¹ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 21, pp. 95–6; D.N. Dumville, “The idea of government in sub-Roman Britain”, *After Empire. Towards an Ethnology of Europe’s Barbarians*, ed. G. Ausenda, *Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology* (Woodbridge 1995) pp. 177–216.

power. There would seem to have been a greater density of Germanic settlement in the Anglian province and a continued link with the North Sea homelands.⁸² One might speculate that it came under Germanic control at an earlier date than the Saxon province in which settlement by Germanic incomers was apparently initially confined to certain districts only.⁸³ West Saxon royal tradition that included as their founder Cerdic, who had a “British” rather than Saxon name, may also suggest a more complex entwining of British and Germanic power structures in this province.⁸⁴

In the absence of adequate written records any attempt to reconstruct political events in eastern England can be only hypothesis, but it is one constructed in the light of developments in northern Gaul where Ægidius or his son Syagrius may have established a kingdom comparable in extent to one of the British provinces.⁸⁵ The *superbus tyrannus*, who together with his council was castigated by Gildas for first allowing the “Saxons” into Britain, could be a candidate for the ruler of a British province controlled through its *civitates*,⁸⁶ while the presence in Gaul c. 470 of a British king Riothamus with his army and fleet is further evidence that rulers with considerable power and resources had emerged in fifth-century Britain (though it is not known from what part he came).⁸⁷ A fleeting view of eastern Britain in the earlier part of the fifth century comes from Constantius’s *Life of St Germanus of Auxerre* which suggests that in the 420s and 430s Britain could still appear to a visitor from Gaul as a basically Romanised province,⁸⁸ an observation which is all the more interesting as the archaeological evidence suggests that a major transformation of many of the essential features of Romanised Britain had already taken place by that date.⁸⁹

⁸² Hines, *Scandinavian Character*; Hills, “People of Spong Hill”, pp. 145–9.

⁸³ Notable areas with few apparent signs of early Germanic culture are districts around the *civitas* capitals of Chichester, Silchester and Verulamium; Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire*, pp. 97–103.

⁸⁴ R. Coates, “On some controversy surrounding *Gewisae/Gewissei, Cerdic and Ceawlin*”, *Nomina* 13 (1989/90) pp. 1–11; Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire*, pp. 75–8.

⁸⁵ James, “Origins of barbarian kingdoms”, pp. 46–7.

⁸⁶ Gildas, *Ruin of Britain* 23, p. 97.

⁸⁷ Dumville, “The idea of government”, pp. 181–2, and further discussion pp. 206–8.

⁸⁸ Constantius of Lyon, *Vie de St Germain d’Auxerre* 3,12–18, pp. 144–59; 5,25–27, pp. 170–3, ed. R. Borius, Sources Chrétiennes 112 (Paris 1965).

⁸⁹ A.S. Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain* (London 1989).

It might not strain credulity too much to suggest that British rulers could have emerged in control of the eastern provinces of late Roman Britain, but where can we go from there? Do we envisage Anglian and Saxon equivalents of Childeric taking control of these former Roman provinces, though without successfully maintaining and spreading their power as Childeric's descendants were able to do? The idea of Anglian and Saxon provinces each with their own ruler might account for the appearance of distinct Anglian and Saxon identities that has already been discussed, but is otherwise without any support. If we are to consider some sort of Germanic take-over of British provincial structure it might be possible to envisage it supported by some more devolved form of power-sharing recorded elsewhere within the Germanic world. Bede, for instance, recorded that the Old Saxons had no king, but *satrapas* who controlled different districts (*Gau*) within the Old Saxon province and might temporarily unite under one leader in times of war.⁹⁰ When eastern England was briefly under Viking control in the late ninth and early tenth centuries there appears to have been a system of districts (based on existing Anglo-Saxon territorial units) in which subdivisions of the army may have settled and, presumably, were supported to some extent through tribute payments.⁹¹ Such a devolved system of power in the eastern and southern districts of England in the late fifth and early sixth centuries could explain both how Anglians and Saxons came to have an identity as distinct *gentes* and how Roman administrative subdivisions might have continued to have significance within this period. It would not necessarily be incompatible with interpretations of the archaeological evidence that sees little evidence for a marked hierarchy at this time and only temporary acquisitions of a broader powerbase by the

⁹⁰ Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 5,10, pp. 480–5. For further discussion of the arrangements in Saxony see T. Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages 800–1050* (Harlow 1991) pp. 65–7, and M. Becher, “Die Sachsen im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert”, 799—*Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn. Beiträge zum Katalog der Ausstellung Paderborn 1999*, ed. C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff (Mainz 1999) pp. 183–94. Bede may have used *satrapa* in part to indicate an unfamiliar political situation, but he was also influenced in his choice of vocabulary by an apposite biblical text.

⁹¹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* 1, pp. 100–4; C. Hart, “The Aldewerk and minster at Shelford, Cambridgeshire”, *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 8 (1995) pp. 43–68, especially pp. 54–8; L. Abrams, “Edward the Elder’s Danelaw”, *Edward the Elder 899–924*, ed. N. Higham and D. Hill (Manchester 2001) pp. 128–43.

more prominent households. But where it would differ from current interpretations based on the archaeological evidence is in seeing the kingdoms that emerged in the latter part of the sixth century as the result (or cause) of the break up of political/military confederations that had characterised the Anglian and Saxon provinces, rather than the result of a complete collapse of Roman systems and a building up from household units to district and ultimately kingdom control through the model of peer-polity interaction.⁹²

The circumstances that led to the formation of Anglo-Saxon regna

By the sixth century there would appear to have been distinctive Germanic *gentes* (the Angles, Saxons and Jutes), but neither written nor archaeological evidence that would confirm that these were also *regna*, or contained *regna* within them. Instead, they may have been controlled through distinctively Germanic forms of power-sharing that are attested amongst other Germanic peoples either in their homelands or in the early years of their contact with the Roman Empire.⁹³ Archaeological and written evidence could be in accord in seeing the development of *regna* and *reges* as a secondary development of the latter part of the sixth century that led to dissolution of the former Anglian and Saxon confederations and a rejection of the distinctive forms of dress (and presumably other distinguishing features which are harder to trace) that had signified membership

⁹² A major plank of the latter argument is the existence of *regiones* within the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms which have been seen as autonomous districts which became the "building blocks" through whose combination the kingdoms were constructed. The so-called "Tribal Hidage" list has been interpreted as providing support for this approach. This is too big an issue to pursue fully here, but suffice it to say that many historians are becoming increasingly wary of placing too much reliance on the "Tribal Hidage" whose original date and circumstances of composition are unclear. Nor is there unequivocal support from any narrative or administrative documents of the seventh or early eighth centuries for *regiones* having the type of autonomous existence that has been envisaged for them; rather they appear as settlement units utilised as administrative subdivisions of larger units and, unlike the kingdoms, they are never referred to as *gentes*. See Yorke, "Political and ethnic identity", pp. 82–6.

⁹³ See Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 2,9, pp. 52–8, and Hans-Werner Goetz (this volume, pp. 310–1) for the existence of many leaders among the Franks when they settled in Gaul in the fifth century.

of the Anglian and Saxon *gentes*. Can we explain the circumstances in which the development of *regna* took place?

Such developments are unlikely to have been monocausal, and there is not the space to explore fully the complex interweaving of factors which would have enabled individual families to aggregate power and wealth into their hands to such an extent that the distance they created between themselves and their nearest competitors was sufficiently great to allow them to establish themselves as royal houses. Different disciplines will stress differing factors. The rise in population that is generally felt to have taken place in the “Germanic” areas of Britain during the sixth century, and the ability to create and exploit agricultural surpluses and other avenues to wealth are elements that must be given due weight.⁹⁴ However, it may also be possible to see something of the political changes that encouraged concepts of royal power to develop.

For many of the peoples discussed in this volume it was direct involvement with the Roman Empire that encouraged the appearance of Germanic *regna*. The Roman Empire found it easier to deal with one all-powerful ruler rather than several sharing control, and after its collapse many native aristocracies too seem to have favoured the stability of royal power, that allowed the continuation of many facets of Roman provincial government, to the uncertainties of fluctuating authority under traditional Germanic leadership systems. Those living in southern and eastern Britain in the later fifth and sixth centuries would have had the opportunity to discover something of kingship in operation in the west and north of the country.⁹⁵ Anglian areas, in particular, may also have been stimulated by the possible move towards establishment of kingdoms in the North Sea homelands,⁹⁶ and, as in the Viking age, one should not rule out the movement of powerful leaders between the homelands and their

⁹⁴ Arnold, *Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*; Hamerow, “The earliest Anglo-Saxon kingdoms”.

⁹⁵ See A. Woolf (this volume).

⁹⁶ L. Hedeager, *Iron Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 B.C. to A.D. 700* (Oxford 1992); U. Näsman, “The ethnogenesis of the Danes and the making of a Danish kingdom”, *The Making of Kingdoms*, pp. 1–10. Care must be taken here as arguments for state-formation in Denmark and other North Sea areas have been influenced by models of peer-polity interaction applied to Anglo-Saxon England.

“colonies” in Britain as a possible destabilising factor. But the kingdom which is likely to have had most influence upon eastern and southern England, and to have acted as a model of post-Roman royal power, is that of the Franks. The Frankish connections of Kent, the first recorded Anglo-Saxon kingdom to emerge, are well-known, and Ian Wood has drawn together evidence to suggest that Frankish kings may have exercised some hegemony in southern England for much of the sixth century.⁹⁷ It may be possible to go further to suggest that it was the links with Francia that lay behind the formation of the Jutish confederation of Kent, the Isle of Wight and southern Hampshire in order to control the English Channel.⁹⁸ The Merovingian rulers may have acted in ways analogous to the Roman Empire to stimulate the development of kingship among *gentes* over which they had some influence, but which they were not contemplating absorbing into the Frankish realm. The Jutish *gentes* may not have had their own kings when first drawn into the Frankish orbit, but their continuing association with the greater power might have encouraged them to develop and would have provided a role-model for aspirants to follow.

It is possible that the Merovingians played a significant role in state-formation in other areas of southern Britain, and by so doing provided much of the impetus that broke up the former Anglian and Saxon confederations. Frankish involvement in the early years of the East Anglian kingdom is attested by Bede and other sources.⁹⁹ Ian Wood has suggested that Frankish hegemony may explain one of the great mysteries of early Anglo-Saxon kingship, the overlordship of southern England, as “names remembered in Canterbury as kings acknowledged by the Merovingians and subsequently misinterpreted”.¹⁰⁰ Alternatively Frankish rulers may have provided a rather different kind of stimulus by provoking a reaction against the control they were trying to establish over the Channel which might also have provided the circumstances in which powerful military leaders could transform themselves into the founders of royal dynasties. One

⁹⁷ Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp. 12–8.

⁹⁸ Yorke, “Gregory of Tours and sixth-century England”.

⁹⁹ Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 3,18, pp. 266–9; I.N. Wood, “The Franks and Sutton Hoo”, *People and Places in Northern Europe 500–1600. Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer*, ed. I.N. Wood and N. Lund (Woodbridge 1991) pp. 1–14.

¹⁰⁰ Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, p. 14.

of the main reasons Frankish rulers may have had for wishing to control the Channel was to reduce the activities of “Saxon” raiders attested in a variety of sources.¹⁰¹ The geographical origin of these “Saxons” is not given, but it is more likely that they were the Angles and Saxons of Britain rather than voyagers who had come directly from the North Sea homelands.¹⁰² Frankish attempts to cleanse the Channel may therefore have provoked a powerful response among those whose piratical livelihoods were thus threatened. Could it be that those first rulers of the southern English recorded by Bede, Ælle of the South Saxons and Ceawlin of the West Saxons, were men who attempted to organise a resistance to Frankish control of the Channel?¹⁰³ Their activities are hard to date exactly. For what it is worth, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that Ælle came to Britain in 477 and that Ceawlin began to reign in 560.¹⁰⁴ However, as David Dumville has shown comprehensively the West Saxon dates in the *Chronicle* are the result of a revision whose effect was to make the formation of the kingdom appear to have been earlier in date than actually seems to have been the case and the evidence of the earliest West Saxon regnal-lists is that Ceawlin would have ruled either 581–8 or 571–88.¹⁰⁵ It may well be the case that the reign of Ælle should also be placed somewhat later so that he was the immediate predecessor of Ceawlin.¹⁰⁶

Ælle and Ceawlin, if this tradition of their overlordship has any historical validity, could have been leaders of a resistance to Frankish hegemony, or alternatively its guarantors as their successors, Æthelbert of Kent and Raedwald of the East Angles, would appear to have

¹⁰¹ I.N. Wood, “The Channel from the 4th to the 7th centuries A.D.”, *Maritime Celts, Frisians and Saxons*, ed. S. McGrail, Council for British Archaeology Research Report 71 (London 1990) pp. 93–7; Yorke, “Gregory of Tours and sixth-century England”.

¹⁰² Anglo-Saxon territories in Britain could have provided temporary bases for North Sea fleets that might later return home; later Viking activities provide an obvious possible analogy. For the early Anglo-Saxons as pirates see also J. Heywood, *Dark Age Naval Power* (London 1991) especially pp. 54–62.

¹⁰³ Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 2,5, pp. 148–51.

¹⁰⁴ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* 1, pp. 14–5; 18–9.

¹⁰⁵ The uncertainty is because variant traditions give the alternative of seven or seventeen years for his reign. D.N. Dumville, “The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the chronology of early Wessex”, *Peritia* 4 (1985) pp. 21–66.

¹⁰⁶ The entry in the *Chronicle* for 560 links the accession of Ceawlin with that of another Ælle, the king of Deira. 560 would in fact be a suitable date for the accession of the South Saxon Ælle.

been. What may be of greater moment is to note that the period in which a new confederation of southern English is said to have come into existence, the latter part of the sixth century, is the same period in which the first of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms familiar to Bede seem to have emerged. Hazy though the picture is, it appears that something happened in the latter part of the sixth century which led to the break up of the former Anglian and Saxon confederations, to the creation of a temporary new confederation of "southern English" and ultimately to the emergence of kingdoms, apparently based in a number of cases on former *civitas* units that had previously been united in the Anglian and Saxon confederations. That something new and decisive occurred at this time is also suggested by the rejection in the upper reaches of Anglo-Saxon society of the distinctive forms of dress and decoration which had proclaimed them to be members of the Anglian or Saxon confederations in favour of new forms that signalled that they too were "heirs of Rome" like those living in other *regna* of the former Roman Empire.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

Consideration of early Anglo-Saxon history has suggested that there are parallels in the formation of *gentes* and *regna* with what occurred in other former provinces of the Roman Empire when they were settled by Germanic peoples, even if the scale and chronology appear different. The Anglo-Saxon evidence supports the view that there could be a *gens* before there was a *regnum*. Although aspects of interpretation can be controversial, written and archaeological evidence appears to support the existence of Anglian, Saxon and Jutish *gentes* before individual Anglo-Saxon kingdoms came into existence. These *gentes* bore the names of peoples in the North Sea homelands, but should not be seen as identical with them. The archaeological evidence shows that their material culture—and so presumably other aspects of their identity as *gentes*—had been affected by the migration to Britain which had brought peoples from various different

¹⁰⁷ However, Germanic elements, especially descent from the gods, were initially also very important in supporting the new kingly regimes as discussed above; see Yorke, "Reception of Christianity".

Germanic *gentes* together, as well as opening them to new experiences as a result of settlement in a former Roman province, even if their experience of *Romanitas* may have been less concentrated than that of Germanic settlers in some other former areas of the Roman Empire. The most controversial aspect of this paper is the hypothesis that the Anglian, Saxon and Jutish *gentes* may have developed within a territorial and administrative framework inherited from the late Roman world and that they had, at least in a very broad sense, a political identity. However, that political identity may not have been expressed in the late fifth and early sixth centuries through the development of kingship. The nature of their governmental organisation is therefore very difficult to establish without the benefit of written records describing its operation, but it can perhaps be presumed to be similar to that dimly discerned in the Germanic homelands, for instance, among the Old Saxons, or among some of the other Germanic peoples such as the Franks when they first came into contact with literate commentators.

The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that began to develop towards the end of the sixth century are therefore a secondary development that grew out of the earlier *gentes* and, it is suggested here, a dissolution of the political order that had supported them. In the new kingdoms we can see a very self-conscious expression of new political identities in which *gens* and *regnum* were equated and the establishment of both ascribed to the founder of the royal dynasty. The new political order could draw upon both Germanic tradition, particularly that of myth and religion, and ape the tactics of Germanic dynasties already established in former parts of the Roman Empire which had utilised imperial trappings to underpin their regimes. Partly through such emulation the new Anglo-Saxon dynasties came to appreciate the value of Christianity in underpinning state-formation, and as a result of their new religion they, like other Germanic *gentes* within the former Roman Empire, came to absorb and internalise the biblical and classical traditions that explained how new *gentes* had been formed.¹⁰⁸ There may have been less of the constitutional and physical remains of the Roman world for the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to inherit than in some other parts of the former Roman Empire (though this paper favours some facets surviving), but ideas could be imported.

¹⁰⁸ Patrick J. Geary in his paper delivered at the symposium.

When it came to the ideology and vocabulary of *gens* and *regnum* the Anglo-Saxons of the seventh and eighth centuries were in accord with the other Germanic *gentes* and *regna* that had grown out of the dissolution of the Roman Empire in western Europe.

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GENS, REX AND REGNUM OF THE LOMBARDS*

Jörg Jarnut

1. *Is there a development from a Germanic gens of the Migration Period to a Germanic kingdom? Or does a gens (or this gens) not exist until after the establishment of a kingdom?*

The question of the relationships between *gens* and *rex*, between people and king, or between *gens* and *regnum*, people and kingdom, can, in the case of the Lombards, partly be easily answered, partly answered only with the greatest difficulty. The reason for this lies, above all, in the nature of the sources. Though there are relatively many Lombard sources from the middle of the seventh century onwards, information about their pre-Italian phases and the first century of their Italian history can almost only be gathered from these later sources. This means that only one of the eight centuries of Lombard history, as it is transmitted via written sources, can be seen through the eyes of Lombard (near)contemporaries. For the other seven centuries (leaving apart the information of little relevance transmitted by antique authors), we are forced to use Lombard memory—with its mythical dimensions—of the seventh and eighth centuries as the basis of our historical construction.¹

The “beginnings” of the Lombards, then, are especially obscure. The little information on the subject given by antique authors during the first two centuries A.D. only testify to their existence, to their name, to their settlement in the area of the Lower Elbe and to a few political-military actions. However, Velleius Paterculus in the first half of the first century A.D. refers to them as a *gens*.² One thing all

* Given the comparative character of this book, the main questions will be dealt with in the given order in this article.

¹ The most important Lombard narrative sources are: *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, ed. G. Waitz, MGH SSrL (Hannover 1878), Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, ed. L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, *ibid.*, and the *Origo gentis Langobardorum codicis Gothani*, ed. G. Waitz, *ibid.*

² Velleius Paterculus, *Historiarum libri duo* 2,106, ed. W.S. Watt, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig 1988) p. 73.

these sources have in common is that they neither tell us about the “constitution” (*Verfassung*) of the Lombard *gens*, nor if they were led by a king.

The seventh and eighth centuries, the period in which the most significant later sources were written, was a period in which Lombard history was largely determined by the kings at Pavia and by the élites dependent on them. If the circumstances described in these sources are projected back onto a largely obscure past, the danger is of creating a false impression that can as easily disorient as inform us about the relationships between *gens*, *rex* and *regnum*.

It is, therefore, all the more remarkable that both the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, the oldest Lombard narrative source dating from the second half of the seventh century, and the (partly) dependant history of the Lombards written by Paul the Deacon, agree that the Lombards from the time of their mythical Scandinavian origins were led by *principes* or *duces*.³

In 643, King Rothari began his law-book by listing his predecessors, a record allegedly based on the statements of old men. It was presented by him as comprising the names of all the kings *ex quo in gente nostra Langobardorum reges nominati coeperunt esse*. This list—undoubtedly serving as establishing the king’s legitimacy as legislator—indicates, on the one hand, that according to seventh-century Lombard memory the time of the kings was preceded by a kingless period, and, on the other, that the list of seventeen names, beginning with Agilmund, from the Gucing family, and ending with the Harud Rothari, should be considered as an official catalogue.⁴ In the eyes of Rothari and these elders, it listed all the Lombard kings. The most important thing that this catalogue shows, however, is that in the middle of the seventh century the Lombards considered their *gens*, rather than their kingship, as the more ancient entity, and that they, thus, considered their *regnum* as a creation of their *gens*.

It is not surprising that the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, which is closely linked to the Edict in its transmission, presents relationships in a similar way: after the Scandinavian, kingless phase of Lombard

³ *Origo gentis Langobardorum* 1, p. 2: *principes*; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1,7, p. 52; 1,14, p. 54: *duces*.

⁴ *Edictus Rothari* Prol., ed. F. Bluhme, MGH LL 4 (Hannover 1868) p. 2.

history, the Lombards made the Gucing Agilmund, allegedly a son of Agio, king.⁵ Here, too, *gens* exists before *regnum*.

Paul the Deacon, who, among other sources, used the *Origo* for his *Historia Langobardorum*, copies this account. He adds, however, that the Lombards no longer wished to be ruled by *duces* as before, but that, after the example of other *gentes*, they desired a king and acted accordingly; an observation to which we will return later.⁶

The *Historia Langobardorum* from the Gotha Codex, composed shortly after 800 and hence the most recent of our four main sources, also recounts how the Lombards chose Agilmund as their first king.⁷ In this source it is made fairly clear that this must have happened in the area where they settled near the Elbe. Hence, from there the Lombards under Agilmund must have advanced upstream along the Elbe as far as Bohemia.⁸ Combining this with the somewhat vague information provided by the *Origo* and Paul the Deacon, the well-founded hypothesis has been put forward that at the end of the fourth century Agilmund was made king, of those Lombards who separated from the others at the Lower Elbe and went south under his leadership.⁹ A surprising, but unprovable, temporal specification of this assumption can be found in the Renaissance copy of the chronicle by Prosper Tiro, where it is maintained that Agilmund became king in 389.¹⁰

As a provisional answer to our initial question it ought to be borne in mind that the main sources from the seventh and eighth centuries

⁵ *Origo gentis Langobardorum* 2, p. 3.

⁶ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1,14, p. 54. Cf. below [part 2, § 3].

⁷ *Origo gentis Langobardorum codicis Gothani* 2, p. 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*: *Postquam de eadem ripa, ut supra dictum est, Langobardi exierunt, sic Scatenauga Albiae fluvii ripa primis novam habitationem posuerunt; sic deinde certantes Saxoniae patria attingerunt, locus ubi Patesbruna cognominantur; ubi sicut nostri antiqui patres longo tempore asserunt habitasse, et in multis partibus bella et pericula generarunt. Ibiq; primis regem levaverunt nomine Agelmund. Cum ipso de hoc loco in antea patrias ad suam partem expugnare coeperunt; unde in Beoviniadis aciem et clauses seu tuba clangencium ad suam proprietatem perduxerunt; unde usque hodie praesentem diem Wachoni regi eorum domus et habitatio apparet signa.*

⁹ See especially H. Fröhlich, *Studien zur langobardischen Thronfolge. Von den Anfängen bis zur Eroberung des italienischen Reiches durch Karl den Großen (774)*, 2 vols. (Doct. diss. Tübingen 1980) vol. 1, esp. p. 32; J. Jarnut, "Zur Frühgeschichte der Langobarden", *Studi Medievali* 3^a ser. 24/1 (1983) pp. 1–16, esp. pp. 13–5.

¹⁰ *Interpolationes chronici Prosperi insertae saec. XV*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 9,1 (Berlin 1882) p. 498. The reference to this late and hardly used source in R. Schneider, *Königswahl und Königserhebung im Frühmittelalter. Untersuchungen zur Herrschaftsnachfolge bei den Langobarden und Merowingern*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 3 (Stuttgart 1972) p. 10 n. 27.

maintain that the previously kingless *gens Langobardorum*, presumably at the end of the fourth century, had consciously decided to introduce kingship. Accordingly, the *gens* must already have existed long before the *regnum*. Whether this version of events has any relation to reality is, admittedly, by no means certain. The Old English poem *Widsith*, possibly composed in the late seventh century, mentions—apart from the rulers Agilmund, Audoin and Alboin attested to in Lombard tradition¹¹—no less than six kings of the Lombards (or Lombard tribes) none of whom are recorded in Lombard tradition itself.¹² Following a plausible hypothesis formulated by Reinhard Wenskus and the editor of *Widsith*, Kemp Malone, these six kings may have ruled over the Lombards who stayed behind by the Lower Elbe.¹³ Nonetheless, it cannot be completely excluded that at least some of these reigned before Agilmund, and that Lombard kingship, therefore, already existed before the end of the fourth century. We must, therefore, resign ourselves to the fact that we know little with any certainty about Lombard political arrangements before their (partial) departure from the Lower Elbe. Still, the possibility exists that contrary to later Lombard sources they were ruled by kings already then. The saga of Gambara, Ibor and Agio, however, seems to render it more plausible that the Lombards were constituted as a *gens*—without kingship necessarily being part of this concept at the beginning of the process. Formulating this idea it ought, though, once more to be emphasised that it is in the main based on a saga written down in the seventh century, which purports to record events from the first century B.C.

2. *What sorts of changes and conditions lead to, or represent the development towards, the establishment of a Germanic kingdom?*

According to the later sources discussed above, the migration from Scandinavia of the proto-Lombards, who at that time still went by the name of Winniler, took place under the leadership of the *duces*

¹¹ *Widsith* 70; 117, ed. K. Malone (Copenhagen 1962) pp. 25–6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 23, p. 23; 32, p. 24; 48, p. 24; 49, p. 24; 117, p. 26. For the identification of the kings, see Malone's "Glossary of Proper Names", pp. 126 ff.

¹³ Cf. R. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln-Graz 1961) pp. 489–90; *Widsith*, esp. pp. 108; 162–5.

or *principes* Ibor and Agio and their mother Gambarā.¹⁴ The new *patriae* of Scoringa and Mauraingā, which are only mentioned by Paul the Deacon, as well as the area on the Lower Elbe in Golaida or Scatenaugē, which according to the other three main narrative sources the Lombards settled, are said to have been conquered by these *duces* or *principes*.¹⁵

It is, however, worth noting that all three sources—be it with varying degrees of clarity—link the separation of a part of the Lombards on the Lower Elbe to the introduction of the institution of kingship and—corresponding also with Rothari's list of kings—to the elevation of the first *rex Langobardorum*, Agilmund.

The three main narrative sources show, more or less clearly, that Agilmund was held to have led his people in the migration from the Lower Elbe. This means that he was made king, by the part of the people that separated from the others, in order to lead the imminent conquests. This would make Agilmund a typical military king (*Heerkönig*) according to Schlesinger's definition.¹⁶ Paul the Deacon's remark mentioned previously, that the Lombards no longer wished to be led by *duces* but rather raised him to the kingship *ad instar ceterarum gentium*,¹⁷ may be interpreted as a suggestion that the Lombards only began to follow the "success-model" of kingship during this period of expansion. If, however, the Lombards were already led by kings on the Lower Elbe then Agilmund's election may indicate that those Lombards who migrated wished to be considered equal in rank to those who stayed behind in Golaida.

How stable the institution of kingship was even under Agilmund may be gathered from the fact that the office was not abolished

¹⁴ Cf. references cited above.

¹⁵ *Origo gentis Langobardorum* 2, p. 3; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1,7–13, pp. 52–4; *Origo gentis Langobardorum codicis Gothani* 1–2, pp. 7–8. On the "migrations" of the Lombards, see most recently Jarnut, "Zur Frühgeschichte der Langobarden"; id., "I Longobardi nell'epoca precedente all'occupazione dell'Italia", *Langobardia*, ed. S. Gasparri and P. Cammarosano (Udine 1990) pp. 3–34 and—in part very different—from an archaeological viewpoint, M. Menke, "Archeologia longobarda tra la bassa Elba e l'Ungheria", *ibid.*, pp. 35–106; N. Christie, *The Lombards, The Peoples of Europe* (Oxford UK–Cambridge Mass. 1995) pp. 1–20.

¹⁶ W. Schlesinger, "Über germanisches Heerkönigtum", *Das Königtum. Seine geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen*, ed. T. Mayer, Vorträge und Forschungen 3 (Lindau–Konstanz 1956, 4th edn. 1973) pp. 105–41. See, further, Schneider, *Königswahl und Königserhebung*, pp. 8–9; Fröhlich, *Studien zur langobardischen Thronfolge* 1, pp. 31–5, and J. Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, Urban 339 (Stuttgart 1982) pp. 28–9.

¹⁷ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1,14, p. 54.

when Agilmund, at the beginning of the fifth century, suffered a catastrophic defeat against the Huns and died in battle.¹⁸ Various explanations may be given for this. For instance, in the seventh and eighth centuries Agilmund was presented as the son of the first and original leader, Agio, thereby constructing a wholly impossible dynastic continuity.¹⁹ Further, he appears to have belonged to a family of the upper nobility that traced its ancestry, or at least its prominent position, back to Wodan. Agilmund was, moreover, *ex genere Gugingus* and, even during the lifetime of Paul the Deacon, it was common knowledge that this *prosapia* (family) was considered *generosior* (more noble) than other comparable families.²⁰

However, more decisive for the survival of the institution of kingship, after the catastrophe against the Huns, was the fact that Agilmund had a ready successor in the person of Laiamicho, whom he had promoted and who was appointed king. This successor had all the necessary military qualifications and, above all, had already won a victory against the Huns that could erase the shame that his people had suffered by their devastating defeat.²¹

Two factors contributed fundamentally to further stabilise the Lombard kingship. On the one hand, with the third king Leth and his descendants a dynasty was established, which ruled for over 100 years during the fifth and sixth centuries and produced a further seven kings; on the other, there were several notable rulers among the first kings—like Godeoc who conquered Rugiland, Tato who defeated the Herules and Wacho who won large parts of Pannonia for the Lombards. However, the king who out-did and out-shone all of them was Alboin, who led his people to Italy in 568.²²

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1,16, pp. 55–6. Cf. also Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, pp. 17–8.

¹⁹ *Origo gentis Langobardorum* 2, p. 3; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1,14, p. 54. Cf. Fröhlich, *Studien zur langobardischen Thronfolge* 1, pp. 31–2; Schneider, *Königswahl und Königserhebung im Frühmittelalter*, pp. 9–10.

²⁰ *Edictus Rothari* Prol., p. 2; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1,14, p. 54. Cf. S. Gasparri, *La cultura tradizionale dei Longobardi. Struttura tribale e resistenze pagane* (Spoleto 1983), esp. pp. 23–5; 31–2; id., “Kingship rituals and ideology in Lombard Italy”, *Rituals of Power. From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. F. Theuvs and J.L. Nelson, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 8 (Leiden-Boston-Köln 2000) pp. 95–114, esp. pp. 101–2.

²¹ Cf. Schneider, *Königswahl und Königserhebung*, pp. 10–2; Fröhlich, *Studien zur langobardischen Thronfolge* 1, pp. 35–40; Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, p. 18.

²² Fröhlich, *Studien zur langobardischen Thronfolge* 1, pp. 41–67; Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, pp. 19–26; 33–5.

Soon after, though, the kingship plunged into its deepest crisis. After the assassination of the second Italian king, Clef, in 574, the *duces* were unable to decide upon a successor and therefore had to take over the leadership themselves, of the many small subgroups into which their *gens* had split. The Byzantines succeeded in winning several of them over to their side by considerable payments of money; some they even managed to recruit as high-ranking officers for the Roman army. Simultaneously, the emperor entered into a treaty of aggression with the Franks who had been threatened by Lombard assaults.²³

Less than a decade after the abolishment of their kingship, the Lombards stood facing the void. The subversion of their *gens* by Roman money, combined with the concurrent military threat from the *Imperium Romanum* and the superior Franks, raised the fear that the conquering people, so successful since 568, in Italy might come to an end that would be no less dramatic than that of the Gepids, whom they had recently destroyed. In this situation so threatening to their existence, the *duces* agreed to elevate one of their own, Clef's son Authari, to the kingship²⁴ and, in this way, to restore continuity to an institution that in the past had lent a certain internal unity to their *gens*.

It is important to realise how singular it is, in the history of the migration-period kingdoms, that the leadership of a *gens*—in a time of deep crisis—consciously decided to revive this institution in order that its unity, capacity to act, even its people's survival could be guaranteed. The choice of Authari, the son of Clef, may be interpreted as an additional personal measure designed to safeguard the continuity of the institution of kingship by bringing about a dynastic revival.

²³ See, for instance, L.M. Hartmann, *Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter*, vol. 2,1: *Römer und Langobarden bis zur Teilung Italiens* (Leipzig 1900) pp. 44–50; P. Delogu, “Il regno longobardo”, *Storia d'Italia*, vol. 1: *Longobardi e Bizantini*, ed. id., A. Guillou and G. Ortalli (Torino 1980) pp. 17–24; Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, pp. 37–9; W. Pohl, “The Empire and the Lombards: treaties and negotiations in the sixth century”, *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. id., *The Transformation of the Roman World 1* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1997) pp. 75–134, pp. 99–102.

²⁴ *Origo gentis Langobardorum* 6, p. 5; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 3,16, pp. 100–1.

In short, it can be established that the Lombards probably introduced kingship first and foremost in order to acquire a particularly efficient political-military system of organisation for the conquest and maintenance of new *patriae*. At the same time, their wish to establish an equality of position with other peoples, and possibly also with their fellow tribesmen who remained behind on the Lower Elbe, certainly also played a role.

3. *What is the role of a gentile identity (Stammesbewusstsein) for the establishment of a regnum?*

When reading the eighth-century sources, it is always the Lombards, the *gens Langobardorum* or the *Langobardi*, who elected their king—who consequently became a *rex Langobardorum*. In other words, it is presented as the collective action of a community with a shared sense of identity that founded and at the same time legitimised Lombard kingship.

According to the sources, all the kings from Rothari onwards presented themselves as *reges gentis Langobardorum* in their legislation.²⁵ In his edicts the king was especially concerned to confirm the tribal, and allegedly ancient, tradition of Lombard law, the codification of which would be of general benefit to his *gens*. The legitimisation of this law was guaranteed above all by the *consilium* and by the consensus of the *iudices* and the warriors, but also *per gairethinx secundum ritus gentis nostrae*.²⁶

There is a peculiar contrast between, on the one hand, the tribe-based strategies of legitimisation used by the kings as law-makers, and, on the other, the absolute royal title that they conferred upon themselves in their charters. So far, this contrast has never been satisfactorily explained.

The *rex gentis Langobardorum* was, therefore, acclaimed by his *gens* as their ruler and leader, and in this position was of rank fully equal to that of the other *reges*, whether they ruled over the Herules, the Gepids, the Goths or the Franks. As *rex Langobardorum* he was the central focal point of his *gens* and the embodiment of its tribal con-

²⁵ *Edictus Rothari* Prol., p. 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.* Prol., pp. 1–2; 386, pp. 89–90.

sciousness. Evidence for this may be found in the sources of the sixth to the eighth centuries, though it can only be assumed for the fourth and the fifth centuries, in which kingship was most probably established.

4. *What sorts of changes in the “constitution” (Verfassung) of a people and a kingdom (such as central organs of power, local power structures, or links between the two) are linked to the establishment of a kingdom? How do socio-economic developments contribute to this process?*

Strictly speaking, we can only answer these questions more or less hypothetically given the state of the sources, as explained in the previous. We simply do not know the “constitutional” situation of the Lombards before the election of their supposedly first king, Agilmund. Nor are these relations much clearer for the period before the conquest of Italy in 568. Better insights are gained only with Rothari’s Edict, with the initiation of a tradition of charter writing, and with the broader representation of Lombard history given by Paul the Deacon from the seventh century onwards. However, a vague hint in the *Origo*—stating that the Lombards after having left Golaida, that is, the Lower Elbe, *possiderunt aldonus Anthaib, Bainaib seu et Burgundaib*²⁷—permits the well-founded suspicion that under their first kings they forced the inhabitants of the conquered territories in eastern middle Europe into the status of half-free *aldii*. This would suggest that they were capable of subjecting these conquered people to physical, mainly agricultural, labour, while they themselves could lead free lives as warriors. If this interpretation is correct, the introduction of kingship may have transformed the *gens Langobardorum* from an at one time mainly agricultural society to a military one. This interpretation is supported by the continuous wars characterising Lombard history during the sixth and seventh centuries.

Prepared, in a sense, by the conquests of Rugiland and large parts of Pannonia, which still preserved significant vestiges of Roman infrastructure, the Lombards in 568 penetrated, in the course of their conquest of Italy, into a world that to a large extent still bore the stamp of Late Antiquity due to Gothic rule and to Justinian’s

²⁷ *Origo gentis Langobardorum* 2, p. 3.

restoration policies. The scope of this article permits the discussion of only a few aspects of the Lombard “constitution” as it was transformed by the extreme Late Antique character of their newly settled territory. From the perspective of *gens*, *rex* and *regnum* it ought to be stressed that in Italy, despite all the barbarising regressions of the preceding three centuries, there still existed a clear concept of the state and at least partially functioning state-structures that would have encouraged the development of Lombard kingship and the transformation of its *regnum* into a state.

Against this background, the Italian *regnum Langobardorum* developed by means of increasing centralisation, hierarchization and institutionalisation—tendencies which all strengthened its kingship.²⁸ It may, thus, be assumed, and this is in part confirmed by the sources, that these developments if not initiated then were at least encouraged by the kings. The emergence of Pavia as the royal capital of the *regnum Langobardorum* would have been decisive in this context, a situation that became firmly established from the 620s onwards. With its *sacrum palatium*, its magnificent churches and monasteries, and as a meeting place for the popular assembly, Pavia became both the factual and the ideological focus of the kingdom.²⁹ In similar ways, Benevento and Spoleto developed into centres with the *duces* of the duchies as their lords.³⁰

The royal *sacrum palatium* itself became a centre within the centre. Here, the king exerted his power over all who belonged to his *gens*. From there, he could also (to a greater or lesser extent) maintain his claim to power against the *duces* of individual *civitates*, even though the kings—like Agilulf or Liutprand—at times needed to struggle with them for decades for precedence.

²⁸ On the development of the Italian *regnum*, see most recently, for instance, Delogu, “Il regno longobardo”, esp. pp. 39–61; 83–6; 101–6; Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, esp. pp. 50–2; S. Gasparri, “Il regno Longobardo in Italia”, *Langobardia*, ed. id. and P. Cammarosano (Udine 1990) pp. 237–305; D. Harrison, *The Early State and the Towns. Forms of Integration in Lombard Italy, A.D. 568–774*, *Lund Studies in International History* 29 (Lund 1993) passim, esp. pp. 223–6.

²⁹ For the role of Pavia, see especially Harrison, *The Early State and the Towns*, s.v. Pavia; G.P. Brogiolo, “Capitali e residenze regie nell’Italia longobarda”, *Sedes regiae (ann. 400–800)*, ed. G. Ripoll and J.M. Gurt with A. Chavarría (Barcelona 2000) pp. 135–62, esp. pp. 144–51 (with further references).

³⁰ For an initial overview, cf. Harrison, *The Early State and the Towns*, ss. vv. Spoleto, Benevento.

Of importance to the realm, and especially for the kingship, were the royal domains organised by or possibly even first created in 584, which were led by gastalds, *actionarii* and other lower administrators. In the gastalds, the kings had ministers who were more dependent on them than the *duces*. Since Rothari's Edict, and especially since Liutprand, there are numerous examples of kings trying to establish these, and other office-holders, in a hierarchical organisation at the head of which stood the all-ruling and controlling king.³¹

Besides the centralising and hierarchical features favouring the kingship, another factor contributing to strengthening its position was the development of new fields of activity through the use of the Italian *leges*. King Rothari expressly emphasised that he had let old Lombard law be first recorded in written form in the interest predominantly of those with little power. The results of this undertaking were acclaimed in a splendidly staged event at the royal palace of Pavia by the great men and warriors of his people *per gairethinx secundum ritus gentis nostrae*. The king, who saw his work as a divine mission, could then convincingly present himself as the law-giver and highest judge acknowledged by the people. None of his *duces* or other magnates held a position that even approached his, and he was therefore able to impressively demonstrate his God-given uniqueness. It is hardly surprising that it was the most powerful Lombard kings, from Grimoald through to Liutprand and Aistulf, who sought to present themselves as great law-givers led by God, thus confirming their unique position within their people.³²

From the sixth century onwards, the kings succeeded in strengthening their position to a possibly even greater extent by laying claim to the right to decide on religious matters in the realm. With this we touch upon one of the most controversial chapters in the history of the Lombards: their Christianisation and consequently their Arianism

³¹ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 3,16, p. 101. On the royal domains and the office-holders, see, for instance, Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, esp. pp. 47–52; Gasparri, “Il regno longobardo in Italia”, pp. 254–62; 274–7; Harrison, *The Early State and the Towns*, esp. pp. 98–157.

³² Cf. Delogu, “Il regno longobardo”, pp. 55–61; Harrison, *The Early State and the Towns*, esp. pp. 105–9; 183–7; id., “Political rhetoric and political ideology in Lombard Italy”, *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998) pp. 241–54, esp. pp. 242–5.

or Catholicism.³³ It is impossible to treat this subject in all its detail here, and it must suffice to note that the Lombards, even before the conquest of Italy (certainly at least from the time of their migration from the Lower Elbe), had been exposed to Christian influences, and, from at least the sixth century, had partly converted to Christianity, be it in an Arian or a Catholic form. The majority of the *gens*, however, remained faithful to its traditional religion centred on Wodan. In any case, the emissaries of King Audoin could in the late 540's maintain to Emperor Justinian that the Lombards had been Catholic from the beginning;³⁴ whereas King Authari, on the other hand, forbade the Lombards to have their children baptised as Catholics.³⁵ However, his successor, Agilulf,—influenced by his Catholic wife Theodelinde—did exactly that when baptising his son Adaloald in 603.³⁶ With this act the complete Catholicisation of a people, which up to then had been religiously fragmented, was initiated. The entire seventh century is characterised by the success of the Catholic Church in silencing, with royal help, all its pagan and confessional opponents in the Lombard realm; a process we see from the baptism of Adaloald to the prohibition of Arianism by King Aripert I (653–662)³⁷ and to the defeat of the Three-Chapters-Schism brought about by the efforts of King Cunincpert in the year 698.³⁸ At the end of the seventh century, the Catholic Church in this way had risen to become the state Church, a development that even Arian kings, like Rothari and Grimoald, could not or would not change. Simultaneously, daily life became increasingly Christianised

³³ A lot of progress has been made on isolated questions regarding this chapter of Lombard history, but still the rather hypothetical and sometimes speculative research of G.P. Bognetti remains standard. Its essence has been gathered in *L'età longobarda*, 4 vols. (Milano 1966–68). Of particular significance is his monumental “S. Maria foris portas di Castelseprio e la storia religiosa dei Longobardi”, first published in 1948 and reprinted in vol. 2 of *L'età longobarda*, pp. 12–683. See, further, Delogu, “Il regno longobardo”, esp. pp. 30–3; 40–2; 96–101; Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, esp. pp. 53–4; 66–71; 125–7; Harrison, *The Early State and the Towns*, esp. pp. 73–82; 107–9; 152–3; 171–83; 204–12.

³⁴ Procopius, *Gotenkriege* 3,34, ed. O. Veh [Prokop, *Werke*] (München 1966) p. 662.

³⁵ *Gregorii I Papae Registrum Epistolarum* 1,17 (a. 591), ed. P. Ewald, MGH EE 1 (Berlin 1887) p. 23.

³⁶ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 4,27, p. 125.

³⁷ *Carmen de synodo Ticinensi*, ed. L. Bethmann, MGH SSrL (Hannover 1878) p. 190, ll. 3–5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 190, l. 21–p. 191, l. 15.

and could therefore indirectly, that is, via the churches, which were in his power, be shaped and controlled by the kings.

It is noteworthy that from the second half of the seventh century, the kingship increasingly expanded its monopoly, which it had had since the days of Rothari, to mint coins.³⁹ The result was that by the reign of King Desiderius no coins were produced apart from those originating under royal control. From the end of the seventh century, the king's likeness and his name on the coinage gave him a presence in everyday Lombard life that could not be attained via any other institution.⁴⁰

The economic and social differentiation that divided the Lombards into poor and rich, for which there is much evidence in the seventh century and which rapidly accelerated in the eighth, influenced daily life even more. This had important consequences for their fitness for military service according to the requirements still set in the time of King Rothari: the process of social differentiation had apparently led to a situation in which fewer Lombards met the criteria for being allowed to bear weapons. The Kings Liutprand and Aistulf, therefore, sought to resolve the military effects of that differentiation-process—and thereby to influence the process as a whole—by regulating the responsibilities of the impoverished *exercitales* towards the king.⁴¹

The king further secured a dominant position within his *gens* by having greater power than any other Lombard to determine who belonged to the *gens* and who did not. He had, for instance, a privileged position in the liberation of slaves, by having the power to determine if a freedman could become a member of the *gens Langobardorum*.⁴² Further, it was principally the kings who decided whether a warrior from another people was to be permitted a

³⁹ *Edictus Rothari* 242, p. 60.

⁴⁰ Cf. E. Bernareggi, *Moneta Langobardorum* (Milano 1983, English transl. Lugano 1989) passim; Harrison, *The Early State and the Towns*, pp. 119–23; J. Jarnut, “Münzbilder als Zeugnisse langobardischer Herrschaftsvorstellungen”, *Iconologia sacra. Festschrift für K. Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. H. Keller and N. Staubach, Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung 23 (Berlin-New York 1994) pp. 283–90; A. Rovelli, “Some considerations on the coinage of Lombard and Carolingian Italy”, *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. I.L. Hansen and C. Wickham, The Transformation of the Roman World 11 (Leiden-Boston-Köln 2000) pp. 195–223.

⁴¹ *Leges Liutprandi* 83, ed. F. Bluhme, MGH LL 4 (Hannover 1968) pp. 140–1; *Leges Aistulfi* 2,3, ed. F. Bluhme, *ibid.*, p. 196. Cf. also Delogu, “Il regno longobardo”, pp. 128–9; 133–44; 169; Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, pp. 97–101.

⁴² *Edictus Rothari* 224, pp. 54–5; *Leges Liutprandi* 55, p. 129.

similar role in the *gens Langobardorum*. Indeed, already King Tato's victory over the Herules in 508 had led to the admission of warriors from various other *gentes* into the Lombard army, by which they had become Lombards.⁴³ Alboin's bloody victory over the Gepids in 567 had a similar effect.⁴⁴ In 568, during his conquest of Italy, the latter also succeeded in integrating Saxons, Gepids, Bulgars, Sarmatians, Pannonians, Sueves and Noricans into the Lombard army, by which it was decisively strengthened.⁴⁵ Along similar lines, King Grimoald in the 660s took a rather large group of wandering Bulgars into his realm and settled them in the vicinity of Isernia.⁴⁶ Since the reign of Rothari the kings had maintained that groups wandering into the realm placed themselves under royal protection and thus, legally, became Lombards.⁴⁷

Surveying the changes in the "constitution", which can be traced in the sources from the establishment of Lombard kingship, we may conclude that throughout its development the kingship was evidently able to intensify and institutionalise its dominion and to open up new areas of activity. In doing so, it naturally also reacted to the significant social and economical changes, taking place after the establishment of Lombard rule in Italy, and used those, at least partially, for its own ends.

5. *What is the role of kings in this development?*

Since the changes in Lombard society and rulership, discussed in the previous section, would ultimately be incomprehensible if not placed within the context of the development of kingship, some repetition is inevitable in this section. This is also the reason that we will first return to the development of Pavia as the capital of the *regnum*, to the self-representation of the kings—from Rothari onwards—as divinely commissioned legislators and supreme judges, and to the key position that the kings, from the seventh century onwards, played in the religious development of their people.

⁴³ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1,20, p. 59.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1,27, pp. 69–70.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2,26, p. 87.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 5,29, p. 154.

⁴⁷ *Edictus Rothari* 367, p. 85.

The paramount importance of the kings and of kingship for the development of the *gens Langobardorum* in Italy was, from the reign of Agilulf (590–616), inseparably connected to their claim of being *rex Dei gratia*.⁴⁸ This claim, repeated continuously in, for instance, laws and charters, of having received their royal office by divine grace, elevated the kings and their activities far above the other members of their *gens*. At the same time, it strengthened the position of the *felicissima gens Langobardorum* as, thus, being led by God. It is remarkable that in a *gens*, which until the end of the seventh century was as religiously diverse as the Lombards, this concept of divine grace could be formulated by an Arian already by the end of the sixth century. The concept was consolidated in the seventh century under his Agilolfing Catholic successors, who made Catholicism the state religion. In the prologue to his new laws, King Liutprand could finally, in 717, formulate the by now indissoluble bonds between royal divine grace and the Catholicism of his people with the following Intitulatio: *Ego in Dei omnipotentis nomine Liutprand excellentissimus rex gentis felicissimae ac catholicae Deoque dilectae Langobardorum*.⁴⁹

Surveying the role of kingship in relation to the changes in the Lombard “constitution” (*Verfassung*), we have first to conclude that well-founded statements about this subject can only be made for the period from the end of the sixth century at the earliest. From the re-establishment of the kingship on, the kings clearly succeeded in securing and expanding both their acquired position of leadership as well as their traditional role as champions and supreme political leaders of their *gens*. They achieved this primarily by developing new policies; for example, in the areas of law and religion and by the centralisation and hierarchical organisation of government. The main reason that this was possible was that they convincingly presented their leading position, over the increasingly Christian and Catholic *gens*, as bestowed on them *gratia Dei*. Obviously, this involved a dialectical process between the religious changes within the *gens Langobardorum*—which became increasingly rooted in its Catholic environment—and its Catholic kings; the latter gaining from this

⁴⁸ S.R. Elze, “Per la storia della corona del tesoro di Monza”, *Atti del VI° congresso internazionale di studi sull’alto medioevo* (Spoleto 1980) pp. 393–400; cf. further Delogu, “Il regno Longobardo”, p. 43; Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, pp. 45–6; Harrison, *The Early State and the Towns*, pp. 118; 189.

⁴⁹ *Leges Liutprandi* a. 5, Prol., p. 109.

religious process in so far as it considerably strengthened their own position.

6. *What part does the Roman Empire play in this process?*

The influence of the *Imperium Romanum* on the Lombards has often been underestimated in older research, mainly because the latter were, according to the often-cited opinion of Velleius Paterculus, a *gens etiam Germana feritate ferocior*.⁵⁰ However, since this view dates from the period of Augustus it renders its validity for the situation during the Migration Period at least questionable.

When the Lombards in 488 occupied Rugiland, i.e. Lower Austria, they entered for the first time a region that had been influenced by Roman culture and civilisation. When they took possession of Pannonia after 510, they acquired old Roman provinces in which—even if they had only been under loose imperial control—(an admittedly weakened) Roman infrastructure survived, as well as the remains of Late Antique social and economic systems.

From the moment the Lombards penetrated these old spheres of culture, they, like other barbarian peoples in comparable circumstances, developed life-styles and forms of settlement that, on the one hand, as far as possible, preserved their old traditions, and, on the other, enabled the necessary adaptation to their new environment. According to the many and readily available excavation results, they settled as self-contained military units in or around fortifications of various kinds. Here, they also received tribute from the subject provincial Roman population. Already in Pannonia, they developed a preliminary version of the system of dominion over a large area that would characterise the first phase of their conquests in Italy.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Cf. above, note 2.

⁵¹ On the history of the Lombards between 488 and 568, see, most recently, Menke, “Archeologia longobarda tra la bassa Elba e l’Ungheria”, esp. pp. 87–104; J. Jarnut, “Die langobardische Herrschaft über Rugiland und ihre politischen Hintergründe”, *Westillyricum und Nordostitalien in der spätromischen Zeit*, ed. R. Bratož (Ljubljana 1996) pp. 207–213; id., “Die Langobarden zwischen Pannonien und Italien”, *Slovenija in sosednje dežele med antiko in karolinško dobo. Začetki slovenske etnogeneze—Slowenien und die Nachbarländer zwischen Antike und karolingischer Epoche. Anfänge der slowenischen Ethnogenese 1*, ed. R. Bratož (Ljubljana 2000) pp. 73–9; id., “I Longobardi nell’epoca precedente all’occupazione dell’Italia”, pp. 24–33; Christie, *The Lombards*, pp. 20–68.

Their integration into the Byzantine state reached a high-point during the 550s, when large Lombard military units, consisting of several thousand men, fought against the Ostrogoths in Italy and against the Persians in the eastern Mediterranean. Their status as *foederati* forced them to develop forms of military organisation that could bridge the differences between their archaic Germanic heritage and the highly complicated Byzantine military system. In this period, the functions of *dux* and *comes* took shape based on an amalgam of Byzantine and "Germanic" elements. On the one hand, the *dux* and *comes* (for which translations of "duke" and "count" are far from adequate) were officers after Byzantine example. On the other hand, they followed "old Germanic" traditions as leaders of their own retinue of military units over which they exercised supreme military and judicial power. In this arrangement the *dux* preceded the *comes*, and both fell under the king. Already at this time, the *de facto* fragmentation of power and the resulting antagonism between king and *duces* must have taken shape; a situation that would come to decide the history of the Lombards in Italy.⁵²

In short, we may conclude that the Lombards, in an environment whose stone buildings, streets and economic system must to their eyes still have seemed Roman, were influenced by Late Antique cultural forms even before their entrance into Italy. This was all the more so considering that in that sphere of life (which as warriors would have influenced them most) they were, as *foederati*, integrated into the East Roman state as part of the Byzantine army.⁵³

Compared to Pannonia how much stronger must this Roman influence have been in Italy, core land of the *Imperium*? Against this background, it would be inconceivable if it had not also influenced the development of the central institutions of the *gens Langobardorum*; that is, its kingship. Some aspects of this influence have been discussed already, a few more will be discussed in the following.

For the survival of the revived kingship after its most serious crisis, the *interregnum* of 584, it was undoubtedly of crucial importance

⁵² Cf. Hartmann, *Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter* 2,1, pp. 38–45.

⁵³ Cf. G.P. Bognetti, "L'influsso delle istituzioni militari romane sulle istituzioni longobarde del seccolo VI e la natura della fara", id., *L'età longobarda* 3 (Milano 1967) pp. 1–46; S. Gasparri, *I duchi Longobardi*, Studi storici 109 (Roma 1978), esp. pp. 10–2.

that the *duces* furnished it with half of the economic potential that had fallen to them, the *substantiae*, and that for this arrangement—as for previous ones—the custom of *hospitalitas* played a decisive part. However one wishes to interpret the two relevant and endlessly discussed passages in Paul the Deacon, concerning the division of land in Italy after the death of Clef and after the end of the *interregnum*, all the interpretations agree that it must be recognised that the economic organisation, and hence the economic existence of the kingship and the *duces*, ultimately rested on Roman foundations.⁵⁴

Certainly, it is no coincidence that Authari, who managed to splendidly fulfil the tasks given to him in 584 as integrator and defender of his *gens*, added the epithet *Flavius* to his name.⁵⁵ Thus he established an association with Romano-Gothic traditions, which eased the integration of non-Lombard subjects into the Lombard state. The gradual rise to power of Pavia as the central royal city in the seventh century, with its *sacrum palatium* as focal point, can only be understood with due consideration of the imperial *sacrum palatium* and the role of the imperial capital Constantinople/Byzantium. Further, the position of the king as legislator and highest judge, the figure that would dominate Lombard legal life from Rothari onwards, is only fully comprehensible when one considers the Roman emperor, legislator and judge, as its model. It goes without saying that it was Roman examples that inspired the Lombard king to date the charters produced in his realm by the year of his rule, and to mint coins in his name.

It was also part of the king's increasingly imperial style of rule that he, like the emperor, represented himself as ruling by divine grace, and that he, at least from the second half of the seventh century when Catholicism became the state religion, maintained an ever closer control of the Church.

⁵⁴ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 3,16, pp. 100–1. On this problem, see, for instance, J. Jarnut, “Die Landnahmen der Langobarden aus historischer Sicht”, *Ausgewählte Probleme europäischer Landnahmen des Früh- und Hochmittelalters. Methodische Grundlagendiskussion im Grenzbereich zwischen Archäologie und Geschichte* 1, ed. M. Müller-Wille and R. Schneider, Vorträge und Forschungen 41 (Sigmaringen 1993) pp. 173–94, esp. pp. 187–90; P. Delogu, “Longobardi e Romani: Altre congetture”, *Langobardia*, ed. S. Gasparri and P. Cammarosano (Udine 1990) pp. 111–68, esp. pp. 111–20, though especially also W. Pohl, *The Empire and the Lombards*, pp. 112–31.

⁵⁵ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 3,16, p. 101.

The royal potential for integration, secured by *imitatio imperii*, facilitated the incorporation of conquered peoples and of those Romans who from the 720s subjected themselves voluntarily after the religiously-based crisis of Byzantine rule. It thus led to a certain strengthening of the *regnum Langobardorum*, and above all also to a transformation of the *gens Langobardorum* based on a process of increasing Romanisation.⁵⁶

In conclusion, we may assert that in the memory of a people, who at the time in which their historical tradition began (that is, in the seventh century) was completely shaped by its kingship, a knowledge existed that there had been another kind of rule before this institution had come into being. In other words, we may accept that their *gens* was older than their *regnum*. Nevertheless, royal rulership was so decisive for the Lombards that it existed for at least 400 years and even survived the fall of their independent realm. The re-establishment of the kingship, after its most serious crisis during the *interregnum*, proves that, in the imagination and experience of its sixth-century contemporaries, it was clearly of vital importance for the survival of their *gens*, which at that point threatened to cease existing altogether. The increasing strength of the kingship after 568 was essentially based on the fact that the kings—at the latest from the time of the Flavian Authari—began to develop an increasingly far-reaching *imitatio imperii*, which facilitated the involvement and integration of the Roman majority into the Lombard state. This, however, also led to a change of its people, the *gens Langobardorum*, a process that went largely unnoticed by contemporaries.⁵⁷ The decisive conditions for this lay, from the seventh century onwards, in the increasing Catholicism and sacrality of the kingship that made the integration of the members of the *regnum Langobardorum* into a *gens catholica Langobardorum* at all possible.

[Translated by Inge Lyse Hansen and Carine van Rhijn]

⁵⁶ Cf. Delogu, "Il regno longobardo", pp. 133–7; Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden*, pp. 97–105.

⁵⁷ On the use of the term *gens* as an often functional construct, see now the articles in *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998), especially the contributions by W. Pohl, "Introduction: Strategies of distinction", pp. 1–15 and "Telling the difference: Signs of ethnic identity", pp. 17–69.

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THE BAVARIANS

Matthias Hardt

The early medieval Bavarians differ from the other *regna* and *gentes* discussed in this volume by their great regional continuity and their lack of formal kingship. Nonetheless, ethnogenesis took place in the Roman provinces of Rhaetia and Noricum. As early as the mid-sixth century, contemporary with the earliest mention of the Bavarians, a family related to the house of the Agilolfings appeared, who ruled the Bavarians in a nearly king-like manner up to the late eighth century, despite being increasingly dependent upon the royal leadership of the Frankish kingdom. Ethnogenesis, a royal ruling family, and long-standing political independence justify the incorporation of the Bavarians in a comparison of the kingdoms of the Migration Period and the early Middle Ages. In order to render a real comparison possible, the questions set out by the group will be followed in the ensuing discussion. In view of the scarce source-material and an early historiography that was exclusively written from the perspective of neighbouring people, however, it will not always be easy to work within this framework.

1. *Is there a development from a Germanic gens of the Migration Period to a Germanic kingdom? Or does a gens (or this gens) not exist until after the establishment of a kingdom?*

Any understanding of the relationship between ethnogenesis and kingship is closely connected to an interpretation of the name of the people and a clarification of the provenance of the Bavarians; even in the first half of the twentieth century, these questions were considered some of the “most difficult and controversial problems of German history”.¹ Further, there are two opposing opinions as to

¹ L. Schmidt, *Die Westgermanen* (München 1940; repr. 1970) p. 194, similarly id., “Zum Ursprung der Baiern”, *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 10 (1937) pp. 12–8, esp. p. 12.

whether the *gens* migrated as a single body into the region south of the Danube, or rather whether an ethnogenesis took place in the lands later possessed by the *gens*.² Already in his biography of the holy Columbanus, Jonas of Bobbio connected the Celtic Boii, who in his days had long disappeared, with the Baiuarii.³ From the very outset, he thus had in mind a specific way of interpreting the Bavarians' name, which a substantial part of present-day research still rightly retains, namely that their name is foreign⁴ and indicates people from a region called *Baiahaim⁵ or Baia. For a long time, however, there was no uniform notion where this supposed home-land of the Bavarians

² For the controversy on this question and on the history of research see E. Klebel, "Langobarden, Bajuwaren, Slawen", *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 69 (1939) pp. 41–116 [repr. id., *Probleme der bayerischen Verfassungsgeschichte* (München 1957) pp. 1–89], esp. pp. 48–54; R. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (2nd edn., Köln-Wien 1977) pp. 560–9; K. Reindel, "Das Zeitalter der Agilolfinger (bis 788)", *Handbuch der bayerischen Geschichte* 1, ed. M. Spindler (2nd edn., München 1981) pp. 101–245, esp. pp. 101–16; H. Beck, S. Hamann and H. Roth, "Bajuwaren", *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 1 (2nd edn., 1973) pp. 601–27, esp. pp. 606–7 and 611–3; M. Menke, "150 Jahre Forschungsgeschichte zu den Anfängen des Baiernstammes", *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 2, ed. H. Friesinger and F. Daim, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 204. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 13 (Wien 1990) pp. 123–220; H.L.G. Gastroph, *Herrschaft und Gesellschaft in der Lex Baiuvariorum. Ein Beitrag zur Strukturanalyse des Agilolfingischen Stammesherzogtums vom 6. zum 8. Jahrhundert*, *Miscellanea Bavarica monacensia* 53. Neue Schriftenreihe des Stadtarchivs München 71 (München 1974) pp. 20–35; A. Kraus, "Die Herkunft der Bayern. Zu Neuerscheinungen des letzten Jahrzehnts", *Bayerisch-schwäbische Landesgeschichte an der Universität Augsburg 1975–1977*, ed. P. Fried, Veröffentlichungen der Schwäbischen Forschungsgemeinschaft bei der Kommission für Bayerische Landesgeschichte, Reihe 7, Augsburg Beiträge zur Landesgeschichte Bayerisch-Schwabens 1 (Sigmaringen 1979) pp. 27–46, esp. pp. 27–8; 30; K. Reindel, "Die Bajuwaren. Quellen, Hypothesen, Tatsachen", *Deutsches Archiv* 37 (1981) pp. 451–73, esp. pp. 454–7.

³ Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Columbani* 2,8, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrG 37 (Hannover 1905) p. 244: *ad Boias, qui nunc Baiuarii vocantur, tendit*. See also Kraus, "Die Herkunft der Bayern", pp. 31–2; H. Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume. Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung*, *Österreichische Geschichte* 3 (Wien 1995) p. 72.

⁴ H. Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich. Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum und die Quellen ihrer Zeit*, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, Ergänzungsband 31 (Wien-München 1995) pp. 23–4; See on this kind of name creation also W.P. Schmid, "Vidivarii", *Sprach- und Kulturkontakte im Polnischen*, *Specimina Philologicae Slawicae*, Supplementband 23 (München 1987) pp. 349–58; W. Hartung, *Süddeutschland in der frühen Merowingerzeit. Studien zu Gesellschaft, Herrschaft, Stammesbildung bei Alamannen und Bajuwaren*, Vierteljahreshefte zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beiheft 73 (Wiesbaden 1983) p. 175. Hartung can, however, not be followed in his interpretation of the name.

⁵ E. Schwarz, "Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit der Baiern", *Südost-Forschungen* 12 (1953) pp. 21–47, esp. p. 22.

might be.⁶ The Anonymous Ravenna Geographer, writing in the first half of the ninth century, knew of a hilly region near the Elbe called Baia[s],⁷ which bordered on the Danube and Pannonia.⁸ The Geographer, perhaps copying a Gothic example,⁹ may have described this region as inhabited by Marcomanni, but on the whole this area cannot, altogether, be considered as, or equated to, Bohemia.¹⁰ According to Heinz Löwe and others, this region could also have been located on the eastern edge of Bohemia and Moravia, north of modern Bratislava in Slovakia.¹¹

It is also often stated that the Bavarians, because of their Bohemian origins, must have descended from the Marcomanni, who had been settled in that region since the early Roman imperial period.¹² These,

⁶ E. Schwarz, "Ermunduren—Thüringer, Böhmen—Baiern", *Et multum et multa. Beiträge zur Literatur, Geschichte und Kultur der Jagd. Festgabe für Kurt Lindner zum 27. November 1971*, ed. S. Schwenk, G. Tilander and C.A. Willemsen (Berlin-New York 1971) pp. 341–9, esp. pp. 345–6.

⁷ G. Neumann, "Baia[s]", *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 1 (2nd edn., 1973) p. 600; J. Schnetz, "'Baia[s]' und der Baiernname", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 16 (1951) pp. 1–19.

⁸ Ravennas Anonymus, *Cosmographia. Eine Erdbeschreibung um das Jahr 700* 18,1–2, transl. J. Schnetz, *Nomina Germanica* 10 (Uppsala 1951) p. 61 [henceforth: Ravennas Anonymus, *Cosmographia* (transl.)]; Ravennas Anonymus, *Cosmographia*, ed. M. Pinder and G. Parthey [*Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia et Guidonis Geographica*] (Berlin 1860; repr. Aalen 1962) p. 213: [. . .] *est patria quae dicitur Albis Ungani, montuosa per longum, quasi ad Orientem multum extenditur, cuius aliqua pars Baia[s] dicitur*. About the time of the Geographer's compilation see M. Springer, "Ripari—Ribuarier—Rheinfranken nebst einigen Bemerkungen zum Geographen von Ravenna", *Die Franken und die Alemannen bis zur "Schlacht bei Zülpich" (496/97)*, ed. D. Geuenich, *Ergänzungsbande zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 19 (Berlin-New York 1998) pp. 201–69, here p. 234.

⁹ Ravennas Anonymus, *Cosmographia* (transl.) 4,13, p. 58 refers to scholars of Gothic provenance. Ravennas Anonymus, *Cosmographia* 4,13, p. 201: *Aitanaridus et Eldewaldus et Marcomirus Gothorum philosophi*. Critically about the Gothic example of the Geographer Springer, "Ripari", pp. 236–45.

¹⁰ For the interpretation of Baia as Baiaheim = Bohemia, see Schnetz, "'Baia[s]'", pp. 2–6.

¹¹ H. Löwe, "Die Herkunft der Bajuwaren", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 15 (1949) pp. 5–67, here pp. 8–19, esp. p. 19; H. Zeiß, "Von den Anfängen des Baiernstammes", *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter* 13 (1936) pp. 24–40, esp. pp. 26 and 28.

¹² Schmidt, "Zum Ursprung der Baiern", pp. 16–8, presupposes a Marcomannic settlement in Rhaetia after 451; Löwe, "Die Herkunft der Bajuwaren", pp. 22–32; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, p. 563. Arguments against a Marcomannic background have been presented by E. Klebel, "Baierische Siedlungsgeschichte", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte*, pp. 75–82, esp. pp. 78–9; Schwarz, "Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit", pp. 23–5; E. Schwarz, "Die bairische Landnahme um Regensburg im Spiegel der Völker- und Ortsnamen", *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 1 (1949/50) pp. 51–71, esp. p. 52.

however, increasingly lost importance through to the end of the Migration Period.¹³ The last certain reference to the Marcomanni can be found in the *Notitia Dignitatum* for the period around 396, which refers to the region around Vienna.¹⁴ At this time, Queen Fritgil turned to Saint Ambrose asking for a broadening of the scope of Christian teaching that was already available.¹⁵

Joachim Werner considered what he saw as the migration of Germanic groups from Bohemia in the 540s A.D., as linked to the Frankish defeat of the Thuringian realm and to the Lombard immigration into Pannonia after the death of Theoderic the Great in 526.¹⁶ Jörg Jarnut, too, has assumed a migration of a rather large Lombard group from Bohemia into the lands between the Danube and the Alps caused by a re-orientation of Lombard politics under King Wacho (511–539).¹⁷ It is also possible that Suebian groups

¹³ Schwarz, "Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit", pp. 22–3; 39–40; id., "Das Ende der Völkerwanderungszeit in Böhmen und die Herkunftsfrage der Baiern", *Bohemia* 8 (1967) pp. 23–58, esp. pp. 38–9; H.W. Böhme, "Zur Bedeutung des spätrömischen Militärdienstes", *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 23–37, esp. p. 30, also emphasizes the archaeological evidence for Marcomannic participation in the settlement of the Danube region in the fifth century.

¹⁴ *Notitia Dignitatum accedunt Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae et Latercula Prouinciarum* 34, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin 1876; repr. Frankfurt a. M. 1962) p. 24: *tribunus generis Marcomannorum*. See further also H. Castritius, "Die Grenzverteidigung in Rätien und Noricum im 5. Jh. n. Chr. Ein Beitrag zum Ende der Antike", *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn* 1, ed. H. Wolfram and A. Schwarcz, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 179. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 8 (Wien 1989) pp. 17–28, esp. pp. 20–1; F. Lotter, "Die germanischen Stammesverbände im Umkreis des Ostalpen-Mitteldonau-Raumes nach der literarischen Überlieferung zum Zeitalter Severins", *ibid.*, pp. 29–59, esp. p. 46.

¹⁵ Paulinus, *Vita Sancti Ambrosii* 36, ed. M. Pellegrino (Rom 1961) p. 102. See also Lotter, "Die germanischen Stammesverbände", pp. 45–6; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 45.

¹⁶ J. Werner, "Die Herkunft der Bajuwaren und der 'östlich-merowingische Reihengräberkreis'", *Aus Bayerns Frühzeit. F. Wagner zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. J. Werner, Schriftenreihe zur bayerischen Landesgeschichte 62 (München 1962) pp. 229–50 [repr. *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, Wege der Forschung 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 12–43], esp. pp. 24–43. Also, H. Wolfram, "Ethnogenesis im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum (6. bis 10. Jahrhundert)", *Frühmittelalterliche Ethnogenese im Alpenraum*, ed. H. Beumann and W. Schröder, *Nationes* 5 (Sigmaringen 1985) pp. 97–151, esp. pp. 105–8, comes to the conclusion, that already in the beginning of the sixth century, Lombard groups from Bohemia may have contributed significantly to the formation of the Bavarian tribe. Similar ideas in Klebel, "Langobarden, Bajuwaren, Slawen", pp. 68–9.

¹⁷ J. Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte einer adligen Familie im 6.*

from the land of Baia, as defined previously, found their way into Bavaria¹⁸ as early as the fifth or early sixth century; at least, some of them attacked Passau shortly after 476 under the leadership of Hunimund.¹⁹

Meanwhile, however, it has become clear that Germanic groups from Bohemia and Moravia were already stationed as Roman *foederati* and auxiliary troops in military camps on the Danube, even before Odoaker ordered the evacuation of Noricum and Rhaetia.²⁰

und 7. Jahrhundert, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 32 (Stuttgart 1986) p. 50; Wolfram, "Ethnogenesen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum", pp. 106–7; id., *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, p. 23. For other Lombard groups, see also A. Schmid, "Bayern und Italien vom 7. bis zum 10. Jahrhundert", *Die transalpinen Verbindungen der Bayern, Alemannen und Franken bis zum 10. Jahrhundert*, ed. H. Beumann and W. Schröder, *Nationes* 6 (Sigmaringen 1987) pp. 51–91, esp. pp. 55–60. G. Hauptfeld, "Die Gentes im Vorfeld von Ostgoten und Franken im sechsten Jahrhundert", *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn* 1, ed. H. Wolfram and A. Schwarcz, *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 179. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 8 (Wien 1989) pp. 121–34, esp. pp. 124–5, presumes Germanic retinues from Bohemia, that may have participated in the formation of the Lombard and Bavarian tribe during the time of Theoderic the Great.

¹⁸ A Quidian provenance of the Bavarians is advocated by Schwarz, "Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit", pp. 25–7. On the Danube Suebians, see Klebel, "Langobarden, Bajuwaren, Slawen", pp. 33–4; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, pp. 561–2; F. Lotter, "Zur Rolle der Donausueben in der Völkerwanderungszeit", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 76 (1968) pp. 275–98; on the Suebians from the province of Savia, see Lotter, "Die germanischen Stammesverbände", pp. 46–7.

¹⁹ Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 38–9.

²⁰ Böhme, "Zur Bedeutung des spätrömischen Militärdienstes", pp. 29–30. Such an early date is at least supported by the early graves from Azlburg I and II, as well as Straubing-Bajuwarenstraße, which have been dated respectively as early as the fourth century and to the middle of the fifth century or shortly afterwards; see H. Geisler, "Neue archäologische Quellen zur frühesten Geschichte der Baiern: spätantike und frühmittelalterliche Gräberfelder aus Straubing", *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 2, ed. H. Friesinger and F. Daim, *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 204. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 13 (Wien 1990) pp. 89–100, esp. p. 91; Th. Fischer, *Das bajuwarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing. Studien zur Frühgeschichte im bayerischen Donaauraum*, *Kataloge der Prähistorischen Staatssammlung* 26 (Kallmünz 1993) pp. 124–5; M. Martin, "Die Gräberfelder von Straubing-Bajuwarenstraße und Straßkirchen—zwei erstrangige Quellen zur Geschichte der frühen Baiern im Straubinger Land", *Frühe Baiern im Straubinger Land* (Straubing c. 1995) pp. 17–39, esp. pp. 20–1; Th. Fischer, *Die Römer in Deutschland* (Stuttgart 1999) pp. 174–5. On the situation in Rhaetia in the fifth century, see also K. Dietz, U. Osterhaus, S. Rieckhoff-Pauli and K. Spindler, *Regensburg zur Römerzeit* (Regensburg 1979) pp. 155–66. On the end of the border army, see also Castritius, "Die Grenzverteidigung in Rätien", p. 26.

Grave-goods of the so-called Friedenrain-Přeštovice-group,²¹ from Barbing-Irlmauth²² as well as from Straubing and outlying areas,²³ suggest the arrival of smaller groups and individuals from southern Bohemia in the area around Regensburg and Straubing²⁴ as early as the beginning of the fifth century. The Cham-Further and the Stallwanger Senke, to the north of these central forts of the Late Antique Rhaetian Danube *limes*, were the natural connections between south-western Bohemia and the area just north of the Alps.²⁵ These Germanic groups often continued to settle around these fortresses, even after the dismantling of the border-armies and the end of Roman supre-

²¹ B. Svoboda, "Zum Verhältnis frühgeschichtlicher Funde des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts aus Bayern und Böhmen", *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter* 28 (1963) pp. 97–116, esp. p. 114; Fischer, *Das bajuwarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing*, pp. 108–11; id., "Zur Archäologie des fünften Jahrhunderts in Ostbayern", *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 2, ed. H. Friesinger and F. Daim, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 204, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 13 (Wien 1990) pp. 101–22, esp. pp. 103–11. The Friedenrain-Přeštovice group in its totality clearly belongs to the fifth century, see *ibid.*, p. 109; related finds have meanwhile come to light in many *castella* of the Danube *limes*, and Fischer, *ibid.*, p. 111, supposes that "the Germanic *foederati* from Bohemia constituted the majority of the Roman troops on this part of the border during the fifth century". Similarly id., *Das bajuwarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing*, pp. 96–8; 101; 108–11; id. and H. Geisler, "Herkunft und Stammesbildung der Baiern aus archäologischer Sicht", *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 61–8, here pp. 66–7; id., *Das Umland des römischen Regensburg. Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte* 42 (München 1990) pp. 33–4; Schwarz, "Das Ende der Völkerwanderungszeit", p. 52, failed when he wanted to link the group Friedenrain-Přeštovice to the Naristi.

²² R. Eckes and H. Zeiß, "Bairische Reihengräber des 6. Jahrhunderts bei Irlmauth, BA. Regensburg", *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter* 15 (1938) pp. 44–56, esp. pp. 51–4; U. Koch, *Die Grabfunde der Merowingerzeit aus dem Donautal um Regensburg*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit A,10 (Berlin 1968) pp. 122–4; 134.

²³ Koch, *Die Grabfunde der Merowingerzeit*, pp. 122–3; Geisler, "Neue archäologische Quellen", pp. 89–100; Fischer, *Das bajuwarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing*, pp. 122–7; Fischer and Geisler, "Herkunft und Stammesbildung der Baiern", pp. 63–6.

²⁴ Heinz Löwe, "Die Herkunft der Bajuwaren", p. 31, expected these archaeologically visible immigrants to be Marcomanni, who in his view crossed the Danube in the early sixth century. See also Kraus, "Die Herkunft der Bayern", p. 30; Reindel, "Die Bajuwaren", pp. 462–4; Th. Fischer, "Römer und Germanen an der Donau", *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 39–45, esp. pp. 41–3; id., *Das bajuwarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing*, pp. 108–11.

²⁵ Fischer, "Zur Archäologie des fünften Jahrhunderts", pp. 110–1; id., "Der Übergang von der Spätantike zum frühen Mittelalter in Ostbayern", *Regensburg—Kelheim—Straubing* 1, ed. S. Rieckhoff-Pauli and W. Torbrügge, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern 5 (Stuttgart 1984) pp. 236–43, esp. pp. 238–41; id., *Das bajuwarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing*, p. 110.

macy.²⁶ Around the year 536, Suebians, who may have arrived from the Pannonian Danube-region, were able to attack Venice from what would later become Bavarian land.²⁷

It is highly probable that all these people, who over a long period of time had migrated into the area between the Danube and the Alps, would have been described as men from Baia or *Baiahaim, **Baiawarioz*.²⁸ They further integrated with East-²⁹ and West-Germanic,³⁰

²⁶ Fischer, *Das bajuwarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing*, pp. 99–100.

²⁷ Cassiodorus, *Variae* 12,7,1, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 12 (Berlin 1894) p. 366: *Sueborum incursione vastatis*. See also Löwe, “Die Herkunft der Bajuwaren”, p. 42. E. Schwarz, “Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit”, pp. 33–5; 44 also thinks in terms of Danube-Suebian groups, that had, to his mind, arrived in the early sixth century from Bojer-Einöde (which was then allegedly called by this name, though there are no written sources to support this view), and entered Rhaetia and Noricum. This may have been of great importance for the formation of the Bavarian people. See also Schwarz, “Das Ende der Völkerwanderungszeit”, pp. 39–43.

²⁸ Schnetz, “‘Baia’s’”, p. 9; Schwarz, “Ermunduren”, p. 346; id., “Das Ende der Völkerwanderungszeit”, pp. 37–8; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, pp. 564–6; Beck, Hamann and Roth, “Bajuwaren”, pp. 601–6 and esp. pp. 601–2; Fischer, “Zur Archäologie des fünften Jahrhunderts”, p. 118; Wolfram, “Ethnogenesen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum”, pp. 107–8. For a criticism of the attempt to deduce the Bavarian name from the Salzberg *Romanitas* see H. Rosenfeld, “Die Völkernamen Baiern und Böhmen, die althochdeutsche Lautverschiebung und W. Mayerthalers These ‘Baiern = Salzburger Rätomanen’. Völkernamen, Völkerwanderung, Stammesgenese und die Namen Baiern, Bayern, Bajuwaren”, *Althochdeutsch*, vol. 2: *Wörter und Namen. Forschungsgeschichte*, ed. R. Bergmann, H. Tiefenbach and L. Voetz, Germanische Bibliothek NF, Reihe 3, Untersuchungen (Heidelberg 1987) pp. 1305–32, esp. pp. 1321–6; P. Wiesinger, “Antik-romanische Kontinuitäten im Donauraum von Ober- und Niederösterreich am Beispiel der Gewässer-, Berg- und Siedlungs-namen”, *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 1, ed. W. Pohl and H. Wolfram, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 201. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 12 (Wien 1990) pp. 261–328, esp. pp. 262–4.

²⁹ Martin, “Die Gräberfelder von Straubing-Bajuwarenstraße und Straßkirchen”, p. 26 emphasises the fact that burials of Ostrogoth women are organised in groups within the cemetery of Altenerding. Moreover, E. Schwarz “Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit”, pp. 38–9, also refers to groups of nomadic horsemen, who may have been involved in the formation of a people. His racial argumentation, which he still expressed on this subject in 1953 shows the continuity in research with which he was closely connected.

³⁰ On Sciri participation in the tribal formation, see Schwarz, “Die bairische Landnahme um Regensburg”, pp. 69–71; id., “Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit”, pp. 36–41, who *ibid.*, p. 31, labels the Sciri West-Germanic from a linguistic point of view. Later, however, in his “Das Ende der Völkerwanderungszeit”, p. 45, he stresses the long-term East-Germanic connections of the Sciri. M. Martin, “Die Gräberfelder von Straubing-Bajuwarenstraße und Straßkirchen”, p. 30, points to the presence of the grave of a West-Germanic woman within the cemetery of Straßkirchen.

and particularly Alemannic³¹ groups, but primarily with the provincial Roman population³² and with the remaining Breonic population³³ to become the Bavarians,³⁴ whom Jordanes mentions for the first time in the year 551.³⁵ They were, presumably not mentioned in Jordanes' main source, Cassiodorus' *History of the Goths*, since the latter in his *Variae* only seems to have been informed about the inhabitants of the provinces of Rhaetia and Noricum, but never used the name of the Bavarians.³⁶ Their settlement taking place as a group

³¹ Koch, *Die Grabfunde der Merowingerzeit*, pp. 121; 134. M. Martin, "Die Gräberfelder von Straubing-Bajuwarenstraße und Straßkirchen", pp. 22–4 shows the increase in Alemannic immigration in the region around Straubing after the new Alemannic defeats against Clovis. Also J. Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum. Das bairische Herzogtum der Agilolfinger*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 35 (Stuttgart 1991) pp. 5–6 stresses the significance of Alemannic participation in the process of Bavarian ethnogenesis. See further D. Geuenich and H. Keller, "Alamannen, Alamannien, Alamannisch im frühen Mittelalter. Möglichkeiten und Schwierigkeiten des Historikers beim Versuch der Eingrenzung", *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn* 1, ed. H. Wolfram and A. Schwarcz, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 179. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 8 (Wien 1989) pp. 135–57, esp. pp. 146–7.

³² K. Bosl, *Bayerische Geschichte* (7th edn., München 1990), pp. 38; 65 gives a great deal of significance to the "Celto-Romans" as "original substratum", also in the development of the name of the Bavarians. See also Schmid, "Bayern und Italien", pp. 54–5; H. Dopsch, "Zum Anteil der Romanen und ihrer Kultur an der Stammesbildung der Bajuwaren", *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. id. and H. Dannheimer (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 47–54.

³³ Wolfram, "Ethnogenesis im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum", pp. 118–24; id., *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, pp. 32–6; K.A. Eckhardt, *Merowingerblut II. Agilolfinger und Etichonen*, *Deutschrechtliches Archiv* 11 (Witzenhausen 1965) pp. 103–5 points out the significance of Herulic provenance of the Breonic King Sinduuld.

³⁴ K. Reindel, "Herkunft und Stammesbildung der Bajuwaren nach den schriftlichen Quellen", *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 56–60; Wolfram, "Ethnogenesis im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum", p. 108; P. Wiesinger, "Gotische Lehnwörter im Bairischen. Ein Beitrag zur sprachlichen Frühgeschichte des Bairischen", *Frühmittelalterliche Ethnogenese im Alpenraum*, ed. H. Beumann and W. Schröder, *Nationes* 5 (Sigmaringen 1985) pp. 153–200, esp. pp. 185–6; Bosl, *Bayerische Geschichte*, pp. 34–7; Kraus, "Die Herkunft der Bayern", p. 41; Wiesinger, "Antik-romanische Kontinuitäten", p. 301; E. Zöllner, "Das Geschlecht der Agilolfinger", *Die Anfänge des Klosters Kremsmünster*, ed. S. Haider, *Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs, Ergänzungsband* 2 (Linz 1978) pp. 83–110, esp. pp. 97–8; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, p. 6.

³⁵ Jordanes, *Getica* 55,280, ed T. Mommsen, MGH AA 5,1 (Berlin 1882) p. 130: *nam regio illa Suavorum ab oriente Baibaros habet, ab occidente Francos, a meridie Burgundzones, a septentrione Thuringos*. See Kraus, "Die Herkunft der Bayern", p. 42.

³⁶ See also E. Schwarz, "Baiern und Naristen in Burgund", *Südostdeutsche Forschungen* 2 (1937) pp. 379–82, esp. p. 382; id., "Die bairische Landnahme um Regensburg", p. 52; id., "Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit", p. 28; Reindel, "Die Bajuwaren",

closed to outside influence, as assumed by many supporters of the migration-thesis,³⁷ is therefore out of the question.³⁸

In the following, the question that must be asked relates to the motivating force behind this process of ethnogenesis in Roman territory. Usually, the Ostrogoth realm under Theoderic the Great is attributed with playing this role.³⁹ Yet as early as in the year 537

pp. 452–3; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 45–6. The supposition of a copy from the lost Gothic history of Cassiodorus is, however, impossible to prove with any certainty, as shown by Schmidt, “Zum Ursprung der Baiern”, p. 13; Lotter, “Die germanischen Stammesverbände”, pp. 54–5; H. Wolfram, “Die Christianisierung der Baiern”, *Baiernzeit in Oberösterreich. Das Land zwischen Inn und Enns vom Ausgang der Antike bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Kataloge des Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseums 97 (Linz 1977) pp. 177–88, esp. p. 178, and Rosenfeld, “Die Völkernamen Baiern und Böhmen”, pp. 1307–8, which are based on the introduction to the *Getica* by T. Mommsen, p. XXXIII. Reference to the Bavarians in the so-called “table of nations” does not seem to predate the middle of the sixth century, though W. Goffart, “The supposedly ‘Frankish’ table of nations: an edition and study”, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 17 (1983) pp. 98–130, esp. pp. 115–28, proposes a compilation of this passage in the time around 520.

³⁷ Zeiß, “Von den Anfängen des Baiernstammes”, pp. 27; 29; 39. Also, E. Schwarz, “Das Ende der Völkerwanderungszeit”, pp. 47–8; 54, maintains, as does Kraus, “Die Herkunft der Bayern”, pp. 33–41, their immigration as a tribe, but does not wish to exclude a merging with other tribal remains (*ibid.*, p. 50). Zeiß, “Von den Anfängen des Baiernstammes”, pp. 23–6 supposes the formation of the tribal name already in the homeland. Also, H. Mitscha-Märheim, “Die Herkunft der Baiern”, *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 80 (1950) pp. 213–44, esp. pp. 233–4, and E. Schwarz, “Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit”, p. 32, do not exclude the possibility of immigration and tribal formation shortly after the year 488. Mitscha-Märheim envisages the immigration of various groups, including Sciri, from Pannonia, led by Odoacer’s brother Hunwulf.

³⁸ Böhme, “Zur Bedeutung des spätrömischen Militärdienstes”, p. 34; Fischer and Geisler, “Herkunft und Stammesbildung der Baiern”, p. 63; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, pp. 561–2; F. Prinz, “Fragen der Kontinuität zwischen Antike und Mittelalter am Beispiel Bayerns”, *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 37 (1974) pp. 699–727, esp. pp. 707–8.

³⁹ Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 64, thinks that the Ostrogothic realm of Theoderic the Great constituted the context for the Bavarian tribal formation: “hence, Theoderic succeeded [...] in allowing the new people of the Bavarians to be created between Iller and Enns”. See also *id.*, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, p. 22; Lotter, “Die germanischen Stammesverbände”, pp. 56–7; H.D. Kahl, “Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn bis zum Tode des Herzogs Theodo (717/18)”, *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn* 1, ed. H. Wolfram and A. Schwarz, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 179. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 8 (Wien 1989) pp. 159–225, esp. p. 164; 217; 223, as well as Wolfram, “Ethnogenesisen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum”, pp. 105–8; *id.*, “Baiern und das Frankenreich”, *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) p. 130; Wolfram, “Christianisierung”, pp. 178–80; Th. Fischer, *Die Römer in Deutschland* (Stuttgart 1999) pp. 174–3; Dietz, Osterhaus, Rieckhoff-Pauli and Spindler, *Regensburg zur Römerzeit*, pp. 155–67; Reindel, “Die

the Ostrogoths ceded their supreme rule over the territories north of the Alps to the kings of the Franks.⁴⁰ Around 540, Frankish bishops ordained priests in Aguntum, Virunum and Teurnia.⁴¹ King Theudebert I was probably the one who added the regions between the Danube and the Alps to Frankish rule, and who supported the

Bajuwaren”, pp. 472–3. G. Hauptfeld, “Die Gentes im Vorfeld”, p. 127 thinks there were Thuringian incentives for the formation of the Bavarian tribe.

⁴⁰ H. Zeiß, “Bemerkungen zur frühmittelalterlichen Geschichte Baierns I”, *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 2 (1929) pp. 343–60, esp. pp. 343–54; R. Schneider, “Fränkische Alpenpolitik”, *Die transalpinen Verbindungen der Bayern, Alemannen und Franken bis zum 10. Jahrhundert*, ed. H. Beumann and W. Schröder, *Nationes* 6 (Sigmaringen 1987) pp. 23–49, esp. pp. 27–8.

⁴¹ *Concilium universale Constantinopolitanum sub Justiniano habitum* 2, ed. E. Schwartz, *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* 4,2 (Straßburg 1914) p. 135: *quod ante annos iam fieri coeperat, et in tribus ecclesiis nostri concilii, id est Breconensi, Tiburniensi, et Augustana Galliarum episcopi constituerant sacerdotes; et nisi eiusdem tunc divinae memoriae Justiniani principis iussione commotio partium nostrarum remota fuisset [. . .]; Gregorii I Papae Registrum Epistolarum* 16a, ed. P. Ewald, MGH EE 1 (Berlin 1887) p. 20, spells *Beconensi*. See H. Berg, “Bischöfe und Bischofssitze im Ostalpen- und Donauraum vom 4. bis zum 8. Jahrhundert”, *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn* 1, ed. H. Wolfram and A. Schwarcz, *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 179. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 8 (Wien 1989) pp. 61–108, esp. pp. 65–6 (Teurnia); pp. 82–4; see also Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 98; H. Wolff, “Die Kontinuität städtischen Lebens in den nördlichen Grenzprovinzen des römischen Reiches und das Ende der Antike”, *Die Stadt in Oberitalien und in den nordwestlichen Provinzen des Römischen Reiches. Deutsch-Italienisches Kolloquium im italienischen Kulturinstitut Köln*, ed. W. Eck and H. Galsterer, *Kölnner Forschungen* 4 (Mainz 1991) pp. 287–318, esp. pp. 295–6 with the supposition of a continuity of ruins in Virunum and a continuity of institutions in Aguntum. On greater continuity of Teurnia, see *ibid.*, p. 301; H. Wolff, “Die Kontinuität der Kirchenorganisation in Raetien und Noricum bis an die Schwelle des 7. Jahrhunderts”, *Das Christentum im bairischen Raum von den Anfängen bis ins 11. Jahrhundert*, ed. *id.* and E. Boshof, *Passauer historische Forschungen* 8 (Köln-Wien 1994) pp. 1–17, esp. pp. 8–16, therefore rather proposes Augsburg, Säben, a Breonic diocese in the Inntal, and Teurnia St. Peter im Holz. As Breonic dioceses, Pfaffenhofen in the Inntal and Martinsbühel near Zirl are likely candidates, though it is by no means certain that there were ever bishops working in that area. See O. Hageneder, “Die kirchliche Organisation im Zentralalpenraum vom 6. bis 10. Jahrhundert”, *Frühmittelalterliche Ethnogenese im Alpenraum*, ed. H. Beumann and W. Schröder, *Nationes* 5 (Sigmaringen 1985) pp. 201–35, esp. pp. 207–9; on Aguntum-Lavant *ibid.*, pp. 210–2; on Teurnia *ibid.*, p. 212; on Virunum *ibid.*, pp. 212–3; see also *ibid.*, pp. 216–21 on the letter of the bishops of Rhaetia and Venice to the Byzantine Emperor, and on the localisation of the three episcopal sees in Virunum, Teurnia und Aguntum; S. Ladstätter, *Die materielle Kultur der Spätantike in den Ostalpen. Eine Fallstudie am Beispiel der westlichen Doppelkirchenanlage auf dem Hemmberg*, *Mitteilungen der Prähistorischen Kommission der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 35,1 (Wien 2000) pp. 37–9. For Teurnia, see also V. Bierbrauer, “Die germanische Aufsiedlung des östlichen und mittleren Alpengebietes im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert aus archäologischer Sicht”, *Frühmittelalterliche Ethnogenese im Alpenraum*,

Suebian campaign against Venice.⁴² The defeat of the Thuringian realm in the year 534 may have also made the inhabitants of the later Bavarian Nordgau open to new political direction.⁴³

Among the political steps taken towards the organization of their dominion, the Merovingian kings installed a duchy in Regensburg.⁴⁴ With the house of the Agilolfings, they established a family capable of deploying the power necessary to bring about the integration of the region northeast of the Alps. The centre of power of the Agilolfing family was probably initially situated in the southwestern Visigothic border-region and later in the Austrasian-Burgundian part of the Frankish realm,⁴⁵ though Thuringian,⁴⁶ Alemannic⁴⁷ and Herulic-Lombard⁴⁸ origins have also been suggested for them.⁴⁹ In any case,

ed. H. Beumann and W. Schröder, *Nationes* 5 (Sigmaringen 1985) pp. 9–47, esp. pp. 33–5.

⁴² Schmidt, *Westgermanen*, p. 201. F. Beyerle, “Süddeutschland in der politischen Konzeption Theoderichs des Großen”, *Grundfragen der alemannischen Geschichte*, Vorträge und Forschungen 1 (Sigmaringen 1955) pp. 65–81, esp. p. 80 argues, that it was Theudebert I who “granted the Bavarians places to live when they were moving from Pannonia via Bohemia and Moravia, after which they subjected to his rulership”. See also Werner, “Die Herkunft der Bajuwaren”, pp. 30–5; Kahl, “Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn”, pp. 176–7; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 47–9.

⁴³ E. Schwarz, “Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit”, pp. 41–3, who, at p. 43, writes about an *Anschluß* of the Oberpfalz as the Nordgau to the Bavarians after the defeat of the Thuringian realm.

⁴⁴ H. Wolfram, “Baiern und das Frankenreich”, *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 130–5, esp. p. 130; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 49–53; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, p. 9. G. Hauptfeld, “Die Gentes im Vorfeld”, p. 131 has expressed the idea that the kings of the Franks might have entered into *amicitia* with the Bavarians.

⁴⁵ K.F. Werner, “Bedeutende Adelsfamilien im Reich Karls des Großen”, *Karl der Große. Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, vol. 1: *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. H. Beumann (Düsseldorf 1965) pp. 83–142, esp. pp. 106–15; E. Hlawitschka, “Studien zur Genealogie und Geschichte der Merowinger und frühen Karolinger”, *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 43 (1979) pp. 1–99, esp. pp. 83–8; A. Friese, *Studien zur Herrschaftsgeschichte des fränkischen Adels. Der mainländisch-thüringische Raum vom 7. bis 11. Jahrhundert*, Geschichte und Gesellschaft. Bochumer Historische Studien 18 (Stuttgart 1979) pp. 163–7; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 12–4; 28–40; 57–68.

⁴⁶ Hauptfeld, “Die Gentes im Vorfeld”, pp. 128–9; N. Wagner, “Zur Herkunft der Agilolfinger”, *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 41 (1978) pp. 19–48, esp. pp. 34; 42–7. *Edictus Rothari*, ed. F. Bluhme, MGH LL 4 (Hannover 1868) pp. 1–90, esp. Prol., p. 2, claims Thuringian origins for the Lombard King Agilulf: *Agilulf Turingus ex genere Anawas*.

⁴⁷ Hartung, *Süddeutschland*, p. 195.

⁴⁸ Eckhardt, *Merowingerblut* pp. 93–105; W. Goetz, “Über die Anfänge der Agilolfinger”, *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 34/35 (1975) pp. 145–61, esp. pp. 152–61; Zöllner, “Das Geschlecht der Agilolfinger”, pp. 87–8; 95–7; 99. But see also Hlawitschka, “Studien zur Genealogie und Geschichte”, pp. 81–95.

⁴⁹ See Kahl, “Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn”, p. 175.

earlier Burgundian⁵⁰ influence may also be clearly demonstrated. This is evident from the fact that it was always Frankish-Burgundian or Alemannic Agilolfings who were appointed dukes of the Bavarians when the local male line of succession was interrupted.⁵¹

Around the year 555, despite clerical protest, Chlothar I offered the Lething Lombard princess Walderada, the widow of his deceased great-nephew Theudebald and for a short time his own wife too, in marriage to Garibald, *uni ex suis*⁵² and duke of the Bavarians. The Bavarians had just been identified for the first time as such in the written sources.⁵³ Since Gregory of Tours does not mention them at all, nor does he link them to the *dux Garivaldus*,⁵⁴ the Bavarians would have only visibly started to develop an identity as a people after the appointment of the Agilolfings. The fact that they are not mentioned in the well known letter from Theudebert I to Justinian I may also point in this direction.⁵⁵ It may therefore be assumed that an integrative power was created only with the appointment by the Frankish king of a *dux*, who actively endeavoured to organize the various Germanic and Roman groups and units living in the former province of Rhaetia.⁵⁶ This effort was initiated at the former centre of Regensburg, with all its administrative-military importance, and the groups that were present in the area around this former legionary camp must have played a central, and an increasingly important, role in the process of ethnogenesis. These people came mainly from

⁵⁰ E. Zöllner, "Die Herkunft der Agilulfinger", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 59 (1951) pp. 245–64 [repr. *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, Wege der Forschung 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 107–34]; id., "Das Geschlecht der Agilolfinger", pp. 91–4; H. Wolfram, "Christianisierung", p. 181 interprets the Agilolfings as "the descendants of the Burgundian royal house that was dethroned by the Franks".

⁵¹ Hartung, *Süddeutschland*, p. 97.

⁵² Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 1,21, ed. L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, MGH SSrL (Hannover 1878) p. 60.

⁵³ Hlawitschka, "Studien zur Genealogie und Geschichte", pp. 84–8; Schmid, "Bayern und Italien", pp. 58–9; Wolfram, "Baiern und das Frankenreich", p. 130; Hauptfeld, "Die Gentes im Vorfeld", pp. 127–8; 131; Kahl, "Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn", pp. 170–5; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 50–4; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 76; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 10–1.

⁵⁴ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 4,9, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SSrM 1,1 (2nd edn., Hannover 1951) p. 141 only gives details on the *dux Garivaldus*.

⁵⁵ *Epistolae Austrasicae* 20, ed. W. Gundlach, MGH EE 3 (Berlin 1892) pp. 132–3.

⁵⁶ Bosl, *Bayerische Geschichte*, pp. 48–9. J. Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, p. 47 states that "this phase of Bavarian ethnogenesis took place under the political-military control of the Austrasian Merovingians, Theudebert and Theudebald".

Bohemia and the northeastern Danube headland and were called *Baiuvarii*—men from the land of Baiaheim.⁵⁷ Jörg Jarnut has shown that it was quite possibly a deliberate measure of the Frankish King Theudebald (whose mother was Roman) to place Garibald as an integrative figure at the head of the developing *gens* in Rhaetia, since Garibald originated from the old noble family of the Agilolfings with its links to the Visigoths, Suebians, Franks, Burgundians and Romance speakers.⁵⁸ The common Suebian background of all the groups involved in the ethnogenesis of the Bavarians, which in older research was seen as the only binding element in the shaping of the Bavarian tribe under Agilolfing leadership, should today at least be critically discussed.⁵⁹

Independently of the question of the name of the *Baiuvarii* and whether it refers to a Germanic core-group from Bohemia or indeed from another land of Baia northeast of the Danube, the ethnogenesis of the Bavarians took place in the territories they later inhabited. The Agilolfing *duces* soon adopted a king-like position,⁶⁰ and were repeatedly called *reges* by Paul the Deacon;⁶¹ they must have had a decisive influence on the development of Bavarian identity and of their own consciousness as a people.⁶²

⁵⁷ Reindel, “Die Bajuwaren”, pp. 471–3. W. Hartung, *Süd Deutschland*, pp. 168–72, stresses, probably too one-sidedly, the interpretation of the name in the sense of groups living “near Bohemia” of mainly Alemannic-Juthungian origins, though this interpretation of the name cannot be completely excluded.

⁵⁸ J. Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, p. 56 states that “in the formation of rulership over the developing *gens Baiuvariorum*, King Theudebald, around the middle of the sixth century, created a key position for the Agilolfings, who were closely related to him and had their origins in the Visigothic region”. See also Zöllner, “Das Geschlecht der Agilolfinger”, p. 98.

⁵⁹ Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, p. 51.

⁶⁰ On the *intitulatio* of the Agilolfing dukes and its example, see H. Wolfram, *Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, *Intitulatio* 1 (Graz 1967) pp. 161–84.

⁶¹ Hauptfeld, “Die Gentes im Vorfeld”, p. 133; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 94; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 11–2; id., “Hausmeier und Herzöge. Bemerkungen zur agilolfingisch-karolingischen Rivalität bis zum Tode Karl Martells”, *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. J. Jarnut, U. Nonn and M. Richter, Beihefte der Francia 37 (Sigmaringen 1994) pp. 317–44, esp. p. 319.

⁶² According to J. Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, p. 561 “the Frankish appointment of the first Bavarian *dux* coincided with the end of Bavarian ethnogenesis. The political ‘voice’ of the Bavarian *gens* was only acquired under the aegis of the Agilolfings.” A. Kraus, “Die Herkunft der Bayern”, pp. 45–6, however, thinks it is almost certain that their ethnogenesis had already been completed before their settlement.

2. *What sorts of changes and conditions lead to (or represent the development towards) the establishment of a Germanic kingdom?*

The possibly royal,⁶³ but certainly old noble, background of the dukes appointed by the Frankish kings, as well as their rule over a transit area infrastructurally and strategically important for several border-regions and boundary-areas of the Frankish realm, furthered the self-consciousness of the Regensburg Agilolfings. Marriage ties with princes and princesses from Lombard royal families and the implicitly sought backing of the ruling family of the Merovingians,⁶⁴ as well as later support from their southern Lombard and western Alemannic neighbours, and after that also from the Carolingian upstarts in the Frankish lands, all contributed to the tendency towards the independent royal power of the Agilolfings over the Bavarians. Although the Frankish kings repeatedly undertook military action against this independence (as happened already in 589–591), they nonetheless always reinstated members of the Agilolfing family in the position of Bavarian dukes. A good example is Tassilo I, in the year 592, who most likely was a son or close relative of Garibald I.⁶⁵ The success of his almost royal rule depended in part upon the military importance of Tassilo I's and his duchy's struggle against the Carinthian Slavs near the Drau and, more importantly, against the Avars aiding them.⁶⁶ While a real success was only achieved in the year 592 (595 witnessed a defeat and around 610, under Garibald II, there was a victory only after a defeat),⁶⁷ wars against the eastern neighbours provided the opportunity to consolidate the Bavarians' own

⁶³ J. Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 36–40 thinks that Agiulf, who was appointed governor of the defeated Suebian realm in northwestern Spain, and king of the Suebians shortly afterwards, was the founding father of the Agilolfings.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 28–32; 56–63; 87–9.

⁶⁵ Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 78.

⁶⁶ On the “eastern politics” of the Agilolfings, see W. Störmer, “Die Agilolfinger im politischen Kräftefeld vom 6. bis zum 8. Jahrhundert”, *Baiernzeit in Oberösterreich. Das Land zwischen Inn und Enns vom Ausgang der Antike bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Kataloge des Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseums 97 (Linz 1977) pp. 1–12, esp. pp. 2–4. On the relations between the Slavs from the Alps and the Bavarians, see Kahl, “Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn”, pp. 194–200, on relations between Bavarians and Avars, see *ibid.*, pp. 201–12; Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, pp. 39–46.

⁶⁷ Wolfram, “Ethnogenesen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum”, pp. 126–8; *id.*, “Baiern und das Frankenreich”, pp. 131–2; *id.*, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 78–9; Ladstätter, *Die materielle Kultur*, p. 39; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 17–8.

position. Around 740, the Carinthian ruler Boruth was made a Bavarian dependent after Avar attacks.⁶⁸ The expansion into the eastern regions settled by Slavs, and the renewed victory over the Carinthians in 772, enabled Tassilo III to counter the increasing influence over the western parts of the duchy exercised by Frankish nobles with close links to the Carolingians.⁶⁹

3. *What is the role of a gentile identity (Stammesbewußtsein) for the establishment of a regnum?*

An *Origo gentis Baiuvariorum* has not survived.⁷⁰ From the twelfth century onwards, multiple traditions emerged regarding the repatriation of the Bavarians, and associated with them was the belief that the Bavarians had an Armenian origin.⁷¹ These traditions must be treated as contemporary learned constructions that helped raise the historic status of the Bavarians.⁷² Research conducted by Erich

⁶⁸ Wolfram, "Ethnogenesisen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum", p. 137; Störmer, "Die Agilolfinger im politischen Kräftefeld", p. 3.

⁶⁹ F. Prinz, "Zur Herrschaftsstruktur Bayerns und Alemanniens im 8. Jahrhundert", *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 102 (1966) pp. 11–27, esp. p. 19; id., "Nochmals zur 'Zweiteilung des Herzogtums der Agilolfinger'", *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 113 (1977) pp. 19–32, esp. pp. 30–2; H. Wolfram, "Das Fürstentum Tassilos III., Herzogs der Bayern", *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde* 108 (1968) pp. 157–79, esp. p. 165; id., *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 89; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 471–3.

⁷⁰ Wolfram, "Ethnogenesisen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum", p. 151.

⁷¹ *Das Annolied*, ed. M. Roediger, MGH Deutsche Chroniken 1,2 (Berlin 1895) pp. 63–132, esp. pp. 121–2; *Das Annolied* 307–317, ed. E. Nellmann (4th edn., Stuttgart 1996); *Vita Almanni episcopi Pataviensis* 28, ed. W. Wattenbach, MGH SS 12 (Berlin 1856) p. 237: *Bavari traduntur ab Armenia oriundi*; *Die Kaiserchronik eines Regensburger Geistlichen* 317–324, ed. E. Schröder, MGH Deutsche Chroniken 1,1 (Hannover 1892) pp. 85–6. See also E. Mayer, "Übersehene Quellen zur bayerischen Geschichte des 6.–8. Jahrhunderts", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 4 (1931) pp. 1–36, esp. pp. 1–13.

⁷² H. Zeiß, "Bemerkungen zur frühmittelalterlichen Geschichte Baierns II", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 4 (1931) pp. 351–66, esp. pp. 351–61; Mitscha-Märheim, "Die Herkunft der Baiern", pp. 214; 236; 238; Klebel, "Langobarden, Bajuwaren, Slawen", pp. 41–5; Reindel, "Das Zeitalter der Agilolfinger", p. 102; G.R. Spohn, "Armenien und Herzog Naimes. Zur bayerischen Stammesgeschichte im Mittelalter und bei Peter Harer", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 34 (1971) pp. 185–210, esp. pp. 190–2; 194–6; Beck, Hamann and Roth, "Bajuwaren", pp. 605–6; M. Müller, "Die bayerische 'Stammesgeschichte' in der Geschichtsschreibung des Mittelalters. Eine Untersuchung zur mittelalterlichen Frühgeschichtsforschung in Bayern", *Zeitschrift für*

Zöllner,⁷³ Reinhard Wenskus,⁷⁴ and Wilhelm Störmer⁷⁵ has shown that the Nibelung heroic poetry was very popular among the Bavarians. Whether this account gained importance in the context of Bavarian ethnogenesis cannot, however, be stated with certainty. Additionally, as the Burgundian connections of the Agilolfings were not the only roots of the family, it cannot be firmly argued that this account of the destruction of the Burgundians was brought to the Danube as an established tradition by them. Notwithstanding these negative results, there must have been an awareness of community, which, among other things, over the centuries led to the adoption and success of the Old High German language.⁷⁶ Whether this awareness lent support to the dukedom of the Agilolfings must remain open, in view of the lack of an early medieval historiography focusing on the Bavarians.

bayerische Landesgeschichte 40 (1977) pp. 341–71, esp. pp. 342–56; 367–9; Reindel, “Die Bajuwaren”, pp. 457–60; L. Kolmer, “Die Inschriften aus dem Grab des Bischofs Gregorius und die Herkunft der Baiern aus Armenien”, *Ostbairische Grenzmarken* 28 (1986) pp. 11–21, esp. pp. 15–7; W. Störmer, “Beobachtungen zu Aussagen und Intentionen der bayerischen Stammes-‘Sage’ des 11./12. Jahrhunderts. Fiktionen—Sage—‘Geschichtsklitterung’”, *Fälschungen im Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, vol. 1: *Kongreßdaten und Festvorträge. Literatur und Fälschung*, Schriften der MGH 33,1 (Stuttgart 1988) pp. 451–70, esp. pp. 465–70.

⁷³ Zöllner, “Die Herkunft der Agilulfinger”, pp. 113–4; id., “Das Geschlecht der Agilolfinger”, pp. 92–4.

⁷⁴ R. Wenskus, “Wie die Nibelungen-Überlieferung nach Bayern kam”, *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 36 (1973) pp. 393–449, esp. pp. 431–43; id., *Sächsischer Stammesadel und fränkischer Reichsadel*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philosophisch-historische Klasse 3,93 (Göttingen 1976) pp. 475; 513–24.

⁷⁵ W. Störmer, “Nibelungentradition als Hausüberlieferung in frühmittelalterlichen Adelsfamilien? Beobachtungen zu Nibelungennamen im 8./9. Jahrhundert vornehmlich in Bayern”, *Nibelungenlied und Klage. Sage und Geschichte, Struktur und Gattung. Passauer Nibelungen-Gespräche 1985*, ed. F.P. Knapp (Heidelberg 1987) pp. 1–20.

⁷⁶ On Old High German and the Bavarians, see I. Reiffenstein, “Stammesbildung und Sprachgeschichte. Das Beispiel der bairischen Ethnogenese”, *Althochdeutsch*, vol. 2: *Wörter und Namen. Forschungsgeschichte*, ed. R. Bergmann, H. Tiefenbach and L. Voetz, Germanische Bibliothek NF, Reihe 3, Untersuchungen (Heidelberg 1987) pp. 1333–41, esp. pp. 1338–9. K. Bosl, *Bayerische Geschichte*, p. 38, also stresses the role of the Franks, who may have contributed to the survival of Old High German. W. Hartung, *Süddeutschland*, p. 175, however, stresses the influence of the Alemans, whom he considers the stronger element in the population.

4. *What sorts of changes in the “constitution” (Verfassung) of a people and a kingdom (such as central organs of power, local power structures, or links between the two) are linked to the establishment of a kingdom? How do socio-economic developments contribute to this process?*

It is possible that an early law-code by the Frankish King, Theudebald, for the emerging Bavarians was connected to the appointment of the Agilolfings as dukes in Regensburg; at least, that is, if it really is he who was intended in the reference to Theuderich mentioned in the preface of the *Lex Baiuvariorum*,⁷⁷ as Jörg Jarnut suggests.⁷⁸ In the earliest codification of this law, there was extensive borrowing from Visigothic law-forms,⁷⁹ which may be explained by the Romanic-Aquitainian contacts of both Theudebald and the Agilolfings.⁸⁰ The later Frankish kings, Childebert II (575–595), Clothar II (584–629) and Dagobert I, also acted as law-givers.⁸¹ The Frankish influence evident here was brought by the Agilolfing dukes, whose role was rooted in this system of law, and they thereby united the developing Bavarian *gens* under one law.⁸² The ruling circles of several individual groups and noble families that may already have participated in Bavarian ethnogenesis: the *genealogiae* of the Huosi, Fagana, Anniona, Drozza and Hachilinga—families with possessions mainly in western Bavaria—were especially privileged in the *Lex Baiuvariorum* with a special double *wergeld*.⁸³ But the law-code also integrated

⁷⁷ On the problem of the date of the *Lex Baiuvariorum* see H. Siems, “Lex Baiuvariorum”, *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte* 2 (1978) pp. 1887–1901, esp. pp. 1890–1; W. Hartmann, “Das Recht”, *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 266–72, esp. p. 266; W. Störmer, “Zum Prozeß sozialer Differenzierung bei den Bayern von der Lex Baiuvariorum bis zur Synode von Dingolfing”, *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 1, ed. W. Pohl and H. Wolfram, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 201. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 12 (Wien 1990) pp. 155–70, esp. pp. 157–60.

⁷⁸ Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 54–6.

⁷⁹ Siems, “Lex Baiuvariorum”, pp. 1892–3.

⁸⁰ Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 55–6.

⁸¹ Reindel, “Das Zeitalter der Agilolfinger”, p. 244; Gastroph, *Herrschaft und Gesellschaft*, pp. 58–9. Limiting the legislative activities of Dagobert I: Kahl, “Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn”, p. 188.

⁸² Gastroph, *Herrschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 19.

⁸³ *Lex Baiuvariorum* 3,1, ed. E. von Schwind, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 5,2 (Hannover 1926) pp. 312–3: *De genealogia, qui vocantur Hosi Drozza Fagana Hachilinga Anniona: isti sunt quasi primi post Agilolfingos, qui sunt de genere ducali. Illis enim duplum honorem concedamus et sic duplam compositionem accipiant.*

them.⁸⁴ The law set out the Agilolfings, who had the privilege of a fourfold wergeld, as hereditary leaders of the Bavarians.⁸⁵ Their rule was based in Regensburg. Under Duke Theodo, a division of the duchy or the creation of sub-duchies or sub-realms for his sons in Passau, Salzburg⁸⁶ and Freising⁸⁷ is evident. His own overlordship based in Regensburg clearly remained unaltered.⁸⁸ Yet from the time of Odilo, Salzburg possibly represented the most important centre of the Bavarian duchy.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Störmer, "Zum Prozeß sozialer Differenzierung", pp. 164–7; id., "Nibelungen tradition", pp. 9–10. H.L.G. Gastroph, *Herrschaft und Gesellschaft*, pp. 105–12; 136–8, despite being mistaken when stating that, from the point of view of wergeld, Agilolfings and genealogies may be characterised as nobility in the service of the Frankish kings (*Dienstadel*). Similarly mistaken is also Bosl, *Bayerische Geschichte*, p. 39. See further Zöllner, "Das Geschlecht der Agilolfinger", p. 97; Rosenfeld, "Die Völkernamen Baiern und Böhmen", pp. 1329–30. See on the interpretation of the names of the *genealogiae* and on their localisation H. Krahwinkler, "Beiträge zu Namen und Geschichte der bayerischen Genealogiae", *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 1, ed. W. Pohl and H. Wolfram, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 201. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 12 (Wien 1990) pp. 217–34; further H. Dachs, "Germanischer Uradel im frühbairischen Donaugau", *Verhandlungen des Historischen Vereins für Oberpfalz und Regensburg* 86 (1936) pp. 179–92 [repr. *zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, Wege der Forschung 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 85–106, esp. pp. 102–4]; Klebel, "Langobarden, Bajuwaren und Slawen", pp. 64–6; id., "Bayern und der fränkische Adel im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert", *Grundfragen der alemannischen Geschichte*, Vorträge und Forschungen 1 (Sigmaringen 1955) pp. 193–208, esp. pp. 194–200; F. Prinz, "Herzog und Adel im agilulfingischen Bayern. Herzogsgut und Konsensschenkungen vor 788", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 25 (1962) pp. 283–311 [repr. *zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, Wege der Forschung 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 225–63, esp. pp. 250–2]; id., "Herrschaftsstruktur", p. 20; Hartung, *Süddeutschland*, pp. 177–9; 185–6; 189–200; W. Störmer and G. Mayr, "Herzog und Adel", *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 153–9, esp. pp. 155–7; Kahl, "Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn", pp. 168–70; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 110–6; W. Volkert, "Die Ortsnamen des Hachinger Tales", *Herrschaft, Kirche, Kultur. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für F. Prinz zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. G. Jenal, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 37 (Stuttgart 1993) pp. 43–60, esp. pp. 57–60. On Huosi and Fagana see Wenskus, *Sächsischer Stammesadel und fränkischer Reichsadel*, pp. 470–5; 518–23; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 232–8.

⁸⁵ *Lex Baiuvariorum* 3,1, p. 313: *Agilolwinga vero usque ad ducem in quadruplum componantur, quia summi principes sunt inter vos*. See further Kahl, "Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn", pp. 172–3; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, p. 83; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 1–3; 232–3.

⁸⁶ K. Reindel, "Salzburg und die Agilolfinger", *Virgil von Salzburg. Missionar und Gelehrter*, ed. H. Dopsch and R. Juffinger (Salzburg 1985) pp. 66–74, esp. pp. 67–70.

⁸⁷ Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 107–9.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 98–9.

⁸⁹ Reindel, "Salzburg und die Agilolfinger", pp. 70–1.

The realization of Agilolfing rulership took place partly through their entourage living in the vicinity of the ducal residence.⁹⁰ At the start of the eighth century, Arbeo's *Life of Emmeram* mentions *satrapes terrae* and a *cohors*, with whose members the duke conferred.⁹¹ In the *Life of Corbinian*, there is reference to Duke Grimoald's *primates*, who were staying at the palace.⁹² On his journey to Rome in 715/16, Theodo "was accompanied by other members of his people".⁹³ The foundation of the monastery of Innichen was confirmed by Tassilo III and by his *optimates*, followers who had apparently accompanied him on a journey to the Lombard King, Desiderius.⁹⁴ Although this group of people is often viewed as proto-nobility,⁹⁵ it may also have been a circle of ducal followers. Counts should be regarded as additional aides of the duke. In Bavaria and its border-regions, there is evidence for them as early as c. 680, though no concomitant rulership covering the whole of Bavaria existed before 788.⁹⁶ As office-holders, they were given ducal goods that with increasing frequency

⁹⁰ K. Bosl, "Das 'jüngere' bayerische Stammesherzogtum der Luitpoldinger", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 18 (1955) pp. 144–72 [repr. *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, Wege der Forschung 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 329–63, esp. pp. 336–7]; Störmer and Mayr, "Herzog und Adel", p. 154; Störmer, "Zum Prozeß sozialer Differenzierung", pp. 160–1; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 223–6.

⁹¹ Arbeo, *Vita Haimhramni* 10; 32; 34, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrG 13 (Hannover 1920) pp. 41; 75; 76. See also Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, p. 48.

⁹² *Vita Corbiniani* 26, ed. H. Glaser, F. Brunhölzl and S. Benker (München-Zürich 1983) p. 136. See also Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, p. 108.

⁹³ *Liber pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne, Bibliothèque des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 2e sér. (Paris 1886; repr. 1955) vol. 1, p. 398: *Theodo, dux gentis Baiuvariorum cum alios gentis suae ad apostoli beati Petri limina orationis voto primus de gente eadem occurrit*. See also Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 109–10.

⁹⁴ E. Zöllner, "Der bairische Adel und die Gründung von Innichen", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 68 (1960) pp. 362–87 [repr. *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, Wege der Forschung 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 135–71, esp. pp. 138–9; 145–65].

⁹⁵ J. Jahn, "Bayerische "Pfalzgrafen" im 8. Jahrhundert? Studien zu den Anfängen Herzog Tassilos (III.) und zur Praxis der fränkischen Regentschaft im agilolfingischen Bayern", *Früh- und hochmittelalterlicher Adel in Schwaben und Bayern*, ed. I. Eberl, W. Hartung and J. Jahn, Regio 1 (Sigmaringendorf 1988) pp. 80–114, esp. pp. 101; 113. J. Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 251–3, supposes that a privileged Bavarian nobility did not develop until the time of Duke Odilo.

⁹⁶ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 5,36, p. 156: *cum comite Baiuvariorum, quem illi gravionem dicunt, qui Bauzanum et reliqua castella regebat*. W. Störmer, *Früher Adel. Studien zur politischen Führungsschicht im fränkisch-deutschen Reich vom 8. bis 11. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 6 (Stuttgart 1973) pp. 392–4; S. Haider, "Oberösterreich im bairischen Stammesherzogtum", *Baiernzeit in Oberösterreich. Das Land zwischen Inn und Enns vom Ausgang der Antike bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Kataloge des Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseums 97 (Linz 1977) pp. 13–26, esp.

later became hereditary, as also happened in the Frankish kingdom.⁹⁷ The autonomous rights of rulership, which the counts gained from their private possessions, meant that they became increasingly independent at times when the duchy underwent a crisis. The southern borders of the duchy were guarded by *prepositi custodes*⁹⁸ and *a[u]ctores montani*,⁹⁹ who maintained contact with the ducal palaces. From the time of Odilo onwards, the Bavarian dukes seem to have deliberately developed a system of office-holders, whom they juridically advanced and with whose support they could sustain their power against the *genealogiae* and the developing nobility.¹⁰⁰

The role of Christianisation in the development of the Bavarians, and in this process of integration of the various groups from which they were composed, can only be properly estimated with difficulty. The Roman population had been Christian since Late Antiquity and there seems to be a marked continuity of individual cults of saints,¹⁰¹ like that of St Florian and the forty martyrs of Lauriacum,¹⁰² of St Maximilian in Bischofshofen¹⁰³ or St Afra in

pp. 16–7; Störmer and Mayr, “Herzog und Adel”, pp. 154–5; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 259–61; Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, pp. 156–8; 166.

⁹⁷ Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 240–4; Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, p. 158.

⁹⁸ *Vita Corbiniani* 23, p. 128. See Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 103–4; 245.

⁹⁹ *Vita Corbiniani* 15, p. 110. See Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁰ Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 254–6.

¹⁰¹ V. Milojević, “Zur Frage der Zeitstellung des Oratoriums von Mühlthal an der Isar”, *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter* 28 (1963) pp. 117–38, esp. pp. 135–6.

¹⁰² K. Reindel, “Die Bistumsorganisation im Alpen-Donau-Raum in der Spätantike und im Frühmittelalter”, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 72 (1964) pp. 277–310, esp. pp. 283–4; L. Eckhart, “Das Nach- und Weiterleben der Römerzeit in Oberösterreich”, *Baiernzeit in Oberösterreich. Das Land zwischen Inn und Enns vom Ausgang der Antike bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Kataloge des Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseums 97 (Linz 1977) pp. 27–38, esp. pp. 32–3; B. Ulm, “Patrozinien in Spätantike und Agilolfingerzeit”, *Baiernzeit in Oberösterreich. Das Land zwischen Inn und Enns vom Ausgang der Antike bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Kataloge des Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseums 97 (Linz 1977) pp. 189–212, esp. pp. 193–5; Wolff, “Die Kontinuität städtischen Lebens”, p. 305. For sceptical remarks regarding continuity of the grave of the saint see id., “Die Anfänge des Christentums in Ostraetien, Ufernorikum und Nordwestpannonien: Bemerkungen zum Regenwunder und zum hl. Florian”, *Ostbairische Grenzmarken* 31 (1989) pp. 27–45, esp. pp. 35–7.

¹⁰³ Hageneder, “Die kirchliche Organisation im Zentralalpenraum”, pp. 228–9; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 108; H. Koller, “Die bairische Kirchenorganisation des 8. Jahrhunderts: Ansätze, Konzepte, Verwirklichung”, *Das Christentum im bairischen Raum von den Anfängen bis ins 11. Jahrhundert*, ed. E. Boshof and H. Wolff, Passauer historische Forschungen 8 (Köln-Wien 1994) pp. 273–89, esp. pp. 284–5; F.R. Erkens, “Die Ursprünge der Lorcher Tradition im Lichte archäologischer, histo-

Augsburg.¹⁰⁴ There is likely also an early date for the many church dedications to St Laurentius, at least some of which had origins in the Roman period.¹⁰⁵ Among the Germanic groups, the number of cults influenced by Arianism is thought to have been small,¹⁰⁶ just as it is possible to point to people who had hardly had contact with Christianity. Possibly around the year 615, Eustasius of Luxeuil, likely accompanied by the Burgundian Agilolfing, Agilus,¹⁰⁷ went to the Bavarians.¹⁰⁸ He had previously worked as a missionary among the Warasks, who lived in the vicinity of Luxeuil and of whom it was still said in the eighth century that they once came from a district

riographischer und urkundlicher Zeugnisse", *ibid.*, pp. 423–59, esp. pp. 431; 440; H. Berg, "Christentum im bayerischen Raum um 700", *Der heilige Willibald—Klosterbischof oder Bistumsgründer*, ed. H. Dickerhof, E. Reiter and S. Weinfurter, Eichstätter Studien NF 30 (Regensburg 1990) pp. 69–113, esp. pp. 93–4; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 64–8; 86.

¹⁰⁴ Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Sancti Martini* 4,640–643, ed. F. Leo, MGH AA 4,1 (Berlin 1881) p. 368. F. Prinz, "Augsburg im Frankenreich", *Die Ausgrabungen in St. Ulrich und Afra in Augsburg 1961–1968*, ed. J. Werner, Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 23 (München 1977) pp. 375–98, esp. pp. 389–90; V. Bierbrauer, "Alamannische Besiedlung Augsburgs und seines näheren Umlandes", *Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg von der Römerzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. G. Gottlieb, W. Baer, J. Becker, J. Bellot, K. Filser, P. Fried, W. Reinhard and B. Schimmelpfennig (Stuttgart 1984) pp. 87–100, esp. pp. 88–91; W. Sage, "Frühes Christentum und Kirchen aus der Zeit des Überganges", *ibid.*, pp. 100–12, esp. pp. 102–5; Wolff, "Die Kontinuität städtischen Lebens", p. 301; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁵ G. Diepolder, "Altbayerische Laurentiuspatrozinien", *Aus Bayerns Frühzeit. F. Wagner zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. J. Werner, Schriftenreihe zur bayerischen Landesgeschichte 62 (München 1962) pp. 371–96, esp. pp. 394–6.

¹⁰⁶ Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 96–7; Wiesinger, "Gotische Lehnwörter im Bairischen", esp. pp. 188–92; K. Schäferdiek, "Gab es eine gotisch-arianische Mission im süddeutschen Raum?", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 45 (1982) pp. 239–57, esp. pp. 247–50, did not find real traces of Arian mission in the Bavarian vocabulary. He considers the arrival of Arian groups to have been rather insignificant.

¹⁰⁷ Zöllner, "Das Geschlecht der Agilolfinger", p. 91.

¹⁰⁸ Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Columbani* 2,8, pp. 243–4; and, based on this, the *Vita Sadalbergae* 7, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 5 (Hannover-Leipzig 1910) p. 54. See further Wolfram, "Christianisierung", pp. 182–3; Kahl, "Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn", p. 190; Wiesinger, "Gotische Lehnwörter im Bairischen", pp. 188–9; G. Mayr, "Frühes Christentum in Baiern", *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 281–6, esp. pp. 282–3; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 104; Berg, "Christentum", pp. 73–4.

called Stadevanga near the rivers Naab and Regen¹⁰⁹ (where they were possibly known as *Naristi* or *Varisti* as early as the time of Tacitus).¹¹⁰ They had been banished from there to Burgundia. Little is known of other missionary activities, although they clearly did take place. An example is the failure-ridden journey of Agrestius before the year 626, which moreover had Iro-Frankish involvements.¹¹¹

It is not until the time of Duke Theodo¹¹² that stronger ducal influence on the *ad hoc* arrangement of the church-organisation¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Egilbert, *Vita Ermenfredi* 1, ed. J. Carnandet, *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis sancti Benedicti* (Paris-Rom 1867) p. 107: *Temporibus igitur Clotarii regis Francorum a beatus vir Eustasius, Luxoviensis monasterii abbas, iubente S. Columbano antecessore suo, progrediens Warescos ad fidem Domini nostri Jesu Christi convertit; qui olim de pago, ut ferunt, qui dicitur Stadevanga, qui situs est circa Regnum flumen, partibus orienti fuerant ejeti, quique contra Burgundiones pugnam inierunt, sed a primo certamine terga vertentes, dehinc advenerunt, atque in pugnam reversi victores quoque effecti in eodem pago Warescorum condecorati.* Rejecting a late eighth-century date for this source: Zeiß, "Bemerkungen I", pp. 354–356; though, see also Löwe, "Die Herkunft der Bajuwaren", p. 27; Schwarz, "Baiern und Naristen in Burgund", pp. 380–2; id., "Die bairische Landnahme um Regensburg", pp. 53–8; id., "Herkunft und Einwanderungszeit", pp. 42–4; id., "Das Ende der Völkerwanderungszeit", pp. 50–3; id., "Die Naristenfrage in namenkundlicher Sicht", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 32 (1969) pp. 397–476, esp. pp. 399–405; 454–5; 468–76; id., "Neues und Altes zur Geschichte der Naristen", *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 22 (1962) pp. 281–9, esp. pp. 286–9; Zöllner, "Die Herkunft der Agilulfinger", pp. 119–21.

¹¹⁰ Tacitus, *Germania* 42,1, ed. G. Perl, *Griechische und lateinische Quellen zur Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas bis zur Mitte des 1. Jahrtausends unserer Zeit*, vol. 2, ed. J. Herrmann, *Schriften und Quellen der Alten Welt* 37,2 (Berlin 1990) pp. 118–9: *Iuxta Hermunduros Naristi ac deinde Marcomani et Quadi agunt.* According to H. Bengtson, "Neues zur Geschichte der Naristen", *Historia* 8 (1959) pp. 213–21, esp. pp. 220–1, the Narists, who lived on the northern Danube in Upper Austria during the middle Empire, have no connection with the Burgundian Warasks. Neither were they involved in Bavarian ethnogenesis.

¹¹¹ Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Columbani* 2,9, pp. 246–7. K. Bosl, "Der 'Adelsheilige', Idealtypus und Wirklichkeit, Gesellschaft und Kultur im merowingerzeitlichen Bayern des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts", *Speculum Historiale. Geschichte im Spiegel von Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsdeutung*, ed. C. Bauer, L. Boehm and M. Müller (Freiburg-München 1965) pp. 167–87, esp. pp. 169–70; F. Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich. Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung (4. bis 8. Jahrhundert)* (2nd edn., München 1988), pp. 356–8; id., "Augsburg im Frankenreich", pp. 380; 386–7; Wolfram, "Christianisierung", pp. 182–3; id., *378–907. Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 104–5; id., *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, p. 43; Mayr, "Frühes Christentum in Baiern", pp. 283–4; Berg, "Christentum", p. 76.

¹¹² E. Klebel, "Zur Geschichte des Herzogs Theodo", *Verhandlungen des Historischen Vereins für die Oberpfalz und Regensburg* 99 (1958) pp. 165–205 [repr. *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, *Wege der Forschung* 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 172–224].

¹¹³ Koller, "Die bairische Kirchenorganisation", pp. 279–87; Erkens, "Die Ursprünge der Lorcher Tradition", pp. 448–50; Berg, "Christentum", pp. 69–78; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 157–9.

becomes evident. After the death of the mayor of the palace, Pippin II, in 714, Theodo intended to further the development of the church-organisation in his lands and to install a metropolitan see in Regensburg; the residences of his sons at Freising, Salzburg, and Passau were to become episcopal sees.¹¹⁴ With the objective of more intensive Christian penetration of the lands over which he ruled,¹¹⁵ Theodo had earlier called Erhard,¹¹⁶ who already worked in Regensburg, into the region and later he sought out Rupert,¹¹⁷ who was a relative of his wife, Folchaid, and bishop of Worms. He also contacted Emmeram of Poitiers¹¹⁸ as well as Corbinian of

¹¹⁴ Hageneder, "Die kirchliche Organisation im Zentralalpenraum", pp. 222-4; Reindel, "Bistumsorganisation", pp. 306-7; id., "Salzburg und die Agilolfinger", pp. 66-7; H. Schmidinger, "Das Papsttum und die bayerische Kirche—Bonifatius als Gegenspieler Virgils", *Virgil von Salzburg. Missionar und Gelehrter*, ed. H. Dopsch and R. Juffinger (Salzburg 1985) pp. 92-101, esp. pp. 92-3; Reindel, "Das Zeitalter der Agilolfinger", pp. 226-7; H. Berg, "Zur Organisation der bayerischen Kirche und zu den bayerischen Synoden des 8. Jahrhunderts", *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern 1*, ed. W. Pöhl and H. Wolfram, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 201. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 12 (Wien 1990) pp. 181-97, esp. p. 181; Wolfram, *378-907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 82-3; 109-10; E. Boshof, "Agilolfingisches Herzogtum und angelsächsische Mission: Bonifatius und die bayerische Bistumsorganisation von 739", *Ostbairische Grenzmarken* 31 (1989) pp. 11-26, esp. pp. 15-6; R. Kaiser, "Bistumsgründung und Kirchenorganisation im 8. Jahrhundert", *Der heilige Willibald—Klosterbischof oder Bistumsgründer*, ed. H. Dickerhof, E. Reiter and S. Weinfurter, Eichstätter Studien NF 30 (Regensburg 1990) pp. 29-67, esp. pp. 53-6; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 73-5; 98-9; 120-1.

¹¹⁵ Mayr, "Frühes Christentum in Baiern", pp. 284-6; Berg, "Christentum", pp. 83-112; W. Störmer, "Die bayerische Herzogskirche", *Der heilige Willibald—Klosterbischof oder Bistumsgründer*, ed. H. Dickerhof, E. Reiter and S. Weinfurter, Eichstätter Studien NF 30 (Regensburg 1990) pp. 115-42, esp. pp. 116-21; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 31-73.

¹¹⁶ Mayr, "Frühes Christentum in Baiern", p. 284.

¹¹⁷ H. Wolfram, "Der heilige Rupert und die antikarolingische Adelsopposition", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 80 (1972) pp. 4-34, esp. pp. 29-30; id., "Der Heilige Rupert in Salzburg", *Frühes Mönchtum in Salzburg*, ed. E. Zwink, Salzburg Diskussionen 4 (Salzburg 1983) pp. 81-92, esp. p. 88; id., "Die Zeit der Agilolfinger. Rupert und Virgil", *Geschichte Salzburgs*, vol. 1,1: *Vorgeschichte, Altertum, Mittelalter*, ed. H. Dopsch (Salzburg 1981) pp. 121-56, esp. pp. 125-34; Reindel, "Salzburg und die Agilolfinger", pp. 68-9; Wolfram, *378-907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 105-9; Berg, "Christentum", pp. 83-96; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 48-69.

¹¹⁸ Klebel, "Zur Geschichte des Herzogs Theodo", pp. 177-86; Wolfram, "Ethnogenesen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum", pp. 131-2; id., *378-907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 109; Boshof, "Agilolfingisches Herzogtum", pp. 13-4; G. Mayr, "Zur Todeszeit des Hl. Emmeram und zur frühen Geschichte des Klosters Herrenchiemsee. Bemerkungen zur Schenkung des Ortlap in Helfendorf", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 34 (1971) pp. 358-73; Berg, "Christentum", pp. 96-106; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 40-7.

Melun.¹¹⁹ These plans for establishing a church-organisation initially failed, in part because of the quarrels among Theodo's sons and grandchildren immediately after his death. Not entirely without reason, they were afraid of growing Frankish influence on the restructuring of Church matters, and of Frankish military campaigns undertaken in reaction to the Agilolfing disputes.¹²⁰ It was not until 739 that Duke Odilo,¹²¹ born into the family of Alemannic Agilolfings and appointed by Charles Martel, could finish the organisation of the church with the support of Boniface.¹²² Even so, he was not able to elevate Regensburg fully to the status of an archbishopric, nor was he immediately able to delimit clearly the various bishoprics.¹²³ The newly created church-organisation was rounded off by the founding of the see of Neuburg on the Danube at some uncertain date between 741 and 760,¹²⁴ as well as the founding of the bishopric of

¹¹⁹ Berg, "Christentum", pp. 106–12; Störmer, "Die bayerische Herzogskirche", pp. 121–3; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 69–73.

¹²⁰ G. Mayr, "Neuerliche Anmerkungen zur Todeszeit des Heiligen Emmeram und zur Kirchenpolitik Herzog Theodos", *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 1, ed. W. Pohl and H. Wolfram, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 201. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 12 (Wien 1990) pp. 199–215, esp. pp. 214–5; Störmer, "Die bayerische Herzogskirche", pp. 121–3; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 75; 101.

¹²¹ Zöllner, "Die Herkunft der Agilulfinger", pp. 126–33; J. Jarnut, "Studien über Herzog Odilo (736–748)", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 85 (1977) pp. 273–84, esp. pp. 278–81; Wolfram, "Baiern und das Frankenreich", pp. 134–5; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 84; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 123–32.

¹²² H. Löwe, "Bonifatius und die bayerisch-fränkische Spannung", *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 15 (1955) pp. 85–127 [repr. *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, *Wege der Forschung* 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 264–328, esp. pp. 280–6]; Reindel, "Bistumsorganisation", pp. 307–9; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 110–1; Kaiser, "Bistumsgründung", pp. 60–2; Störmer, "Die bayerische Herzogskirche", pp. 124–6; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 139–41.

¹²³ Schmidinger, "Das Papsttum und die bayerische Kirche", pp. 93–5; Störmer, "Die bayerische Herzogskirche", pp. 126–7. J. Jahn, "Bayerische Pfalzgrafen", pp. 86–7 and 98–9, denies that Odilo wanted to create a separate church-province. The new dioceses from this point of view were not supported by Odilo, who rather focused on ducal monasteries as elements of Christian penetration of the land. See also Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 152–3; 169–71; 372; id., "Hausmeier und Herzöge", pp. 337–8. H. Wanderwitz, "Der Libellus Virgillii und das Verhältnis von Herzögen und Bischöfen in Bayern", *Virgil von Salzburg. Missionar und Gelehrter*, ed. H. Dopsch and R. Juffinger (Salzburg 1985) pp. 357–61, esp. pp. 359–60, has expressed similar opinions.

¹²⁴ P. Fried, "Bischof Simpert und das Bistum Neuburg-Staffelsee", *Jahrbuch des*

Eichstätt between 741 and the middle of the century, which happened as a result of the handing over of the expanded Bavarian Nordgau to the Frankish mayors of the palace.¹²⁵ Cooperation with Frankish institutions in the organisation of the Church may possibly have been the reason for Odilo's brief expulsion, and his subsequent exile in 740/41 to the court of the mayors of the palace. During this period, Odilo's marriage with Hiltrud, daughter of Charles Martel and sister of Pippin III and Carloman, may have commenced.¹²⁶ This wedding provided further justification for the future antagonistic attitude of the Agilolfings towards the Carolingians.¹²⁷ However, it appears that Odilo was reserved in his opinion of the newly founded bishoprics. In order to intensify his power, he, as later his son Tassilo III, concentrated on founding monasteries and cells, either doing so himself or through cooperation with Bavarian nobles.¹²⁸

5. *What is the role of kings in this development?*

Through skillful politics, the Agilolfing dukes managed first of all to liberate themselves from the role of the dukes appointed by the Merovingian king, and then to attain for many years a position equal

Vereins für Augsburgs Bistumsgeschichte 12 (1978) pp. 181–5, esp. pp. 182–5. But see also Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 404–7.

¹²⁵ S. Weinfurter, "Das Bistum Willibalds im Dienste des Königs. Eichstätt im frühen Mittelalter", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 50 (1987) pp. 3–40, esp. pp. 14–22; A. Kraus, "Der heilige Willibald von Eichstätt: Person, Zeit, Werk", *Der heilige Willibald—Klosterbischof oder Bistumsgründer*, ed. H. Dickerhof, E. Reiter and S. Weinfurter, Eichstätter Studien NF 30 (Regensburg 1990) pp. 9–28, esp. pp. 20–7; H. Dickerhof and S. Weinfurter, "Summa historica", *ibid.*, pp. 245–61, esp. 253–61; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 159–63.

¹²⁶ Contra the supposition of this expulsion, which is only described in the *Breues Notitiae* 7, ed. W. Hauthaler, *Salzburger Urkundenbuch*, vol. 1: *Traditionskodizes* (Salzburg 1910) p. 27, see Zeiß, "Bemerkungen I", pp. 356–8. But see also Zöllner, "Die Herkunft der Agilolfinger", pp. 131–2; Jarnut, "Studien über Herzog Odilo", pp. 281–4; and Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 84. Further, see Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 172–8; 248–9; *id.*, "Hausmeier und Herzöge", pp. 338–40.

¹²⁷ Differently J. Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, p. 190, who considers the Frankish-Bavarian war of 743 as the "definitive recognition of Odilos dukedom". See also, on the ever changing and by no means always negative relations between Agilolfings and Carolingians, *id.*, "Hausmeier und Herzöge", pp. 317–8; 330–43.

¹²⁸ *Id.*, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 192–220.

to that of the kings.¹²⁹ To achieve this, they took advantage of periods of weakness suffered by the Frankish kings, the increasingly open conflict with the ambitious mayors of the palace, and alliances established with neighbouring Germanic groups.¹³⁰ In particular, the marriages made with members of the Merovingian family, the Lombard royal house and Lombard dukes, as well as with the Alemannic ducal house and sometimes with Carolingian mayors of the palace and their female relatives, raised the status of the Agilolfings. For nearly a century they were related to the kings of the Lombards, and for a time to the dukes of the Alemans, but above all the family was very influential in the Austrasian-Burgundian area, in Alsace, and in the region of the middle Rhine and Thuringia.¹³¹

However, the ambition of becoming equal in status to royalty, and the increasing self-consciousness of the Agilolfings, attracted the constant threat of military reprisals by the Frankish kings. In the end, the trial of Tassilo III and his subsequent monastic imprisonment set in motion the downfall of the Agilolfings and the end of the old Bavarian duchy. Despite the *Lex Baiuvariorum*, which was influenced by the Merovingian kings to a considerable extent, and the elevation of the Agilolfings to the position of dukes, the Merovingians and the Frankish mayors of the palace retained their control over appointments to the duchy. Garibald I and Tassilo I (circa 591) seem certainly to have been appointed by Frankish kings. Odilo, of the family of Alemannic dukes,¹³² was appointed duke by Charles Martel.

¹²⁹ Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 91–2.

¹³⁰ Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 178–85.

¹³¹ Werner, “Bedeutende Adelsfamilien”, pp. 108–15; J. Jarnut, “Beiträge zu den fränkisch-bayerisch-langobardischen Beziehungen im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert”, *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 39 (1976) pp. 331–52, esp. pp. 341–2; Frieze, *Studien zur Herrschaftsgeschichte des fränkischen Adels*, pp. 163–7; Zöllner, “Das Geschlecht der Agilolfinger”, pp. 87–8; W. Störmer, “Bayerisch-ostfränkische Beziehungen vom 7. bis zum frühen 9. Jahrhundert”, *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn* 1, ed. H. Wolfram and A. Schwarcz, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 179. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 8 (Wien 1989) pp. 227–52, esp. pp. 248–52; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, pp. 41–3; 57–78; 86–9; W. Störmer, “Das Herzogsgeschlecht der Agilolfinger”, *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 141–52, esp. pp. 142–8.

¹³² Jarnut, “Studien über Herzog Odilo”, pp. 273–8; Kahl, “Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn”, pp. 219–20; J. Jarnut, “Genealogie und politische Bedeutung der agilolfingischen Herzöge”, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 90 (1991) pp. 1–22, esp. pp. 2–5; 12–5.

Tassilo III, too, owed his rule to the mayor of the palace, Pippin III. The family relationship between Odilo and Tassilo III, and Pippin III and Charlemagne, respectively, did not improve the situation for the Agilolfings. In fact, it contributed to a hopeless situation leading to a conflict between Tassilo III and Pippin III, which in the end made Charlemagne decide to depose the duke.¹³³ It was not only with the Aquitanian campaign in the year 763, during which the breach¹³⁴ between Tassilo III and the Frankish king became evident, that the former began to behave in a royal manner. The signs of this royal interpretation of rulership included: his marriage to Liutpiric, daughter of the Lombard King, Desiderius;¹³⁵ the *amicitia* with Charlemagne established in 771/72;¹³⁶ his alliance with his eastern Avar neighbours;¹³⁷ his role at the synods of Aschheim, Dingolfing and Neuching as lord over a Bavarian Church—or rather, ducal Church¹³⁸—as well as his relations with the papacy;¹³⁹ his disposal of a treasure, which, significantly, was taken away from him in 788,¹⁴⁰

¹³³ On the relationship between Tassilo III, Pippin III and Charlemagne see M. Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft. Untersuchungen zum Herrscherethos Karls des Großen* (Sigmaaringen 1993) pp. 21–74. See also H. Wolfram, “Tassilo III. und Karl der Große—Das Ende der Agilolfinger”, *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 160–6.

¹³⁴ Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft*, pp. 45–51; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 371–5.

¹³⁵ Wolfram, “Das Fürstentum Tassilos III.”, p. 164; Schmid, “Bayern und Italien”, pp. 71–2; 74.

¹³⁶ Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 467–8; Jarnut, “Genealogie und politische Bedeutung”, pp. 18–9.

¹³⁷ Wolfram, “Das Fürstentum Tassilos III.”, pp. 171–3; id., *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 91–2; Kahl, “Die Baiern und ihre Nachbarn”, p. 211; P. Classen, “Bayern und die politischen Mächte im Zeitalter Karls des Großen”, *Die Anfänge des Klosters Kremsmünster*, ed. S. Haider, Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs, Ergänzungsband 2 (Linz 1978) pp. 169–87, esp. p. 181; L. Kolmer, “Zur Kommendation und Absetzung Tassilos III.”, *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 43 (1980) pp. 291–327, esp. pp. 323–4.

¹³⁸ W. Hartmann and H. Dopsch, “Bistümer, Synoden und Metropolitanverfassung”, *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 318–26, esp. pp. 319–22; Berg, “Zur Organisation der bayerischen Kirche”, p. 191; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 89; Störmer, “Die bayerische Herzogskirche”, pp. 131–3; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, p. 223; id., “Hausmeier und Herzöge”, pp. 331–2.

¹³⁹ Wolfram, “Das Fürstentum Tassilos III.”, p. 165; Classen, “Bayern und die politischen Mächte”, pp. 175–6; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 392–4; 469–70; Jarnut, “Genealogie und politische Bedeutung”, pp. 19–20.

¹⁴⁰ *Annales Nazariani* a. 788, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS 1 (Berlin 1826) pp. 43–4: *adduxerant haec omnia una cum thesauris ac familia eorum copiosa valde ad iam dictum regem*. See Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft*, pp. 68–9.

the anthropomorphic ruler's staff,¹⁴¹ which he started to use in 787; and the building of the cathedral at Salzburg, possibly intended as coronation church.¹⁴² This claim's material basis, however, was not sufficient to pursue it militarily against the Frankish king.¹⁴³ Thus, Agilolfing high-flying was followed by their downfall, with the trial of 788, and the temporary end of Bavarian ambitions of independence.¹⁴⁴ Yet, the significance of Regensburg as a late Carolingian residence and the role of the Liutpoldings and the Bavarian Liudolfings cannot be explained in the absence of the achievements of the Agilolfings.¹⁴⁵

6. *What part does the Roman Empire play in this process?*

In this context, the Roman Empire only had an indirect influence. Although the ethnogenesis of the Bavarians and the organisation of the Bavarian duchy had as their basis the former Roman provinces of Rhaetia and Noricum and their infrastructure of a network of

¹⁴¹ Wolfram, "Das Fürstentum Tassilo III.," pp. 170–1; Classen, "Bayern und die politischen Mächte," p. 178. This staff is, however, not related to the so-called Tassilo-chandelier in Kremsmünster, see K. Holter, "Kunstschätze der Gründungszeit", *Die Anfänge des Klosters Kremsmünster*, ed. S. Haider, Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs, Ergänzungsband 2 (Linz 1978) pp. 111–43, esp. p. 129; Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 91.

¹⁴² H. Vettors, "Die mittelalterlichen Dome zu Salzburg", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 5 (1971) pp. 413–35, esp. pp. 418–26; id., "Die mittelalterlichen Dome Salzburgs", *Virgil von Salzburg. Missionar und Gelehrter*, ed. H. Dopsch and R. Juffinger (Salzburg 1985) pp. 286–316, esp. pp. 296–313; S. Haider, "Zur Baugeschichte des Salzburger Virgil-Domes", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 80 (1972) pp. 35–47, esp. p. 47; H. Sedlmayr, "Die politische Bedeutung des Virgildomes", *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde* 115 (1975) pp. 145–60, esp. pp. 150–1; Wolfram, "Die Zeit der Agilolfinger", pp. 147–8. But see also Reindel, "Salzburg und die Agilolfinger", p. 71, as well as H.R. Sennhauser, "Die Salzburger Dombauten im Rahmen der frühmittelalterlichen Baukunst Europas", *Virgil von Salzburg. Missionar und Gelehrter*, ed. H. Dopsch and R. Juffinger (Salzburg 1985) p. 326.

¹⁴³ Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 86–93.

¹⁴⁴ Classen, "Bayern und die politischen Mächte", pp. 180–4; Kolmer, "Zur Kommendation und Absetzung Tassilo III.," pp. 291–327; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 540–50; Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft*, pp. 64–71.

¹⁴⁵ K. Bosl, "Das bayerische Stammesherzogtum", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 25 (1962) pp. 275–82 [repr. *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, Wege der Forschung 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 1–11, esp. pp. 4–5]; id., "Regensburgs politische Stellung im frühen Mittelalter", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 34 (1971) pp. 3–14.

roads, Roman continuity was nonetheless limited by the departure of Roman military and civil personnel after Odoacer's eviction order in 488. In the Ostrogothic period, Ravenna and the two Rhaetias were considered to be under the jurisdiction of the diocese of Italy, and hence under the authority of the Ostrogothic king.¹⁴⁶ Even so, after the regions north of the Alps were ceded by King Witigis in 536/37, or even earlier, Italian influence was clearly diminished.¹⁴⁷ Yet, the area later inhabited by the Bavarians maintained its significance in the context of Frankish-Byzantine relations, at least until the Avars occupied the Pannonian plains and Slavonic groups migrated into Inner Noricum and Upper Austria. On the eastern border of Noricum, before their departure to Italy, the Lombards played a key role in the intersection of Frankish and Byzantine interests. Emperor Justinian I was able to win over the Lombards in an alliance with Byzantium in 547, with the consequence that Theudebald I felt it necessary to organise the eastern border-region of his realm as the duchy of the Agilolfings after the death of Theudebert I. In this he may have followed an organisational form of duchies from the Late Antique and Ostrogothic period.¹⁴⁸ The duchy proved its usefulness when at its eastern borders nomadic horsemen and Slavonic princes, rather than Germanic *regna* based on Byzantine influence, tried to establish an independent regime.

Roman influence on the ethnogenesis of the Bavarians and on the rule of the Agilolfings is most clearly visible in the Romanic

¹⁴⁶ Contra Zeiß, "Bemerkungen I", pp. 352–4. For support of the idea that the Alpine foothills belonged to the Ostrogothic realm, see Beyerle, "Süddeutschland", pp. 68–9; 76–7; Wolfram, "Ethnogenesisen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum", pp. 110–1; id., *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, pp. 64–5. K. Reindel, "Bistumsorganisation", pp. 300–1 supposes a Gothic rulership over the mountains, but not over the Alpine foothills. K.A. Eckhardt, *Merowingerblut*, p. 103, believes it temporarily belonged to the Herulian realm. F. Lotter, "Die germanischen Stammesverbände", pp. 56–7, argues that another Germanic contingent from Bohemia arrived in conjunction with the Lombard victory over the Herulians.

¹⁴⁷ Agathias Myrinaei, *Historiarum libri quinque* 1,6, ed. R. Keydell, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 2 (Berlin 1967) pp. 16–9; cf. Schneider, "Fränkische Alpenpolitik", pp. 27–8.

¹⁴⁸ J. Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 6; 8–11; 561–3, as well as id., "Hausmeier und Herzöge", p. 320, supposes that a duchy was created on the Danube as early as the Ostrogothic time, while H. Wolfram, "Ethnogenesisen im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum", p. 112, discusses a situation of competition, of little synchronicity, between the older, Late Antique Ostrogothic Rhaetian duchy and the duchy created by the Franks.

population, which had strong roots not limited to the lands near and in the Alps.¹⁴⁹ Their integration was an important condition for the successful formation of the Bavarian people;¹⁵⁰ their Christian faith¹⁵¹ formed the basis for relations with the Frankish realm, which was organised along Roman-Christian lines, and the successful mission of immigrant Germanic groups. Their settlement on fiscal lands was further an important economic and financial factor in the rule of the Agilolfings.¹⁵² The educational forms preserved within their circles may have possibly played an influential role: the dukes Theodo and Odilo both recruited members for their chancellery from fam-

¹⁴⁹ J. Sturm, "Romanische Personennamen in den Freisinger Traditionen", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 18 (1955) pp. 61–80, esp. pp. 68–9; Schwarz, "Die bairische Landnahme um Regensburg", pp. 59; 61–4; H. Dachs, "Römerkastelle und frühmittelalterliches Herzogs- und Königsgut an der Donau", *Aus Bayerns Frühzeit. F. Wagner zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. J. Werner, Schriftenreihe zur bayerischen Landesgeschichte 62 (München 1962) pp. 293–320 [repr. *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. K. Bosl, Wege der Forschung 60 (Darmstadt 1965) pp. 44–84, esp. pp. 64–9]; id., "Baiern und Walchen", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 33 (1970) pp. 857–958, esp. pp. 921–7; Reindel, "Das Zeitalter der Agilolfinger", pp. 127–30; F. Prinz, "Salzburg zwischen Antike und Mittelalter", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 5 (1971) pp. 10–36, esp. pp. 18–20; id., "Fragen der Kontinuität", pp. 710–1; 722–7; Eckhart, "Nach- und Weiterleben", pp. 27–38; Störmer, "Zum Prozeß sozialer Differenzierung", pp. 162–3; M. Pfister, "Entstehung, Verbreitung und Charakteristik des Zentral- und Ostalpen-Romanischen vor dem 12. Jahrhundert", *Frühmittelalterliche Ethnogenese im Alpenraum*, ed. H. Beumann and W. Schröder, Nationes 5 (Sigmaringen 1985) pp. 49–95, esp. pp. 61–4; Wolfram, "Ethnogenesis im frühmittelalterlichen Donau- und Ostalpenraum", pp. 124–6; id., "Die Zeit der Agilolfinger", pp. 152–4; id., *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, pp. 25–6; 37–9; Reiffenstein, "Stammesbildung und Sprachgeschichte", p. 1340; D. Messner, "Salzburgs Romanen", *Virgil von Salzburg. Missionar und Gelehrter*, ed. H. Dopsch and R. Juffinger (Salzburg 1985) pp. 103–11. There is hardly any archaeological evidence for those Romance speakers that remained, see Fischer, *Das bajuvarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing*, pp. 87–9.

¹⁵⁰ Prinz, "Herrschaftsstruktur", pp. 26–7.

¹⁵¹ V. Milojčić, "Zur Frage der Zeitstellung", pp. 128–9 and 133, thinks that various Late Antique sacred buildings were still used in the later Bavarian regions, and concludes on this basis that the Roman population played the role of intermediary in the Christianisation of the Bavarians. Also H. Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume*, p. 96, stresses the importance of Roman Christianity for the conversion of the Bavarians. See also Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 154–5.

¹⁵² Prinz, "Herrschaftsstruktur", pp. 22–3; Wolfram, "Das Fürstentum Tassilos III.", pp. 166–7; J. Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, p. 86, points out that the Romance speakers in Salzburg knew how to win gold, Th. Fischer, *Das bajuvarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing*, pp. 82–3, has demonstrated the significance of the Roman population for the transmission of Roman pottery technology. See also H. Geisler, "Barbing-Kreuzhof", *Regensburg—Kelheim—Staubing* 1, ed. S. Rieckhoff-Pauli and W. Torbrügge, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern 5 (Stuttgart 1984) pp. 164–73, esp. pp. 170–3. On the tribute of Romance speakers for fiscal lands see also Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 247–8.

ilies of the Salzburg *Romanitas*. Organisation based on literacy—a tool of increased importance for effective rulership—owed much to the Roman population.¹⁵³

For the governing efforts of the dukes, the possibility of using the late Roman infrastructure played a particularly significant role. This was exemplified by their reoccupation of the legionary camp in Regensburg (a massive and extremely strong construction of limestone blocks built without mortar) as a centre of power,¹⁵⁴ as well as their continued use of many other Roman fortifications, roadside stations and roads.¹⁵⁵ That they were, indeed, used is demonstrated by, for instance, the persecution of Saint Emmeram on his way to Rome and his murder in Helfendorf close to a former Roman tavern, which was apparently still used in the Agilolfing period and at which site, at least in the eighth century, there was ducal property.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Störmer, *Früher Adel*, p. 213; Bosl, *Bayerische Geschichte*, p. 48; Prinz, "Herrschaftsstruktur", p. 26; Wolfram, "Der Heilige Rupert in Salzburg", p. 86; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 29–30; 204; 246–7; 558–60.

¹⁵⁴ Arbeo, *Vita Haimkranni* 4, p. 32: *ad Radasponam pervenit urbem, qui ex sectis lapidibus constructa, in metropolim huius gentis in arce decreverat*. Fischer, "Zur Archäologie des fünften Jahrhunderts", p. 103; id., "Der Übergang von der Spätantike zum frühen Mittelalter in Ostbayern", p. 242; id., *Das bajuvarische Reihengräberfeld von Staubing*, pp. 115–8; Wolff, "Die Kontinuität städtischen Lebens", pp. 304–5; K. Schwarz, "Regensburg während des ersten Jahrtausends im Spiegel der Ausgrabungen in Niedermünster", *Jahresbericht der Bayerischen Bodendenkmalpflege* 13/14 (1972/73) pp. 20–98; Dietz, Osterhaus, Rieckhoff-Pauli and Spindler, *Regensburg zur Römerzeit*, pp. 169–72; K. Reindel, "Regensburg als Sitz der Herrscher bis zum 10. Jahrhundert", *Regensburg—Kelheim—Straubing* 1, ed. S. Rieckhoff-Pauli and W. Torbrügge, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern 5 (Stuttgart 1984) pp. 243–54; A. Schmid, "Regensburg zur Agilolfingerzeit", *Die Bajuwaren. Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, ed. H. Dannheimer and H. Dopsch (Rosenheim-Salzburg 1988) pp. 136–40; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 37–8; P. Schmid, "König—Herzog—Bischof. Regensburg und seine Pfalzen", *Deutsche Königspfalzen. Beiträge zu ihrer historischen und archäologischen Erforschung*, vol. 4: *Pfalzen—Reichsgut—Königshöfe*, ed. L. Fenske, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 11,4 (Göttingen 1996) pp. 53–83, esp. pp. 53–62.

¹⁵⁵ Dachs, "Römerkastelle", pp. 44–84; W. Störmer, "Fernstraße und Kloster. Zur Verkehrs- und Herrschaftsstruktur des westlichen Altbayern im frühen Mittelalter", *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 29 (1966) pp. 299–343, esp. pp. 313–32; 339–43; J. Jahn, "Urkunde und Chronik. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Glaubwürdigkeit der Benediktbeurer Überlieferung und zur Geschichte des agilolfingischen Bayern", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 95 (1987) pp. 1–51, esp. pp. 48–9.

¹⁵⁶ A. Sandberger, "Römisches Straßensystem und bairische Siedlung im Osten von München", *Aus Bayerns Frühzeit. F. Wagner zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. J. Werner, Schriftenreihe zur bayerischen Landesgeschichte 62 (München 1962) pp. 287–92, esp. pp. 290–2; A. Kraus, "Zweiteilung des Herzogtums der Agilolfinger? Die Probe aufs Exempel", *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 112 (1976) pp. 16–29, esp. p. 26;

Summary

The Agilolfing dukes of the Bavarians started their career in Regensburg employed as office-holders of the Merovingian kings. By virtue of their background and the various *gentes* from which they emerged, as well as their close relationship even with senatorial circles of south-western Gaul, conditions were favourable for the formation of Bavarians as a people from both eastern and western Germanic groups and the autochthonous Roman population of Rhaetia and Noricum. Their rule over a fertile land, equipped with infrastructure of the Roman period and characteristics of a border-region,¹⁵⁷ enabled the Agilolfings, who profitted from their eminent background, to conduct an increasingly independent style of politics. They secured this position by forging bonds with their Germanic neighbours. The downfall of the Merovingian kingship created ulterior motives for increasing their distance from the Frankish rulers, and hence the Agilolfings were able gradually to achieve a position equal to royalty in the late seventh and the eighth centuries. However, they never completely managed to shake off Frankish supremacy, and consequently Tassilo III's accession to power in the 770s was followed by his deposition by Charlemagne in 788 and eventually even by his forced renunciation of all rights during the Synod of Frankfurt in 794.¹⁵⁸ The implications of this dismissal of Bavarian ducal power do not differ much from the fate of Desiderius, the last king of the Lombards, who also spent the end of his life in a monastery.¹⁵⁹ The similarities in Charlemagne's behaviour in both cases once again give a sense of the position of the Agilolfing dukes in Bavaria. They found themselves in a permanently ambivalent position in relation to the Frankish kings: on the one hand, they found a livelihood as appointed

Hartung, *Süddeutschland*, p. 200; Mayr, "Neuerliche Anmerkungen zur Todeszeit des Heiligen Emmeram", pp. 204–5; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 44–5.

¹⁵⁷ Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 552–4, on natural-spatial and logistic-geographical prerequisites for tribal formation and Agilolfing rulership.

¹⁵⁸ Classen, "Bayern und die politischen Mächte", p. 184; Kolmer, "Zur Kommenation und Absetzung Tassilos III.", pp. 316–7; Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft*, pp. 72–3; Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum*, pp. 549–50.

¹⁵⁹ Classen, "Bayern und die politischen Mächte", p. 184; W. Laske, "Die Mönchung Herzog Tassilos III. und das Schicksal seiner Angehörigen", *Die Anfänge des Klosters Kremsmünster*, ed. S. Haider, Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs, Ergänzungsband 2 (Linz 1978) pp. 189–97, esp. pp. 190–5.

dukes and enjoyed a guarantee of their position in the *Lex Baiuvariorum* that had been shaped by the Franks; on the other hand, they both expressed self-consciousness and pursued independent policies. This unique situation gave them freedom as well as established limits on their power, but it could not prevent their final defeat by the king of the Franks.

[Translated by Inge Lyse Hansen and Carine van Rhijn]

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AVARS AND AVAR ARCHAEOLOGY AN INTRODUCTION

Falko Daim

Introduction

The Avar Empire is one of the most fascinating cultural-historical phenomena of the European Early Middle Ages.¹ From the year 568 until Charlemagne's Avar wars (788–803), the riders of the steppes dominated the Carpathian Basin and its environs (fig. 1). The early period, up to 626, in particular, and the end of the Avar Empire are well illuminated by numerous written sources. Countless archaeological finds, more than 60,000 graves, some hoards and settlements, permit us—provided we are prepared to adhere to a number of methodical rules—to reconstruct a culture which appears to have reacted very flexibly to external influences while nevertheless maintaining some basic traits, apparently as the indispensable “backbone” of Avar identity, from the period of first settlement to the decline of the Avar Empire. At the same time, the large number of finds and the great size of many cemeteries make the Avar material highly suitable for testing modern evaluation methods. The majority of these are sophisticated statistical methods; however, technical and scientific examinations of archaeological finds are becoming increasingly important (fig. 2).

The aim of this essay is to present the English-speaking audience with an overview of Avar archaeology. At the same time, the purpose is to confront the results of archaeological research with the

¹ This essay would not have been possible without advice, suggestions and help from a number of friends and colleagues. I would especially like to thank: Birgit Bühler (Vienna), Anton Distelberger (Vienna), Róbert Müller (Keszthely), Silvia Müller (Vienna), Péter Somogyi (Frastanz), Béla Miklós Szóke (Budapest) and Tivadar Vida (Budapest). For the translation I am indebted to Birgit Bühler and to Elizabeth Fox (Edinburgh) for thorough proof-reading of the text. I would also like to thank Beate Lethmayer for the lay-out of the plates and Franz Siegmeth for digitalising them.

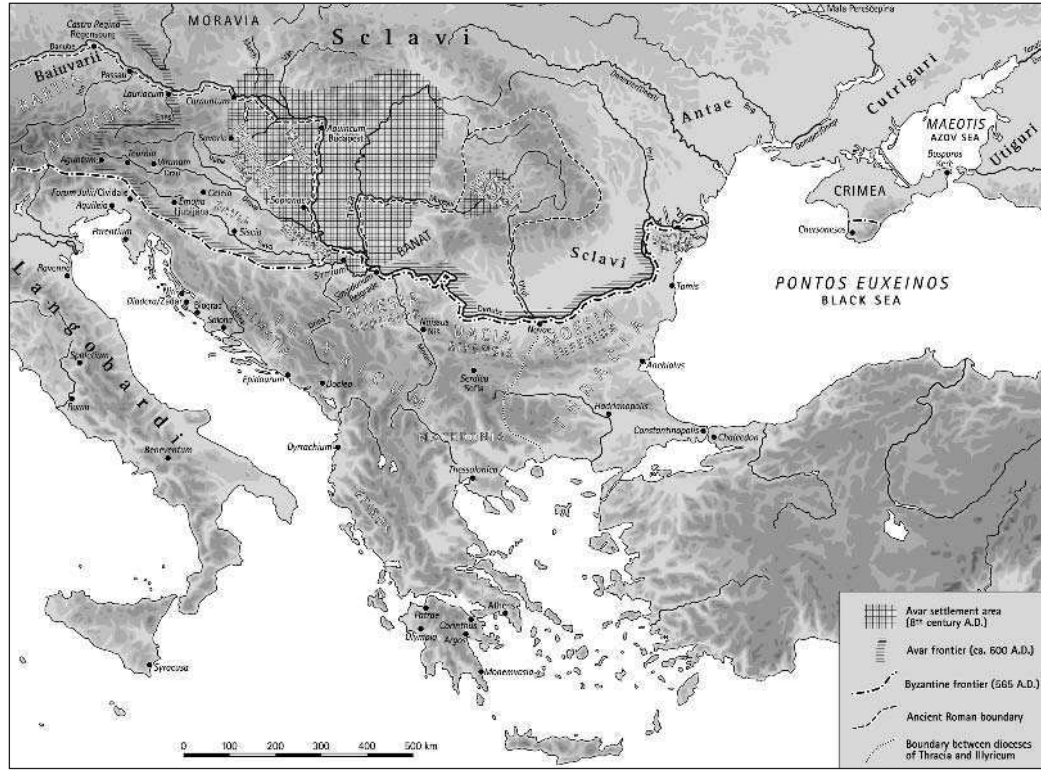


Fig. 1: The Avars, Central- and South-Eastern Europe around the Year 600 (according to W. Pohl)

political development, which has been reconstructed mainly by the work of Walter Pohl.

This introductory work is aimed at demonstrating that the diverse character of the different types of sources—especially the written and the archaeological evidence—of course facilitate special research-questions and results, but that only the combined view of the many results will give a detailed picture of the fascinating world of the Avars: a world which, with its way of life and system of values, is so far from ours but is nevertheless part of our European past.

Avar Archaeology—Avar Finds

1 *Early Avar Period I (568–626) and II (626–650/670)*

The archaeological material of the Early Avar Period (568–650) is extremely diverse and archaeologists are trying to illuminate the parallel lines of development with all their connections. Although we are still a long way from a detailed overall picture, some admirable achievements of recent archaeology and some lucky finds allow us to reconstruct some lines of development. For mainly methodological reasons, we tread on somewhat firmer ground only once the large cemeteries are established. The latter enable us to study the cultural development of small population groups.

Maurikios gives us an impressive and almost admiring account of Avar warriors in his *Strategikon*. He even recommends that certain parts of their equipment, for instance the long coat, the tent and the horse armour (of which not a single example has so far been found in the archaeological material), should be adopted by the Byzantine army. It is understandable that for a long time, Hungarian archaeology was mainly concerned with identifying the first generation of Avar settlement archaeologically. It seems that the Avar warriors who entered the Carpathian Basin in 568 were all accomplished riders and—according to Maurikios—shrewd tacticians, equipped—in a uniform and rather Spartan way—with riding equipment and weapons. The Avars used the composite bow, which was a technical miracle, consisting mainly of wooden parts with tendons, glued together on the inside with strips of horn, while in the centre and at the ends it was strengthened with lamellae made of deer antler. The different parts made use of forces of pressure on the inside and

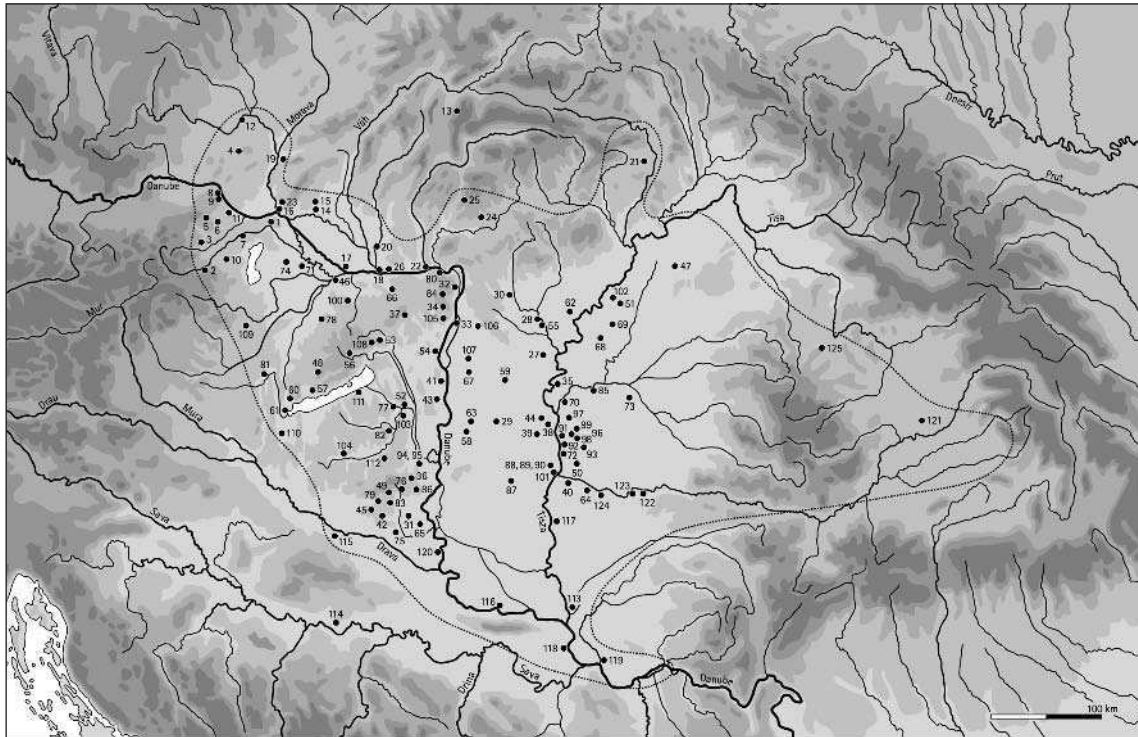


Fig. 2. The most important archaeological sites of Avar culture

- Austria**
- 1 Edelstal (Hungarian: Nemesvölgy) 43 Előszállás 92 Szegvár – Sápoldal
 2 Frohsdorf 44 Gátér 93 Székkutas
 3 Leobersdorf 45 Gyöd 94 Szekszárd – Bogyiszlói út
 4 Mistelbach 46 Győr – Téglavető – dűlő 95 Szekszárd – Mocsfacsárda
 5 Mödling 47 Hajdúdorog 96 Szentes – Berekhát
 6 Mönchendorf 48 Halimba 97 Szentes – Kaján
 7 Sommerein 49 Hird 98 Szentes – Lapistó
 8 Wien 11 – Csokorgasse 50 Hódmezővásárhely 99 Szentes – Nagyhegy
 9 Wien 23 – Liesing 51 Hortobágy – Árkus 100 Táp
 10 Zillingtal 52 Igar 101 Tápe
 11 Zwölfaxing 53 Inota 102 Tiszafüred – Majoros
 54 Iváncsa 103 Tolnanémedi
 55 Jánoshida 104 Toponár
 56 Jutas 105 Törökbálint
 57 Káptalantóti 106 Üllő
 58 Kecel 107 Ürböpuszta
 59 Kecskemét 108 Várpalota
 60 Keszthely 109 Vasasszonyfa
 61 Keszthely – Fenékpuszta 110 Zalakomár
 62 Kisköre 111 Zamárdi
 63 Kiskőrös 112 Závod
 64 Kiszombor
- Czech Republic**
- 12 Dolní Dunajovice 65 Kölked – Feketekapu
- Slovakia**
- 13 Blatnica 66 Környe
 14 Čataj 67 Kunbábony
 15 Cífer Pác 68 Kunhegyes – Bánhalma
 16 Devínska Nová Ves 69 Kunmadaras
 17 Holiare 70 Kunszentmárton
 18 Komarno 71 Lébény
 19 Moravský Ján 72 Mártély
 20 Nové Zámky 73 Mezőberény
 21 Šebastovce 74 Mosonszentjános
 22 Štúrovo 75 Nagyharsány
 23 Záhorska Bystrica 76 Nagypall
 24 Želovce 77 Ozora – Tótipuszta
 25 Zemianský Vrbovok 78 Pápa
 26 Zitavská Tõn 79 Pécs
- Hungary**
- 27 Abony 80 Pilismarót
 28 Alattyán 81 Pókaszeptek
 29 Bócsa 82 Regöly
 30 Boldog 83 Romonya (= Ellend)
 31 Bóly 84 Solyvár
 32 Budakalász – Dunapart 85 Szarvas
 33 Budapest – Csepel 86 Szebény
 34 Budapest – Farkasrét 87 Szeged – Átokháza
 35 Cibakháza 88 Szeged – Fehértó
 36 Cikó 89 Szeged – Kundomb
 37 Csákberény 90 Szeged – Makkoserdő
 38 Csanytelek 91 Szegvár – Oromdűlő
 39 Csengele
 40 Deszk
 41 Dunajváros
 42 Egerág
- Former Yugoslavia**
- 113 Aradac (Hungarian: Aradka)
 114 Brodski Drenovac
 115 Čadjavica (Hungarian: Csadjavica)
 116 Čelarevo
 117 Čoka (Hungarian: Csóka)
 118 Novi Balnovci
 119 Pančevo
 120 Zmajevac (Hungarian: Vörösmart)
- Romania**
- 121 Band (Hungarian: Mezőbánd)
 122 Felnac (Hungarian: Fönlak)
 123 Simpetru German (Hungarian: Németszentpéter)
 124 Simnicolau Mare (Hungarian: Nagyszentmiklós)
 125 Zălau (Hungarian: Zilah)

forces of tension on the outside, the reinforcements thus acting as levers. We have merely a vague notion of the types of glue which were used. In our regions, only the antler reinforcements of this miraculous weapon remain, but bows of this type which have been preserved complete are known from the Caucasus. It is quite probable that in the Avar Empire, simple wooden bows, which usually cannot be detected by the archaeologists, were also used in addition to the composite bows. While in the west, the main responsibility of fighting still lay with the infantry, all Avars were mounted. Iron stirrups, without exception, formed part of the equipment of every Avar warrior. They stabilize the riding position in combat, which is particularly important when using the long lance, which was apparently part of the equestrian warrior's standard equipment. This set, consisting of two stirrups, iron bit and lance-head, sometimes occurs as a "votive deposit pit" (*Opfergrubensfund*), without human remains (plates 1, 2 & 3). These definitely belong to the Early Avar Period, but at least for now, cannot be dated more precisely.² However, here there is evidence of a burial custom which seems to have existed among the Huns in the first half of the fifth century, although without evidence of cremation. The earliest Avar finds in the Carpathian Basin also include various bone objects, among them belt buckles, needle containers and a tool for undoing knots. All of these generally correspond to the fashion of the eastern steppes.³ The strange Avar burial place at Börcs-Nagydomb has even yielded an entire belt-set which had been carved from bone.⁴

There is a significant accumulation of typical artefacts from the Early Avar Period in present-day western Hungary (former Pannonia)

² C. Bálint, "Probleme der archäologischen Forschung zur awarischen Landnahme", *Ausgewählte Probleme europäischer Landnahmen des Früh- und Hochmittelalters. Methodische Grundlagendiskussion im Grenzbereich zwischen Archäologie und Geschichte* 1, ed. M. Müller-Wille and R. Schneider, Vorträge und Forschungen 41 (Sigmaringen 1993) pp. 195–273, esp. pp. 203–4.

³ É. Garam, "Bemerkungen zum ältesten Fundmaterial der Awarenzeit", *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern* 2, ed. H. Friesinger and F. Daim, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 204. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 13 (Wien 1990) pp. 253–72; Bálint, "Awarische Landnahme", pp. 199; 217.

⁴ P. Tomka, "Frühawarenzeitliche Hirten in der kleinen Tiefebene", *Ethnische und kulturelle Verhältnisse an der mittleren Donau vom 6. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert. Symposium Nitra 6. bis 10. November 1994*, ed. D. Bialeková and J. Zábajník (Bratislava 1996) pp. 141–9, esp. pp. 142 ff.

and a somewhat lesser concentration to the east of the Tisza, while the region between the rivers Danube and Tisza remains empty.⁵ The reasons for this are self-evident: Pannonia offered a certain infrastructure and large cleared areas, which were perhaps still being cultivated. It also had at least a sparse local population. In addition to this, there was the network of Roman roads, which presumably could still be used extensively, even if it had not been restored for more than 200 years. In the course of their settlement process, the Avars also settled in the formerly Gepid territory east of the Tisza. As Herwig Wolfram once said, “To rule only makes sense if one is ruling people”. As far as we know today, in the Early Avar Period, comparatively large and wealthy settlements existed only in western Hungary (Budakalász-Dunapart, Zamárdi). However, if we want to draw conclusions about the location of the centres of power from the wealth of the graves, then the focus of the Avar Empire would appear to have been located close to the Danube, between Danube and Tisza and just east of the Tisza. This is demonstrated in a particularly impressive manner by the distribution of the princely graves of the Bócsa-Kunbábony group (e.g. pl. 19–22) which belong to the middle of the seventh century and—apparently—seem to manifest a certain turning away from the Byzantine model. They are all located east of the Danube.⁶

Byzantine culture seems to have held great appeal for the Avar rider-nomads. Byzantine authors appear to have actually made fun of this fact. However, this does not necessarily imply that the Avars were in the process of turning into provincial Romans. The Avars selected carefully what they wanted to integrate into their culture. As this involves aspects of mentality, of collective psychology and of a set of cultural values, we still have to deal with this question at length.

As even before they settled, the Avars had had enough time to acquaint themselves with Byzantium, it is possible that they had already brought some of the Byzantine means of representation with them when they came into the Carpathian Basin. In this context, one should consider the belts with cast silver “mask fittings”. These were common in the Black Sea and the Caucasus region in the sixth

⁵ Bálint, “Awarische Landnahme”, pp. 243 ff.

⁶ Garam, “Ältestes Fundmaterial”, fig. 11.

century, while in the Carpathian Basin only a few examples have been found so far. (pl. 2,1–3).⁷ Similar objects, which may be somewhat newer but appear to be related to the cast “mask fittings” occur in two Lombard graves, Arcisa 2 and 5, in both cases together with strap-ends of Sadovec-Arcisa type.⁸ A parallel was found in an Avar grave from Budakalász (pl. 2,4). There can be no doubt that the Lombards got to know both the strap-ends and the fittings in Italy, as no comparable objects have been found so far in Lombard graves in Pannonia. Grave 9 from Kiskőrös contains a belt-set, in which cast-fittings which are related to those from Arcisa 2, have been combined with strap-ends of Martynovka type. These are only rarely decorated in openwork technique—as are the mask fittings—but instead have a linear ornament which, in Hungary, has traditionally (but incorrectly) been called Tamga-decoration (pl. 2,5).⁹

The belt-sets of Aradac type belong to the first half of the seventh century. These are strap-ends and mounts pressed in a mould, decorated with a triple hemispherical dent supplemented by dot-comma ornament (e.g. from Keszthely-Fenekpuszta: pl. 2,7).¹⁰ A mould of this type was found in Fenlac (Fönlak).¹¹ The distribution of this type suggests that it is in fact derived from the products of

⁷ C. Bálint, “Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe. Das Grab von Ūč Tepe (Sowj. Azerbajdžan) und der beschlagverzierte Gürtel im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert”, *Awarenforschungen* 1, ed. F. Daim, *Archaeologia Austriaca* 1. Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren 4 (Wien 1992) pp. 309–496. Regarding the multi-part belt-sets in the Mediterranean region see—most recently—C. Bálint, “Byzantinisches zur Herkunftsfrage des vierteiligen Gürtels”, *Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe im 6.–7. Jahrhundert*, ed. id., *Varia Archaeologica Hungarica* 10 (Budapest 2000) pp. 99–162.

⁸ M. Martin, “Awarische und germanische Funde in Männergräbern von Linz-Zizlau und Környe. Ein Beitrag zur Chronologie der Awarenzeit”, *A Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Évkönyve* 15 (1990) pp. 65–90, esp. pp. 66–7; S. Uenze, *Die spätantiken Befestigungen von Sadovec*, Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 43 (München 1992) pp. 187–92 and pl. 11.

⁹ N. Fettich, *Die Metallkunst der landnehmenden Ungarn*, *Archaeologia Hungarica* 21 (Budapest 1937) pl. CXXXVI; L.V. Pekarskaja and D. Kidd, *Der Silberschatz von Martynovka (Ukraine) aus dem 6. und 7. Jahrhundert*, *Monographien zur Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie* 1 (Innsbruck 1994) pl. 31,1–3; 32,1–4; 32,6.

¹⁰ Martin, “Linz-Zizlau und Környe”, p. 67 n. 8 and distribution map, fig. 4; J. Werner, “Nomadische Gürtel bei Persern, Byzantinern und Langobarden”, *Atti del Convegno Internazionale sul Tema: La civiltà dei Longobardi in Europa. Roma 1971* (Rome 1974) pp. 109–56, esp. pp. 127 ff. with note 48.

¹¹ J. Hampel, *Altertümer des frühen Mittelalters in Ungarn I–III* (Braunschweig 1905) pl. 446,2; see also in future Z. Rácz, *Awarische Goldschmiedegräber*, *Monographien zur Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie* (forthcoming).

Byzantine craftsmen, but seems to have been restricted to the Balkans (Garičin Grad)¹² and the Carpathian Basin. No examples of this type are known so far either from Italy or the Black Sea region. Syna Uenze has suggested—at first not altogether convincingly—that the strap-ends and belt-fittings with triple hemispherical dent may have been derived from the buckles of Sucidava type.¹³ However, the variant of a Byzantine buckle from Gyenesdiás grave 64 appears to prove that she may in fact have been right in doing so: it is decorated with a similar motif in openwork and therefore—like a “missing link”—establishes a definite typological connection (pl. 25,3). However, Gyenesdiás 64 has a post quem date of 654, which is a little late for the fittings of Aradac type.

The belt-sets of Kunágota-Mersin type (after Bálint) correspond much more closely to the kind of belt fashion which was common in Byzantium.¹⁴ The complete belt-set consists of matching strap-ends and fittings, which have been either chased individually (Kunágota: pl. 7,1) or “pressed” in a mould. The main strap-ends have medallions with Christian monograms, which, however, have been replaced by geometric ornaments—presumably especially to suit the Avar market. One of the most beautiful examples of such a belt-set is in fact a set of moulds from the smith’s grave of Kunszentmárton (pl. 6,2). Belt-sets of Kunágota-Mersin type still occur—although of somewhat lesser quality—up to the end of the seventh century, as is demonstrated by the grave from Ozora-Tótipuszta, for which we have a post quem date. Particularly interesting are the so-called “fringed mounts” from horse harness, which are one of the most characteristic types of mount from the Early Avar Period and of the early Middle Avar Period.¹⁵ The origin of this square or triple hemispherical type of fitting, which is characterised by a set of vertical grooves, may be traced back to the cast mask fittings. For example, three cast horse harness-mounts from Arcisa 5 have a fringe decoration. A cast mask fitting of triple hemispherical shape with fringe decoration is preserved in the Šumen museum (Bulgaria).

Especially in western Hungary, the Germanic component plays a vital role within Avar material. This does not only mean that Germanic

¹² Werner, “Nomadische Gürtel”, p. 129 n. 48.

¹³ Uenze, *Sadovec*, p. 185, fig. 14.

¹⁴ Bálint, “Awarische Landnahme”, p. 223.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

types of decoration were adopted by Avar craftsmen. Corresponding dress customs are usually linked with the “Germanic” objects. Examples are the three- and four-part belt-sets with silver wire inlay (*Tauschierung*) (Kölked-Feketekapu A), which have already been mentioned, but especially the so-called “toothcut” decoration. The most famous ensemble of this type, the so-called “Jankovich-Gold”, constitutes a sword strap set of “western type” (pl. 15,1).¹⁶ Several pieces of jewellery from two graves which have been published only recently, are on a par with the Jankovich-finds: The artfully constructed gold disc fibula, the bracelet and the fingering from the woman’s grave 119 of Kölked-Feketekapú B,¹⁷ which also included a wooden bowl with silver fittings (pl. 14). The woman’s grave 85 did not contain quite as much gold and silver, however, it is almost more interesting from a historical point of view. The woman’s belt was decorated with a lovely shield-tongue buckle made of gilded bronze with silver inlay, which in turn was decorated with niello, and depicts a Germanic god with two swords, around whose shoulders a snake was coiled, biting the warrior’s left arm: According to Attila Kiss, this is a depiction of Tiuz or Tyr¹⁸ (pl. 11,1). Next to it, a stylistically matching rectangular mount had been found (pl. 11,2). The belt terminated in a strap-end decorated with interlace (pl. 11,5), on her head, the lady wore gold basket earrings and a hair-pin with a decorative part made of gold (pl. 11,3). With the help of the objects’ exact position in the grave (pl. 12), the deceased’s dress may be reconstructed, to a certain degree (pl. 13). Splendid finds with “toothcut” ornament occur in the necropolis of Zamárdi, south of Lake Balaton, which has so far only been partly published and presented to the public in the form of exhibitions. This includes a pair of bracelets made of solid silver, but also belt pendants, which are part of female dress (example from Kölked-Feketekapú B, grave 85: pl. 11,5 and 12) and belt-sets as part of male dress, where the shape of the strap-ends is

¹⁶ F. Daim et al., *Das awarische Gräberfeld von Leobersdorf, Niederösterreich*, 2 vols., Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren 3. Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 194. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 10 (Wien 1987) p. 132 n. 93; T. Vida, “Merowingische Spathagurte der Awarenzeit”, *Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae* (2000) pp. 161–75, esp. pp. 167 ff.

¹⁷ A. Kiss, “Előzetes jelentés (II.) A Kölked—Feketekapui avarkori település és temetők ásatasáról”, *Folia Archaeologia* 39 (1988) pp. 173–94, esp. Part 2, pl. 4; 5,1–4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Part 1, pp. 294–303.

closely related to those from typical early Avar sets (pl. 15,2). Recently, Tivadar Vida has devoted particular attention to the female costume of the Germanic population of the Early Avar Period, starting with some finds from the necropolis of Budakalász-Dunapart, where the reciprocal permeation of eastern-Avar, Germanic, Roman and Byzantine traditions is evident.¹⁹ Certainly, the defeated Gepids and the remaining Lombards must have played a much more substantial role within this massive agglomeration of Germanic traditions, but it is nevertheless becoming increasingly clear that during the Early Avar Period, intensive contacts must also have existed between the Carpathian Basin and the Baltic, present-day north-western Germany and the upper Danube region.²⁰

The interaction between the local Romanic and Germanic population and the new lords from the East, as well as the strong impulses from Italy and the northern pre-Alpine region can be studied in one of the most fascinating archaeological provinces of the Carpathian Basin, the so-called “Keszthely culture”, located at the western end of Lake Balaton. The term “Keszthely-Kultur”, which is now commonly used, was defined by Ilona Kovrig and Attila Kiss.²¹ In 1993, Éva Garam called for a less rigid, more flexible and discerning view of the cultural phenomena in the Lake Balaton region and in southern Hungary.²² The archaeological phase comprises characteristic types of disc fibulas and bracelets with terminals in the shape of

¹⁹ T. Vida and A. Pásztor, “Der beschlagverzierte Gürtel der Awaren am Beispiel des Inventars von Budakalász-Dunapart, Ungarn, Grab 696”, *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Awaren*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) pp. 341–7; T. Vida, “Die Ziergehänge der awarenzeitlichen Frauen im Karpatenbecken”, *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 51 (1999/2000) pp. 367–77; A. Pásztor and T. Vida, “Eine frühbyzantinische Bronzekanne aus dem awarenzeitlichen Gräberfeld von Budakalász”, *Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe im 6.-7. Jahrhundert*, ed. C. Bálint, *Varia Archaeologica Hungarica* 10 (Budapest 2000) pp. 303–11.

²⁰ M. Menke, “Zu den Fibeln der Awarenzeit aus Keszthely”, *A Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Évkönyve* 15 (1990) pp. 187–214; Martin, “Linz-Zizlau und Környe”; id., “Zu den tauschierten Gürtelgarnituren und Gürtelteilen der Männergräber von Kölked-Feketekapu A”, *Das awarenzeitlich gepidische Gräberfeld von Kölked—Feketekapu A*, ed. A. Kiss and F. Daim, *Monographien zur Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie* 2, *Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren* 5 (Innsbruck 1996) pp. 345–61.

²¹ I. Kovrig, “Megjegyzések a Keszthely-kultúra kérdéséhez”, *Archeologiai Értesítő* 85 (1958) pp. 66–72; A. Kiss, “A Keszthely-kultúra helye a pannoniai római kontinuitás kérdésében”, *Archeologiai Értesítő* 95 (1968) pp. 93–101.

²² É. Garam, “Die awarenzeitlichen Scheibenfibeln”, *Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae* (1993) pp. 99–143, esp. p. 131.

animal heads (pl. 5) in the early period (end of the sixth and first quarter of the seventh century), and so-called stylus-pins and oversized basket earrings (pl. 35,1,4) in the late period (eighth century), but also many other objects and types, which however did not get any attention because the researchers all focused on the “classical” types. If we adhere to the definition established by Kovrig and Kiss, the Keszthely-culture presently comprises 18 archaeological sites.²³ Among the most important are the impressive late Roman castle (“Keszthely-Fenekpuszta”) south of the present-day town Keszthely²⁴ and the Dobogó, a hill north-west of the town of Keszthely, on which an early medieval cemetery with approximately 4,000 graves was found. Another large cemetery of the Keszthely-culture was located in the south-western part of the town Keszthely (Gräberfeld Keszthely-Stadt). The cemetery of Alsópáhok with around 1,500 graves was found to the west of the town. The necropolis at Lesencetomaj-Piros kereszt seems to be an extremely promising site for Avar archaeology. It is one of the most north-eastern cemeteries of the Keszthely-culture and will presumably allow us to establish a fine chronological system for the types of objects which are typical for the Keszthely-culture.²⁵

The archaeological finds show clearly that the area around Keszthely must have been one of the most important regions in the Carpathian Basin during the Lombard and Avar Period. The extraordinary concentration of jewellery from Byzantium (earrings, belt-fittings from the sixth and early seventh century) and the Adria region (dress-pins with semi-circular head, presumably second half of the seventh century),²⁶ as well as fibulas from the Saxon²⁷ and Frankish regions (excavation by Róbert Müller 1999) is probably due to its location at the cross-roads of important long-distance roads from Aquileia via Emona,

²³ G. Kiss, “Funde der Awarenzeit in Wiener Museen—1. Funde aus der Umgebung von Keszthely”, *Archaeologia Austriaca* 68 (1984) pp. 61–201. The most recent summary is: R. Müller, “Die Keszthely-Kultur”, *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Awaren*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) pp. 265–74.

²⁴ R. Müller, “Die Festung ‘Castellum’, Pannonia Inferior”, *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Awaren*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) pp. 91–5.

²⁵ Most recently Á.S. Peremi, “Lesencetomaj-piroskereszt keszthely-kultúrás temető fülbevalói”, *A Veszprém Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei* 21 (2000) pp. 41–75.

²⁶ A. Distelberger, *Das awarische Gräberfeld von Mistelbach, Niederösterreich*, Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren 6 (Innsbruck 1996) pp. 77–82.

²⁷ Menke, “Fibeln”.

Celeia, Valcum (Keszthely-Fenekpuszta) to Aquincum and from Sirmium via Valcum to Carnuntum.²⁸ Some of the pieces of jewellery from the cemetery of Keszthely-Fenekpuszta-Horreum from the sixth and early seventh century, especially the gold dress pins with genuine pearls and the inscription “BONOSA”, the presumably matching gold medallion with genuine pearls and rock crystal inlay as well as the jewelled collar, are amongst the most precious and most beautiful of their period (pl. 5,4).²⁹ The silver S-fibulas, the crescent-shaped gold earrings and the basket earrings are common in Italy and the regions north of the Alps. The disc fibulas will be discussed below. A belt-set made of sheet silver of Aradac-Fönlak type, as known from Linz-Zizlau and other Avar sites, is also important in this context (pl. 2,7).³⁰ The early phase of the Keszthely-culture is usually placed in the period between 568 and the early seventh century. These dates are based on the assumption that the Keszthely-culture is, so to speak, an archaeological branch of Avar culture, which is methodologically incorrect. László Barkóczy alone has it begin a little earlier. Does a local late Roman population stand behind the Keszthely-culture, or should we—as most archaeologists do—postulate immigrations to account for the unusually rich material? As Ilona Kovrig has already observed, there is no continuous settlement from Late Antiquity until the seventh century at the sites of the Keszthely-culture (with the exception of Fenekpuszta itself). The remarkable heterogeneity of the archaeological material of the late sixth and early seventh century from the Keszthely region is another argument both against a purely local development as well

²⁸ R. Müller, “Die spätromische Festung Valcum am Plattensee”, *Germanen, Hunnen und Awaren. Schätze der Völkerwanderungszeit*, ed. W. Menghin (Nürnberg 1988) pp. 270–3. The course of the roads in the region of Keszthely is, in detail, still subject to discussion. Recently for example E. Tóth, “Mosaburg und Moosburg”, *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 51 (1999/2000) pp. 439–56, esp. fig. 4.

²⁹ Regarding the jewelled collar see É. Garam, “Über Halsketten, Halsschmucke mit Anhängern und Juwelenkragen byzantinischen Ursprungs aus der Awarenzeit”, *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 43 (1991) pp. 151–79.

³⁰ L. Barkóczy, “Das Gräberfeld von Keszthely-Fenekpuszta aus dem 6. Jahrhundert und die frühmittelalterlichen Bevölkerungsverhältnisse am Plattensee”, *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 18 (1971) pp. 179–91, pl. 82. Recently: É. Garam, “Gürtelverzierungen byzantinischen Typs im Karpatenbecken des 6.-7. Jahrhunderts”, *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 50 (1999/2000) pp. 379–91, esp. p. 381 and fig. 1a.

as against the view that the early Keszthely-culture constitutes the remains of a particular population group which settled there.

Recently it has been possible to discover a living Christian community behind the early Keszthely-culture. Some of the disc fibulas are decorated with Christian images, for instance Jesus busts flanked by angels (pl. 5,8) or equestrian saints (pl. 5,5). At least a couple of these fibulas are filled with beeswax, which is a popular secondary relic. As the closest parallels for the disc fibulas are found in the coastal regions of Montenegro, Albania and Calabria, it would seem that at least some of the examples from Pannonia were in fact “private reliquiaries”, amulets which pious pilgrims brought with them from their travels. We can assume that before the political turmoil following the events of the year 626, a suitable church organisation, including a direct link with Rome, must have also existed in Keszthely.

The iron belt-sets consisting of three or four parts appear to be linked to a strong local cultural element of Germanic origin, although research by Max Martin suggests that contacts with the region of present-day southern Germany must have also played a role.³¹ Direct connections between the Avar territory and Italy and/or present-day Bavaria are also evident from the “North Italian” belt-sets and iron belt-sets with wire inlay in the form of spiral ornaments (pl. 16,1–4).

The following “western” belt-set types occur frequently in an early Avar context:

- Iron 3- or 4-part belt-sets with wire inlay (Layer 2 according to Joachim Werner and Rainer Christlein): for example Környe 1, 18, 66, 77, 97; Kölked-Feketekapu A 44, 180, 227, 249³² (around 600, first quarter of the seventh century).
- “North Italian” belt-sets, cast bronze: The ensembles first presented—and as far as we know today, interpreted correctly—in 1961/62 by István Bóna, occur relatively frequently in Avar contexts.³³ Apart from genuine belt-sets, there were also—apparently—a number of imitations. The following belt-sets are presumably

³¹ Martin, “Kölked-Feketekapu A”.

³² Ibid.; Martin, “Linz-Zizlau und Környe”.

³³ I. Bóna, “Beiträge zu den ethnischen Verhältnissen des 6.–7. Jahrhunderts in Westungarn I—Norditalischer Bronze-Gürtelschmuck in frühawarischen Gräberfeldern”, *Alba Regia* 2/3 (1963) pp. 49–63.

imports: Sommerein 216,³⁴ Zamardi 10³⁵ und Zillingtal D 469³⁶ (first half of the seventh century, in exceptional cases also third quarter of the seventh century) (pl. 16,1).

- Iron strap-ends and mounts with wire inlay in the form of spiral ornament: Kölked-Feketekapu A 341;³⁷ Pitvaros 72;³⁸ Zamárdi;³⁹ Zillingtal D 14⁴⁰ (second quarter of the seventh century) (pl. 16,2–4).

Today, technological aspects play an important role in Avar archaeology. On the one hand, one would like to find out as much as possible about “daily life”, and crafts are part of it. In addition to this, we have discovered that technological criteria allow us to refine the chronological system of the finds and that fine chronology is the prerequisite for any historical interpretation of the results of archaeological research. The noblemen’s belt-sets were subject to rapidly changing fashions and all kinds of techniques were used to produce them.

The cast silver “mask fittings” (pl. 2,1–3) are one of the earliest types of object which appear in Avar graves. However, among the Avars they do not occur in the form of complete belt-sets. Possible explanations for this may be either that the period during which they were used was already more or less over and therefore the

³⁴ F. Daim and A. Lippert, *Das awarische Gräberfeld von Sommerein am Leithagebirge*, *NÖ, Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren* 1. Studien zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte des Donau- und Ostalpenraumes 2. Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 170 (Wien 1984) pl. 108,2,4,1; 108,2,5; 109,2,4,2; 109,2,6; 109,2,8; 109,2,10.

³⁵ K. Bakay, “Az avarok időrendjéről. Újabb avar temetők a Balaton Környékén [Zur Chronologie der Avarzeit. Neue awarenzeitliche Gräberfelder in der Umgegend des Plattensees]”, *Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei* 1 (1973) pp. 1 ff., esp. p. 13, pl. IV.

³⁶ F. Daim, “Das awarische Gräberfeld von Zillingtal: Sechs Gräber mit westlichen Gegenständen”, *Wissenschaftliche Arbeiten aus dem Burgenland* 100 (1998) pp. 97–135, esp. pl. 18 and 19.

³⁷ *Das awarenzeitlich gepidische Gräberfeld von Kölked—Feketekapu A*, pl. 70 A 341,9.

³⁸ L. Bende, “Tausírozott díszű övgarnitúra a pitvarosi avar temetőből [Tauschierte Gürtelgarnitur im awarischen Gräberfeld von Pitvaros]”, *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve—Studia Archaeologica* 6 (2000) pp. 199–217 [German summary: pp. 209–11] esp. fig. 5 ff.

³⁹ Exhibition Museum Kaposvár 1999. Compare also the exhibition catalogue: *The largest cemetery from the Avar period in the Carpathian basin. Selection from the restored material of the Avar cemetery at Zamárdi* (Kaposvár 1998).

⁴⁰ Daim, “Sechs Gräber mit westlichen Gegenständen”, pl. 2,10.

Avars merely possessed a couple of “antiquities” or, alternatively, that the main focus of the distribution of the belt-sets with mask fittings lay elsewhere, for instance in the Caucasus region and along the coast of the Black Sea. In the Early Avar Period, casting technology was used mainly for buckles and for some parts of the fittings of Bócsa-Kunbáony type (pl. 19–22). Exceptions are some cast strap-ends with “toothcut”-decoration, for instance from Budapest-Farkasvölgy, typically with a well developed spout.⁴¹ The first cast subsidiary strap-ends appear in the Middle Avar Period. A little later, in Late Avar Period I, complete belt-sets first occur. In the Early Avar Period, sheet-fittings were, as a rule, attached by filling the reverse with a non-precious, soft metal alloy (lead or lead alloys) and casting small strips of wire in with it. This production process is now being examined in the form of a research project. In the Middle Avar Period one appears, in the majority of cases, to have glued sheet-metal fittings onto the belt, as neither traces of lead, nor holes for rivets or threads, nor soldered-on attachment lugs or cast attachment lugs could be detected. We do not know what kinds of glue were used, however, we may assume that the Avars had access to a wide range of materials, for instance tree pitch, resins, fish- or skin glues, possibly mixed with waxes. All of these are highly effective natural substances of quite different specifications. The production of a composite bow alone, which is attested by several hundreds of finds, required the knowledge of excellent glues, as has already been mentioned.

The metalsmith’s grave from Kunszentmárton, which is at the moment being examined closely as part of a research project, is one of the most fascinating archaeological deposits from the Carpathian Basin in the Avar Period. The smith’s grave from Kunszentmárton was found in 1928. It is the burial of a man equipped with horse, lamellae armour and sword, possibly also with bow and arrow.⁴² At

⁴¹ M. Nagy, “Avarzeitliche Gräberfelder im Stadtgebiet von Budapest”, *Monumenta Avarorum Archaeologica* 2 (Budapest 1998) pl. 83 A 13–15; F. Daim, “‘Byzantinische’ Gürtelgarnituren des 8. Jahrhunderts”, *Die Awaren am Rand der byzantinischen Welt. Studien zu Diplomatie, Handel und Technologietransfer im Frühmittelalter*, ed. id., *Monographien zur Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie* 7 (Innsbruck 2000) pp. 77–204, esp. fig. 90.

⁴² D. Csallány, *A kunszentmártoni avarkori ötvössír [Goldschmiedegrab aus der Avarzeit von Kunszentmárton]* (Szentes 1933).

the same time, it contained the most extensive collection of metal-smith's tools and other accessories, as well as half-products and raw materials, known so far from early medieval Europe.

The deceased lay on his back. On his breast there was a set of lamellae armour, which—according to the reconstruction attempted by Csallány—consisted of iron parts sewn onto a linen fabric, arranged in nine rows and overlapping each other.⁴³ A sword with a single cutting edge, possibly with p-shaped attachment plates, had been placed beside the body.⁴⁴ It is not known whether the smith wore a three-, four- or a multi-part belt. Two iron strap-ends (?) appear to have decorated the belt.⁴⁵ “A small horse” had been buried above the feet of the dead warrior. Unfortunately, only two foot bones of the animal remain and for this reason, Vierck has claimed that it cannot be excluded that this may in fact have been a partial horse burial. The latter are known several times from the Early Avar Period. In these cases the horse was skinned, however, the foot bones and the skull remained in the skin. The horse skin was then arranged in the grave in a way which seemed natural, usually bridled and with saddle and stirrups. In this case, however, the animal wore neither bridle nor stirrups. The smith's grave from Kunszentmárton contained 130 objects. Apart from a small number of personal possessions (armour, sword, knife, belt components) these are implements/tools, other devices, a few half-finished products and raw materials. We may, tentatively, reconstruct some of the technical procedures of which the man was capable. It is extremely likely that he produced iron objects, re-cycling old metals in the process. The numerous moulds (pl. 6) which the man had with him were used for serial production of sheet-metal fittings by hammering them over such a device. This indicates a process in which a piece of sheet-metal was placed on a softer lead plate or a firm piece of leather and the model was put on it upside-down. The mould was then “pressed” on top of the sheet by means of hammering forcefully.

⁴³ H. Vierck, *Awarische Schmiedegräber* [working title, unpublished manuscript, Universitätsarchiv Münster] pp. 246 ff.; regarding the *lamellae* armour from Hajdúdorog, which is the second complete specimen from an early Avar grave: D. Csallány, “A hajdúdorogi avar mellpáncél [Der avarische Brustpanzer von Hajdúdorog]”, *Debreceni Déri Múzeum Évkönyve* 45 (1958/59) pp. 17–23 [German summary: p. 23].

⁴⁴ Csallány, *Kunszentmárton*, pp. 8–9; Vierck, *Awarische Schmiedegräber*, p. 231.

⁴⁵ Vierck, *Awarische Schmiedegräber*, pp. 221–2.

Some pieces of raw material and some drops of cast metal suggest that the smith from Kunszentmárton also cast bronze objects. He was also able to do fine soldering work. The precision scale and a larger number of Byzantine precision weights prove that he also dealt with precious metal, presumably he also used the process of mercury gilding.

The smith from Kunszentmárton had full access to Byzantine artefacts and was familiar with Byzantine traditions and techniques (as is suggested by the precision scale and sets of weights, for instance.) However, to call him a Byzantine travelling craftsman would be going too far, because for a Roman citizen an equestrian burial would be unthinkable.

Pottery constitutes the largest group of finds in Avar archaeology by far. At the same time, pottery from the Early and Middle Avar Period is—due to long years of research by Tivadar Vida—apparently the most thoroughly examined type of find in Avar archaeology.⁴⁶ Vida has succeeded in distinguishing numerous groups and variations and has been able to show local developments and influences at supra-regional level. It will now be crucial to examine thin-section samples and to analyse the heavy mineral content of at least a small selection of the pottery. The pottery of the Early Avar Period shows eastern influences in many respects: Hand-made pots with a funnel-shaped or square mouth, with wart- or lump-shaped decoration (pl. 18,3–4). Certainly, it is not feasible to ascribe all objects which have parallels in Eastern Europe and Asia to the first Avar generation which settled in the Carpathian Basin. We should not underestimate the mobility of population groups between the Carpathian Basin and the East. The Avars' victories against Byzantium attracted both adventurers and settlers, the wealth of the Avar elite during this period attracted merchants and travelling craftsmen, while political changes in the East (we know of some of them, but of many we have no idea) frequently brought refugees into the Carpathian Basin. We must therefore avoid any interpretations which are overly

⁴⁶ T. Vida, "Zu einigen handgeformten frühawarischen Keramiktypen und ihren östlichen Beziehungen", *Awarenforschungen*, ed. F. Daim, *Archaeologia Austriaca* 1. Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren 4 (Wien 1992) pp. 517–77; id., "Das Töpferhandwerk in der Awarzeit", *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Awaren*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) pp. 362–4; id., *Die awarenzeitliche Keramik I (6.–7. Jh.)*, *Varia Archaeologica Hungarica* 8 (Budapest 1999).

schematic, and should by no means assume that there was a kind of “settlement evolution”.

Craftsmen’s traditions of Late Antique origin may also be discerned in the pottery of the period. The so-called “grey pottery” is fine ware of a high technical standard. It was made on the fast wheel, mainly for local trade, in small workshops which were producing for internal trade (pl. 18,2; 5–6). Gyula Rosner has managed to locate at least one of the workshops producing “grey pottery”, in the vicinity of Szekszárd and has subjected it to archaeological examination.⁴⁷ In addition to local production, there are some “grey” vessels, which may have been brought into the Avar territory from the Byzantine Empire, for instance the amphora from Kunbábony.

The Avar defeat at Constantinople in 626 marks a turning-point in the history of the khaghanate. The effects are noticeable in the archaeological record, but without written sources we would not be able to draw any conclusions from the archaeological evidence. While up to 626, large sums of yearly tribute entered the Avar territory, they now stop, as is illustrated by the numismatic analysis of the coins found in this region.⁴⁸ The ransoms for Byzantine prisoners were another important source of income for the Avars. The looted luxury goods must also have represented considerable wealth. After 626 it was necessary to adapt from a war economy: the Avars now earned their livelihood by means of crop husbandry, but especially by breeding livestock. Trade may also have played a certain role, which, however, cannot be expressed in quantitative terms.

The fact that Avar sovereignty survived the crisis is, not without reason, ascribed to the fact that their neighbours were so weak. A number of princely graves, which presumably belong to the middle of the seventh century and, at the latest, to the 670s, testify to this phase of re-organisation of the Avar Empire. The earliest of these are presumably the “princely graves” from Tepe, Bócsa and Kunbábony, even if the chronological placement (even in terms of relative chronology) of the finds of Bócsa-Kunbábony type is still

⁴⁷ G. Rosner, “Keramikerstellung und Handel im Karpaten-Becken in der frühen Awarenzeit”, *A Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Évkönyve* 15 (1989) pp. 125–33; Vida, *Keramik I*, pp. 88–96; 177–81; 206–19.

⁴⁸ P. Somogyi, *Byzantinische Fundmünzen der Awarenzeit*, Monographien zur Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie 5. Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren 8 (forthcoming).

subject to heated discussions. In Tepe there is apparently loot in the form of the largest Byzantine silver plate hitherto known. It had been cut up.⁴⁹ The gold mounts of the sword scabbard from Kunágota appear to be the remains of a looted casket with gold fittings (pl. 7–8).

The grave from Kunbábony, which has already been mentioned, was discovered by chance in 1971 and is one of the most precious archaeological deposits to have been discovered in Hungary in the twentieth century (pl. 19–22).⁵⁰ The deceased had been buried with two valuable belts with gold fittings, two swords, a gold pot with a handle and several wooden vessels with gold mounts. There was also a huge Byzantine amphora, in addition to a number of other objects. Apparently, pieces of gold foil had been sewn onto his funeral robe. The most striking ensemble among the dress accessories and grave goods from Kunbábony is the belt-set with “pseudo-buckles”, decorative fittings in the form of buckles which were mounted vertically onto the belt and which cannot be opened, thereby serving purely decorative purposes (pl. 19).

The so-called “pseudo-buckles” are decorative fittings of pure gold in the shape of buckles, sometimes with glass- or precious stone inlay, which decorate some of the belts not only from Kunbábony but also from Tépe and Bócsa. In recent years, they have frequently been described as Byzantine products, mainly because they have been made in the “Byzantine fashion”, using an intricate “composite technique”. One argument against this view is the fact that not a single “pseudo-buckle” is known from a Byzantine context. There is merely an ensemble from Sirmium, where decorative techniques with substantial Byzantine analogies, such as the arcade border and a complicated openwork lattice ornament, occur (pl. 23).⁵¹ On the other hand, clear Christian symbolism is avoided on the belt-set from

⁴⁹ É. Garam, *Katalog der awarenzeitlichen Goldgegenstände und der Fundstücke aus den Fürstengräbern im Ungarischen Nationalmuseum*, *Catalogi Musei Nationalis Hungarici, Seria Archeologica* 1 (Budapest 1993) pl. 94; *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Awaren*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) p. 260, fig. 22.

⁵⁰ E. Tóth and A. Horváth, *Kunbábony. Das Grab eines Awarenkhanen* (Kecskemét 1992); F. Daim, “Kunbábony”, *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 17 (2nd edn., 2001) pp. 490–5.

⁵¹ I. Popović, *Žlatni avarski pojasi iz okoline Sirmijuma (Golden Avarian belt from the vicinity of Sirmium)*, National Museum, Belgrade, Monographies 10. Archaeological Institute, Belgrade, Monographies 32 (1997).

Sirmium—as opposed to belt-ornaments which were definitely used in Byzantium. From this, we may deduce that this particular belt-set was produced by a local (Byzantine) workshop for the Avar market.⁵² But where did the strange “pseudo-buckle” in fact originate? For now, this question can only be answered hypothetically. The pseudo-buckle-fitting can only be derived from buckles which serve purely decorative purposes on the belt. Objects of this type are in fact known from Eastern Europe, at least from the Volga-Kama-region, but their position in terms of absolute chronology is not yet clear, so that it is not yet possible to submit irrefutable evidence for this theory. Nevertheless, for now, the available data give the impression that, with the help of pseudo-buckles and Byzantine technology, there was a desire to create a representation culture which, on the other hand, consciously tries to avoid a pale imitation of Byzantine customs.

Around the middle of the seventh century, an increased inflow of Byzantine coins can once more be observed and the most recent princely graves from Ozora-Tótipusztá, which belong to the Middle Avar Period, contain almost exclusively Byzantine objects (pl. 28). We also hear once more about a Byzantine delegation being sent to the Avars. There are two possible explanations for these observations: either the Avar Empire is once more becoming attractive to the Byzantine Empire as a political ally and trade partner, or there is in fact a connection between the end of the Bulgarian Empire in the Black Sea region between 641 and 668 and the migration of Bulgarian groups, in an attempt to escape the Chazars. The Bulgarian Empire in the lower Danube region was established by Asparuch at this time. This was the beginning of a rather changeable relationship with the Byzantines. While they were allied closely during some periods, during others the Byzantines attempted repeatedly to destroy the Bulgarian Empire. Regardless of this, it definitely made sense that, in times of changing political topography, Byzantium apparently tried to establish more intensive contacts with the Avars.

We may assume that, as a result of the dramatic events at Constantinople in 626, radical changes must have taken place in Avar settlement, as from then on, they must have been forced to earn their living exclusively by means of agriculture. However, the

⁵² Similarly: *ibid.*, p. 85.

finds do not permit us to come to any conclusions regarding this question. There are two reasons for this: Firstly, only two Avar settlements have been published to date⁵³ and secondly, in order to enable us to attempt a historical interpretation of this scope, we would require a very exact chronological system as a basis and this will be impossible even in the near future. Pottery from the Early and Middle Avar Period can, as Tivadar Vida frankly admits, be dated within half a century at best.⁵⁴

Due to a lack of finds which are relevant in terms of fine chronology, settlements and settlement layers are more difficult to date. Nevertheless, they can reveal much about the way of life of the population. Byzantine building traditions never gained much popularity among the Avars, a point that can be compared with the observations Priskos made about Attila and his court. Since comparative analysis of excavation results is hindered by geology (for instance, there is over a metre of pitch black humus in Örménykút) and variations in excavation technique, regional differences in settlement structure are not yet clear, although we would definitely expect to find such. From the Early and Middle Avar settlement Dunaújváros-Öreghegy, several rectangular, sunken huts whose roof was supported by a pair of posts at each of the narrow sides are known (pl. 17,1).⁵⁵ The entrance is usually in the south-east, the stone oven is located in the north-eastern corner. Furthermore, there are free-standing ovens and numerous pits within the settlement. However, what is presumably a storage pit may be observed next to many of the huts. Several systems of ditches permeate the settlement. These ditches overlap some of the huts, or, in turn, are overlapped by them, so that István Bóna was able to conclude that the Avar village had two phases.

In Lébény near Győr, the hitherto largest Avar settlement, consisting of two sites with a total area of 13–14 hectares, was examined as a result of the construction of the Wien-Budapest motorway.⁵⁶

⁵³ I. Bóna, *VII. sz-i avar települések és Arpád-kori magyar falu Dunaújvárosban* [*Avarische Siedlungen aus dem VII. Jh. und arpadenzeitliches Dorf in Dunaújváros*], *Fontes Archaeologici Hungariae* (Budapest 1973); C. Bálint, *Die spätawarenzeitliche Siedlung von Eperjes*, *Varia Archaeologica Hungarica* 4 (Budapest 1991).

⁵⁴ Vida, *Keramik I*, pp. 15–26.

⁵⁵ Bóna, *Dunaújváros*.

⁵⁶ M. Takács, “Die awarenzeitlichen Siedlungen von Lébény”, *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Awaren*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) pp. 378–82.

The earlier settlement of Lébény-Kaszás-domb also includes a system of ditches which encloses rectangular areas. The latter may be interpreted as pens for livestock (pl. 17,2). The two huts correspond more or less to those from Dunaújváros, additionally, there are numerous pits and three wells, one of them with a stone border and a wooden well-box. The evaluation of the early Avar settlement at Kölked-Feketekapu, which has been excavated by Attila Kiss and his wife Zsuzsa K. Zoffmann, will be of utmost importance.

Unfortunately, it was possible to excavate only a tiny part of the settlement at Zillingtal. Nevertheless, the results illuminate some important aspects of Avar archaeology, three of which will be mentioned here: The first concerns the process of settlement in our region. After it had been shown that Early Avar finds, almost without exception, occur on formerly Roman sites,⁵⁷ the question arose whether the Avars made use of existing Roman ruins. In Zillingtal, a Roman house was uncovered within a settlement from the Avar Period. Avar post holes and small ditches situated above the Roman building do not respect it in any way. This shows that the Avars erected their own huts above and beside the Roman buildings according to their own ideas.⁵⁸ The reason for settling in a particular place was presumably the fact that the area, which had been cleared of woodland in the Roman Period could still be used agriculturally and apart from that, there was still an existing network of roads and paths, which must also have facilitated traffic for the Avars. One should keep in mind that the deciduous and the mixed forest are the natural types of vegetation in the Carpathian Basin. The fact that today, parts of Hungary appear to belong to the Eurasian steppe region, is in fact the result of human mismanagement in the Early Modern Period.

In Zillingtal, numerous different types of pits have been excavated. However, none of them permitted the reconstruction of a pit house of the Dunaújváros type. In addition to this, we found rows of wooden posts, which definitely belong to the Avar Period. The wooden

⁵⁷ Daim et al., *Leobersdorf*, p. 175; H. Winter, *Avarenzeitliche Grab- und Streufunde aus Ostösterreich. Ein Beitrag zur Siedlungsgeschichte*, Monographien zur Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie 4 (Innsbruck 1997) pp. 73–7.

⁵⁸ F. Daim and A. Distelberger, “Die awarische Siedlung von Zillingtal—Die Grabungen 1994–95”, *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Awaren*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) pp. 372–7.

posts had been carefully worked into a square shape. Here, some above-ground buildings supported by wooden uprights, of a type which so far had not been observed in Avar areas of settlement, must have existed. Three furnaces for iron working, which have been excavated carefully and are now being evaluated, are also particularly interesting. Two of them appear to have been used for ore reduction, the others for forging.

It is obviously of interest to ascertain the type of economy used, however, this is not yet possible. Due to the animal bones, which are in fact the remains of grave accompaniments in the form of meat, we are familiar with the whole range of Avar animal breeding. Game, on the other hand, hardly occurs at all. It will surely be possible, in the near future, to identify precisely the cereals cultivated, the other crops and the produce from gardening, from the plant remains found in settlements, and it seems that we will be in for some surprises. At present, ethnographical analogies play a predominant role in interpretation; however, it is vital to exercise caution in using them. We must assume that each village in fact practised its own version of a commonly accepted way of life, in the same way that the burial customs differ in some details between settlements.⁵⁹ Presumably, it was especially important to the Avars to own cattle. However, the relative proportion between breeding livestock, farming and gardening, between the production of goods and services (trade) will have been different in every population group. In the process of interpreting the cemetery and the settlement from Zillingtal, we will attempt to create economic models, starting with a given population size and the maximum area of land available for cultivation.

Hungarian researchers have dealt intensively with Avar burial customs, especially with the equestrian graves (pl. 3; 25; 37; 39). At first, this research was based on the assumption that it would be possible to link ethnic groups with particular customs. These hopes have been destroyed; however, most types of equestrian graves—not surprisingly—show links with Eastern Europe. There are many different types of equestrian grave. Usually the saddled horse—this means with saddle, stirrups and bridle—was buried beside the dead warrior in a reclining position. Occasionally, partial horse burials also

⁵⁹ Daim et al., *Leobersdorf*, pp. 165–6 with notes 14 and 15.

occur and as a rule these are east of the Tisza (pl. 3). This means that the horse was skinned, whereas the skull and the foot bones remained within the horse skin. The latter was then spread out or rolled together and placed in the grave together with saddle, stirrups and bridle. In exceptional cases, a combination of the two types seems to have occurred, for instance in Szegvár-Sápoldal. This burial was interpreted from a culture-historical point of view by István Bóna.⁶⁰ The documentation of this excavation, however, is restricted to ground plans. It seems likely that this was in fact a tunnel grave. For this type of burial, a tunnel was dug outwards from the shaft of the grave at an oblique angle and the deceased then placed in it. The grave pit itself contains the horse (in Szegvár-Sápoldal also the second horse which had been skinned; pl. 3) as well as any other animals which had been killed. Tunnel graves occur in eastern Hungary from the Early up to the Late Avar Period.

We know smaller and larger row-grave cemeteries of late sixth to early seventh century date, from Keszthely and from formerly Lombard western Hungary (Környe, Kölked-Feketekapu A). One gets the impression that the Avars adapted their burial customs gradually to the “western” model in the course of the settlement process. Some early Avar burial places consist of inhumation burials, which were located at considerable distance from each other (Kunszentmárton, Leobersdorf, Sommerein, Zillingtal, Börcs-Nagydomb).⁶¹ In the case of Leobersdorf, it is possible to observe the gradual transition from single-grave burial to row-grave cemetery. In this process, not only the distance between the graves, but also their orientation, has changed successively from NNW-SSE to W-E.

2 *Middle Avar Period (650/670–710)*

If we had only princely graves from the second half of the seventh century—the inventories from Igar and Ozora-Tótipusztza—then pre-

⁶⁰ I. Bóna, “A Szegvár-sápoldali lovassír. Adatok a korai avar temetkezési szokásokhoz [Das Reitergrab von Szegvár-Sápoldal. Beiträge zu den frühawarischen Bestattungssitten]”, *Archeologiai Értesítő* 106,1 (1979) pp. 3–32; id., “Studien zum frühawarischen Reitergrab von Szegvár”, *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 32 (1980) pp. 31–95.

⁶¹ Tomka, “Hirten”.

sumably the Middle Avar phase, the second group according to Ilona Kovrig,⁶² would never have been identified. This is because the archaeological material preserved in these graves is either linked much too closely to the Early Avar material (Igar; pl. 24) or, alternatively, it consists almost exclusively of Byzantine objects (Ozora-Tótipusztá; pl. 28). Important innovations during this period were merely the sabre, which replaces the early Avar single-edge sword, as well as a number of different types of jewellery. The sabre scabbard now has different types of attachment loops, for instance “donkey-back-shaped” (Gyenesdiás 64: pl. 26,1, Ozora-Tótipusztá) or D-shaped loops (Igar III: pl. 24,4). However, in the large necropolises, the Middle Avar group may be discerned with remarkable clarity. Moreover, in many cases it constitutes a large proportion of the cemetery (Mödling-An der Goldenen Stiege; Zillingtal). In the Middle Avar Period a certain homogenisation may be observed, a standardisation of the archaeological material which makes imported goods, from Byzantium, Italy or southern Germany, stand out with unusual clarity. Today, this standardisation may appear to us as a kind of impoverishment, nevertheless it suggests the existence of a cultural power, which becomes noticeable once more at a later point, in the process of adapting new stimuli from the South to suit its own taste. At the same time, we may interpret this homogenisation of Avar culture as the result of a political process, through which all the khagan’s “people” were united. Under this system of allegiance, all the small groups which were united under Avar sovereignty, but nevertheless frequently became (temporarily) independent under the leadership of their *warlords*, were absorbed by a society which was divided—first and foremost—into horizontal strata. The local cultural variations are clearly not so important.

The interlace- and chain-ornament of Igar type constitute the Middle Avar version of Germanic Animal Style or its Pannonian variant, the “toothcut”-decoration. The beginnings of such ambitions are related to classical Byzantine interlace and can be seen on a mould for sheet-metal strap-ends from Kunszentmárton. In the princely grave Igar III, the strap-ends and fittings, which are made individually by chasing and punching sheet gold, are decorated with chain

⁶² I. Kovrig, *Das awarenzeitliche Gräberfeld von Alattyán*, Archaeologia Hungarica 40 (Budapest 1963).

ornament, whereas the gold buckle is decorated with “toothcut”-decoration (pl. 24,3). With its chain-ornamented belt-set made of sheet silver and the strap-ends with triple-hemispherical end (pl. 29,1), the relatively rich grave Mödling 35 links the equestrian grave from Gyenesdiás (pl. 25,4) with the finds from Igar III. Apart from that, ensembles without or with only simple geometric decoration also occur. They may be derived from early Avar belt-sets of Szegvár-Sapoldal type. The Late Roman, Hunnic and Germanic roots are no longer apparent in the Middle Avar Period; mirrors, omega brooches and belt pendants with sieve spoons no longer occur. There is no doubt that the belt-sets of Byzantine type, especially the set from Ozora-Tótipusztá, as well as other Byzantine jewellery, which is remarkably abundant in the archaeological record of the Middle Avar Period, as well as Byzantine coins, which once again, occur more frequently in the Carpathian Basin, signify a change in the overall situation of the Avar elite. It seems possible that the renovation of the Avar Empire has, after one or two generations, reached a stage where it was once more possible to practise active foreign policy. At least, there is evidence of an Avar delegation to Constantinople in the year 678/679.

The princely grave III from Igar and the equestrian grave from Gyenesdiás 64, on which remarkably thorough research has been done, may serve as examples of archaeological complexes from the Middle Avar Period:

The three finds from Igar (Igar I, II, III) are among the most well-known archaeological assemblages of the Middle Avar Period. Nándor Fettich has dealt with them repeatedly, however, a precise examination of the original documents and the inventory records was only carried out a few years ago by Gyula Fülöp. He also attempted to contact the descendants of the finder and succeeded in clarifying a number of errors.⁶³

The third find from Igar, which we would now like to look at more closely (pl. 24), has given its name to a type of sheet-metal belt-fittings with chain decoration (“Igar type”), which is character-

⁶³ G. Fülöp, “Awarenzeitliche Fürstentum von Igar”, *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 40 (1988) pp. 151–90; id., “New research on finds of Avar chieftain-burials at Igar, Hungary”, *From the Baltic to the Black Sea. Studies in medieval archaeology*, ed. D. Austin and L. Alcock, One world archaeology 18 (London 1990) pp. 138–46.

istic for Middle Avar Period I. In 1928, the equestrian grave was discovered in the process of removing a hill, at a depth of 4 m. As the finders were unable to agree on how to divide up the valuable objects, the police heard about the find and collected the gold fittings from the villagers. According to the landowner, the bronze and gold objects lay in the stomach region, the sword to the left of the body, the silver cup near the left hand, the wooden vessel near the feet, the coffin clamps around the skeleton. The man wore two small gold earrings decorated with small spheres and two plait fasteners, consisting of gilded bronze tubelets of hexagonal section (pl. 24,1–2). The belt-set (pl. 24,3) made of sheet gold (for information on the buckle see below) had not—as is usually stated—been pressed in a mould. Instead it had been given individual form by chasing and punching, whereby the basic lay-out of the ornament had first of all been scratched on the front with a needle.⁶⁴ The set is definitely not complete, however, apart from the strap-loop and the hole-reinforcements all the different types seem to be present: Buckle, main strap-end, one double escutcheon-shaped mount, one “double-bow-shaped” and three escutcheon-shaped fittings as well as one broad and four narrow subsidiary strap-ends. The gold buckle with inflexible fitting has been cast and is decorated with a fine, symmetrical “toothcut”-ornament. The “chain decoration” on the sheet fittings has obviously been created in the Middle Avar period by developing the “toothcut”-ornament further. The latter is a Pannonian variation of the Animal Style II in the form of interlace, in the “chain decoration” the interlace is usually split up into separate chain links. The silver cast and gilded hook-fitting may also have been part of the belt. The sabre with “star-shaped” hilt is bent considerably and was worn by means of two D-shaped attachment loops. The latter were framed by strips of silver. If one considers the sabre from Gyenesdiás for comparison (pl. 26,1), the two square gold fittings with face-shaped protuberances in the corners could have decorated the attachment loops of the sabre sheath. The handle was partially covered in gold- and silver foil and has two bronze nails with decorative function. The mouth of the scabbard is decorated with sections of gold foil. The function of another, quite large Byzantine buckle (pl. 24,7) is not quite clear. Fülöp thinks there may have been a second

⁶⁴ Birgit Bühler (forthcoming).

belt, to which, apart from the buckle, the cast-fitting with a hook, a broad strap-end made of low-quality silver and some fragments of silver sheet may have belonged.⁶⁵ Another possibility is that the buckle, together with a small bronze buckle with inflexible fitting, was used for fastening the straps belonging to the sabre, although it seems a little too large for this purpose. In the case of both buckles, the lost bronze tongues had been replaced by ones made of iron. The slightly flaring chalice made of low quality silver has fallen apart during restoration; the pottery vessel is made of well-tempered clay and finished on a slow wheel. It is well rounded and has a flaring, rounded rim.⁶⁶ There is also an iron sickle, which is unfortunately heavily corroded, so that its shape can only be described vaguely. Sickles occur only rarely.

In Gyenesdiás, just 2 km northeast of Keszthely, an Avar cemetery was excavated between 1963 and 1991. Among other important burials, it also includes a Middle Avar equestrian grave with a Byzantine coin (pl. 25–27).⁶⁷

The grave's orientation was precisely E-W. The man lay facing east, in a coffin which had been placed in a large, rectangular grave pit over 2 m deep. On the southern side, beside the coffin, a horse had been buried with the same orientation. A goat's skin with complete skull and legs had been spread out over the horse's head and forelegs. The warrior was outstandingly equipped. On both sides of his skull lay gold earrings, on one of them an oval amethyst had been preserved (pl. 25,1). There was a gold finger-ring on each hand, one with a round cabochon on three small columns, the other with pyramid-shaped decoration and a small red precious stone (pl. 25,2). The belt-set consists of a Byzantine bronze buckle with inflexible fitting, triple hemispherical openwork and three cast attachment lugs, a variant of the Sucidava type of buckle, and gilded sheet-bronze fittings and strap-ends (pl. 25,4). The basic shape of the strap-ends resembles an elongated trapezium, the lower end is decorated with three hemispheres. The fittings each consist of four hemispheres: in

⁶⁵ Fülöp, "Awarenzeitliche Fürstenfunde", pp. 165 ff.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 168–9.

⁶⁷ R. Müller, "Vorbericht über die Freilegung des Grabes eines hohen Militärs aus der Mittelawarenzeit in Gyenesdiás", *Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae* (1989) pp. 141–64; *id.*, "Das Gräberfeld von Gyenesdiás", *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Awaren*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) pp. 411–6.

the centre there is a truncated cone which has been turned by 90 degrees. The strap-loop is decorated with a motif resembling a St. Andrew's cross. The latter may well reflect the—much earlier—cross motif on the strap-loop from Kunágota. The belt-set is completed by two hole-reinforcements and two fragments of fittings. Near the right lower arm of the deceased, there was an iron dagger of exceptional length, approximately 20 cm. To the man's left a sabre, with an exceptionally long handle, had been placed (pl. 26,1). The attachment loops are "donkey-back-shaped", similar to those from Ozora-Tótipusztá. They are ornamented with gold fittings in the shape of a square which has been rotated by 90 degrees, again with a flat truncated cone in the centre and four heart- or face-shaped protuberances. These fittings correspond closely to the chased gold fittings from Igar III, which may therefore also be considered sabre ornaments. At the man's left elbow there was a biconical spindle-whorl. These are found predominantly in women's graves. Near the man's feet there was a hand-made clay vessel. In the mouth of the deceased, Róbert Müller found a so-called "coin of Charon", which, according to tradition, is the dead man's payment for the ferryman who is supposed to take him over the river Styx. The gold coin, fresh from the mint, belongs to the reign of Constans II, minted between 654 and 659.

The horse was saddled and bridled. Its bridle was decorated with fittings and strap-ends made of gilded sheet-bronze (pl. 26,2). In some ways they seem very traditional (triple-hemispherical fringed mounts), in some ways very modern (strap-ends in the shape of an elongated trapeze, with star-shaped ends). The horse had an iron snaffle-bit in its mouth, which must originally have had side-bars of unknown form made of some kind of organic material. Beside the horse's flanks there were round stirrups. The quiver with the arrows had been placed to the right of the horse, maybe it was hanging from the saddle. It was apparently decorated with tin foil, which however, fell apart in the excavation process. It contained four arrows with triple-winged arrow-heads, one of them with a horizontal blade. The composite bow with bone reinforcements in the centre and at the ends lay to the left of the horse (pl. 27). Possibly, it had already been broken when it was placed in the grave.

In Middle Avar Period II, there is a tendency to make the fittings more geometric, for example by placing a square boss in the centre (pl. 29,3). While in the Early and Middle Avar Period, usually

only buckles had been cast (exceptions can be found among the group of belt-fittings with “toothcut”-decoration), now, at the end of the Middle Avar Period, the first cast strap-ends and fittings appear, usually only with geometric ornament and frequently together with sheet-metal fittings. In the cemetery of Mödling, this phase, which is a period of transition leading to the “griffin and tendril industry”, is particularly clear (pl. 30,1–2). It would be useful to know when exactly these innovations were introduced to Avar belt fashion. Usually, we place the beginning of the Late Avar Period in the years around or just after 700, however this is based more on intuition and convention than on hard facts. If one would like to move the transition between the Middle and the Late Avar Period further into the eighth century, one would, in turn, have to move the material from Late Avar Period III into the ninth century in order to prevent “overcrowding” of chronological phases in the eighth century.

The fact that three types of iron belt-sets with silver inlay, which otherwise occur mainly in southern Germany, but which could also have originated in Italy, are found in Avar territory, is particularly interesting: The first type is characterised by depictions of human faces (“Feldmoching type”), the second by striped inlay and the third by vertical stripes and zig-zag ornament:

- Iron belt-sets with silver inlay depicting human faces (“Feldmoching type”): Előszállás-Bajcsihegy;⁶⁸ Zamárdi⁶⁹ (third quarter of the seventh century).
- Iron belt-sets with silver inlay in the form of stripes: Alattyán 520;⁷⁰ Mödling-An der Goldenen Stiege 240;⁷¹ Pókaszeptek 67;⁷²

⁶⁸ Bóna, “Ethnische Verhältnisse”, pp. 64 ff. and fig. 4.

⁶⁹ Exhibition Museum Kaposvár 1999. Compare also the exhibition catalogue: *The largest cemetery from the Avar period in the Carpathian basin. Selection from the restored material of the Avar cemetery at Zamárdi* (Kaposvár 1998).

⁷⁰ Kovrig, *Alattyán*, pl. 34,47–51.

⁷¹ *Mödling—Goldene Stiege*, ed. F. Daim, K. Matzner and H. Schwammenhöfer (forthcoming).

⁷² Á. Sós and Á. Salamon, *Cemeteries of the Early Middle Ages (6th–9th c.) at Pókaszeptek* (Budapest 1995) pl. VII 67,5–12. The distribution of belt-sets with striped inlay was examined by U. Koch, “Das fränkische Gräberfeld von Herbolzheim, Kreis Heilbronn”, *Fundberichte aus Baden-Württemberg* 7 (1982) pp. 387–474, esp. p. 461, fig. 37 and 469, as well as R. Marti, “Das Grab eines wohlhabenden Alamannen in Altdorf UR, Pfarrkirche St. Martin”, *Jahrbuch der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte* 78 (1995) pp. 83–130, esp. pp. 109–10.

- Sommerein 16⁷³ (third quarter of the seventh century) (pl. 16,5).
- Iron belt-sets with silver-inlayed zig-zag ornament: Gyenesdiás 5,⁷⁴ Záhorská Bystrica 20⁷⁵ und Zalakomár 545⁷⁶ (third quarter of the seventh century).

It is possible that these three types of belt-sets entered the Carpathian Basin during a very short phase only. On the other hand, they may be linked with a particular workshop or with a particular trade route. Technical studies of the objects in question will help answer this question.

The numerous large cemeteries which were used continuously in the Middle and Late Avar Period now permit us to observe the cultural development in the Avar Empire more clearly. However, the reason why large necropolises were established at this particular time—the end of the Early Avar Period or the beginning of the Middle Avar Period, is difficult to determine. But certainly, the settlements—inhabited for seven to nine generations—belonging to these large cemeteries are proof of a tendency to settle down, even if the Avars maintained many elements of traditional pastoral farming in the process.

One of the “provincial” necropolises, which was used from the end of the Early Avar Period up to the end of Late Avar Period is the cemetery at Mödling-An der Goldenen Stiege.

Mödling is located south of Vienna on a slope of the Vienna woods. In 1967, during dredging work in preparation for building a house, Avar graves were found and then examined by the *Bezirksmuseumsverein* of Mödling, the rescue excavation service of the *Urgeschichtliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* today known as *Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte* and in particular by Hermann und Lotte Schwammenhöfer. By 1973, a total of 497 Avar graves had been rescued.⁷⁷ There

⁷³ Daim and Lippert, *Sommerein*, pl. 15–16.

⁷⁴ Müller, “Gräberfeld von Gyenesdiás”, p. 412.

⁷⁵ L. Kraskovská, *Slovansko-avarské pohrebisko pri Záhorskej Bystrici*, *Fontes archeologického ústavu Slovenského národného múzea v Bratislava 1* (Bratislava 1972) fig. 13; 14,1–2.

⁷⁶ For an illustration see: R. Müller, *Der Häuptling von Gyenes. Awarenzeit in der Umgebung von Keszthely*, *Kataloge des Niederösterreichischen Landesmuseums N.F.* 256 (Wien 1990) fig. 4.

⁷⁷ Exhibition catalogue *Germanen, Awaren, Slaven in Niederösterreich: das 1. Jahrtausend nach Christus*, ed. H. Windl (Wien 1977); K. Matzner, “Völkerwanderung und

were also 55 cremations from the Hallstatt Period and 40 settlement pits predominantly from the Neolithic Period. Another interesting detail: there is also evidence of a ditch—presumably also from the Neolithic—enclosing the area.

The cemetery from Mödling is not an example of a really rich necropolis. It does not contain horse graves and only two graves are spectacular: This is the man's grave 35, from the Middle Avar Period, with a silver belt-set of Igar type and the woman's grave 144 from the Late Avar Period with a more than complete repertoire of grave goods, including the famous coat-clasp with images of two archers. However, for two reasons the cemetery is particularly suitable for archaeological interpretation: First of all, it has a relatively clear structure. The central section belongs mainly to the Middle Avar Period and starting from there, in the Late Avar Period, further burials were added to the west and east. Only the northern part of the cemetery was apparently used more than once; here however, some of the overlapping graves assist interpretation.

As mentioned previously, the cemetery at Mödling is particularly suitable for examining and illustrating the chronological development of the archaeological material, especially in the Middle Avar Period and during the transition from Middle to Late Avar Period. The two most interesting assemblages of Middle Avar Period I come from grave 35 and 93 (pl. 29,1,2). In grave 35, a man had been buried with his silver sheet belt-set, decorated with chain ornament of Igar type. He wore earrings consisting of silver rings and hollow gold spheres decorated with granulation. Beside his head a spindle-whorl had been placed, in the pelvic region there were bone ornaments from the quiver and a triple-winged iron arrow head. In grave 93 a man with his bronze sheet belt-set, decorated with "wrapped" interlace had been buried. On the square fittings, the interlace disintegrates once more to form separate chain links, which proves that the two types of ornament are related. A vertical fitting with double symmetry and decorated with a blue precious stone, is particularly characteristic. It was worn on the back part of the belt. The grave also contained two knives, an iron tool for making fire with

Awarenzeit", *Mödling. Landschaft, Kultur, Wirtschaft* (Mödling 1975) pp. 67–88; H. Schwammenhöfer, "Ein awarenzeitlicher Bestattungsort in Mödling bei Wien", *Antike Welt* 7,2 (1976) pp. 11–8.

several flint stones, two arrow heads and a vessel hand-made from clay containing small pieces of chalk or marble and finished on a slow wheel.

Square belt-fittings with geometric decoration, which can no longer be traced back to Animal Style ornament, are typical for Middle Avar Period II. Grave 79 is a good example (pl. 29,3). Two square belt-fittings which belong to the set are decorated with bosses in the form of truncated cones with zig-zag ornament around them. A little later, one began to cast belt-fittings with geometric decoration. A number of graves contain mixed assemblages: parts of the belt consist of sheet-metal, while others have been cast, for instance grave 242, which also includes a pot finished on a slow wheel and decorated with distinct wave-band ornament (pl. 30,1; 33,4). In grave 100, there were square fittings with lattice decoration which match the main strap-end as well as a cast fitting with a hook, which no longer occurs in Late Avar Period I. The main strap-end from grave 242 has a real spout for fastening the belt-strap, while the one from grave 135 only has a gap, to which the tip of the strap is riveted by means of a supplementary sheet of metal (pl. 30,2). Grave 135 also contained a clay vessel which had been finished on a slow wheel, but seems more archaic: It has an almost conic shape and a flaring rim (pl. 33,2). The early women's graves in Mödling are not very remarkable. Bead necklaces with colourful biconical beads and "eye beads" are characteristic of Middle Avar Period I, while the earrings are frequently decorated with hollow spheres made of sheet-bronze, for instance those depicted here from grave 54, which however, cannot compare to those splendid specimens found in the contemporary "princely graves".

As far as pottery is concerned, changes can be detected not only in the fine ware ("grey pottery") but increasingly also in the simple household pottery, made with the help of technical devices. Some of the pots from the cemetery Mödling-An der Goldenen Stiege which were finished by turning them on a slow wheel can be dated with certainty to Middle Avar Period I (pl. 33,1).⁷⁸ These early vessels have a gentle, S-shaped profile and are made of clay which has

⁷⁸ F. Daim, "Zur nachgedrehten Keramik aus dem awarischen Gräberfeld von Mödling—An der goldenen Stiege", *Slawische Keramik in Mitteleuropa vom 8. bis 11. Jahrhundert*, ed. Č. Staňa, Internationale Tagungen in Mikulcice 1 (Brno 1994) pp. 29–52.

been tempered with small chalk stones, possibly even with ground marble. This technique was already used in Late Antiquity; it seems to have survived locally.⁷⁹ Those vessels which are characteristic of the Late Avar Period but still occur in the later Early- and Later Middle Ages, have been finished on a slow wheel and have an angular rim (pl. 33,6–7). They may in fact be traced back to the Middle Avar pots mentioned above. Regarding the Late Avar Period in Mödling see below.

Some Hungarian archaeologists have linked the development of the Middle Avar spectrum of finds with the immigration of a Bulgarian population group led by Kuver, who is believed to have been the son of the Bulgarian ruler. For methodical and thematic reasons, this theory must be refuted, even if, for demographic reasons we must assume that there was considerable immigration in the middle and the second half of the seventh century, presumably also from Eastern Europe.

3 *Late Avar Period*

In the Early and Middle Avar Period, metal-casting technology was well known, however it was used mainly to produce buckles. The majority of Avar belt components was either pressed or chased. In the Mediterranean region, both techniques were used at the same time, however, there appear to have been regional preferences. Only in Northern Italy do we find belt-sets which consist exclusively of cast components (second and third quarter of the seventh century, at least; pl. 16,1). Similar sets, as well as cast buckles with U-shaped fittings also find their way into the Carpathian Basin.⁸⁰ Among the Early Avar belt-sets with “toothcut”-decoration, there are also some cast specimens of high technical quality.⁸¹

Within a relatively short period—if we allow that the Late Avar period begins with this important innovation—casting becomes the preferred technique for the production of buckles, strap-ends and fittings (fig. 4). At the beginning of this period, for a considerable

⁷⁹ Vida, *Keramik I*. I would also like to thank Roman Sauer (Vienna) for information on this topic.

⁸⁰ Bóna, “Ethnische Verhältnisse”. Most recently: Daim, “Sechs Gräber mit westlichen Gegenständen”, with further literature.

⁸¹ Daim, “Byzantinische’ Gürtelgarnituren”, pp. 160 ff.

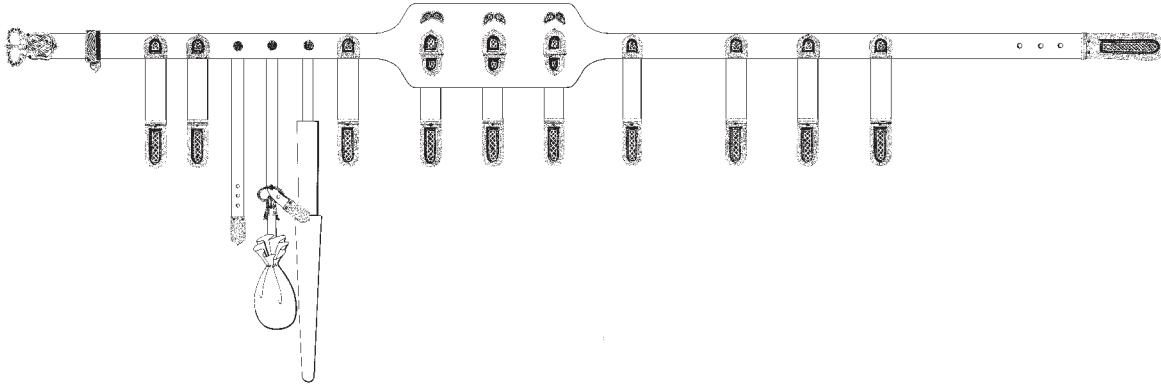


Fig. 3: A belt from the Early Avar Period decorated with fittings (Budakalász – Dunapart, Hungary, grave 696. According to T. Vida)

amount of time, the juxtaposition of thin, predominantly square sheet fittings and cast products, which are frequently decorated with a very similar geometric ornament, may be observed. It is apparent from many details that an effort was made to adapt to the new fashion. For instance, thick, square sheets, which are strong enough to support attached rings and large decorative rivets, are common. We also find strap-ends which do not, as yet, have a spout but instead are riveted onto the belt with the help of a rectangular piece of sheet (fig. 5). To cast a spout a three-part mould would be needed, whereas the third part must have been either an iron wedge, which was removed from the strap-end after casting or, alternatively, a clay wedge, which was broken up later.

It may seem surprising that by no means all details of the casting process are known. They would definitely merit further research and archaeological experiments. Nevertheless, some substantial work on Avar casting technology has already been done.⁸²

Not only the period of transition from Middle- to Late Avar Period, but also the various Late Avar phases, are well represented in the cemetery from Mödling, which has already been mentioned. Grave 140 is a good example, containing a belt-set consisting of more than 40 parts. The main decorative element on both the strap-ends and the fittings is a frame with scale ornament, sometimes with additional engraved or punched decoration. However, the most impressive grave from Mödling is the already famous woman's grave 144. The coat-fastener found in this grave is decorated with the images of two kneeling archers. Both parts consist of thick bronze sheet, engraved and punched, and finally mercury-gilded. The woman was lavishly equipped with a pair of silver- and of gold-earrings, a neck-ring made of bronze wire, a rich bead necklace, consisting mainly of large black melon- and pumpkin seed beads, two band-like bracelets, spiral finger-rings made of bronze wire and a Roman glass bottle. Significantly, the clay vessel had been made by hand, which seems

⁸² For example H.-J. Hundt, "Textilreste aus awarischen Gräbern von Leobersdorf und ein Exkurs über gegossene Textilstrukturen an der Rückseite bronzener Riemenzungen", F. Daim et al., *Das awarische Gräberfeld von Leobersdorf, Niederösterreich* 2, Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren 3. Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 194. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 10 (Wien 1987) pp. 9–18.

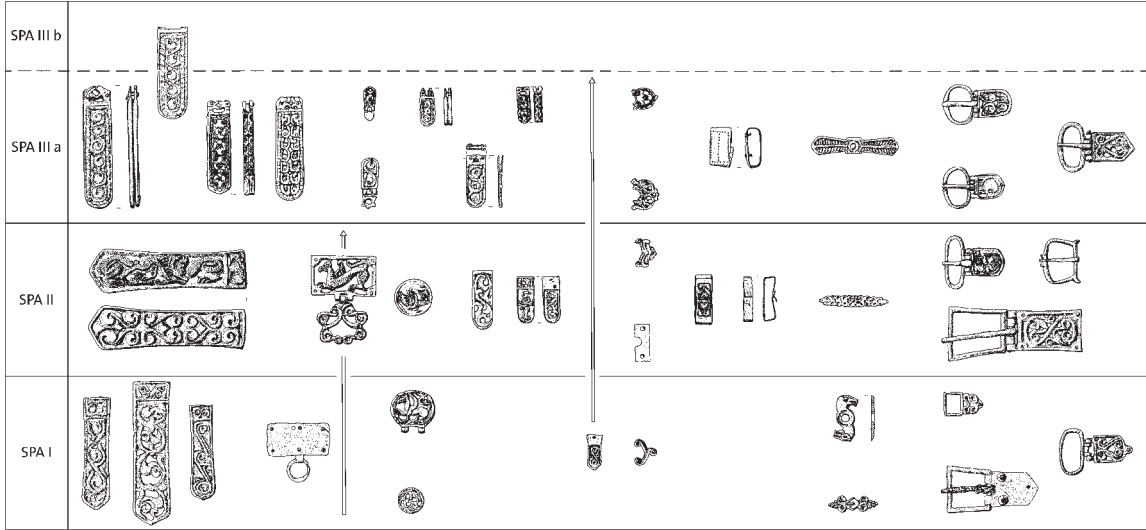


Fig. 4: Typochronology of Late Avar belt ornaments based on the Leobersdorf cemetery

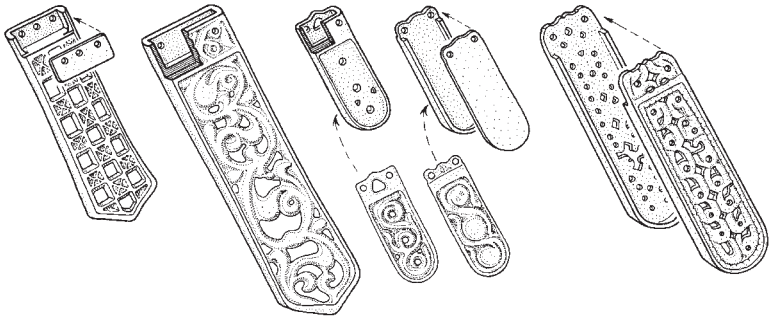


Fig. 5: The structure of Avar main strap-ends in the eighth century

to prove that the almost industrial production of the majority of Late Avar pots on a slow wheel (pottery finished on a slow wheel) was not perceived as increasing their value.

Let us now return to the male means of representation, the belt-set. Apart from the lattice ornament mentioned previously, rectangular fittings decorated with the griffin-motif are characteristic of Late Avar Period I, together with main strap-ends divided into several panels and decorated with figural imagery, “trees of life” and many other motifs. In Late Avar Period II, the animal-combat scene is the most characteristic motif. Two griffins attack a stag or doe, whereby the animals are arranged in such a way that they resemble the rhythm of a large-leaved scroll with circular lobes (e.g. pl. 36,8). This type of depiction is totally foreign to the principles of classical art. Although the animal-combat scene—griffins against deer—like the griffin by itself, belongs to the group of motifs which had been adopted into the Avar repertoire from images in Byzantine art, the animal-combat scene which was so popular in Late Avar Period II must have been created by Avar artists. It reveals that they were familiar with the concept of multi-dimensional motifs.⁸³ The rectangular fittings, which are typical for Late Avar Period I, are now replaced by hinged fittings of escutcheon-like, pentagonal or

⁸³ F. Daim, “Der awarische Greif und die byzantinische Antike”, *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern 2*, ed. H. Friesinger and F. Daim, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 204. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 13 (Wien 1990) pp. 273–304.

more or less round shape, usually decorated with simple plant-ornament. In Late Avar Period III, there are some important innovations. The belt-sets tend to have a high number of parts, some consist of more than 30 fittings. The individual, larger hinged fittings are sometimes replaced by groups of three tongue-shaped fittings. Abstract plant-ornament prevails, especially the circular-lobe ornament. The griffin-motif, which was so popular in the two earlier phases, disappears almost completely. However, round decorative harness-mounts and griffin-head-shaped (eagle heads with ears; pl. 37,8) fittings, which were fixed on straps of horse harness, are one important exception. Instead, strap-ends with circus scenes (pl. 37,5), with medallions and animal motifs, as well as with stylized plant and tendril ornament, the so-called “lily decoration”, now appear.

Some important changes also take place in casting technology (fig. 4): The spout for fastening the belt is now used exclusively in conjunction with appendages, frequently in the shape of animal heads, which enclose the rivets for fastening the end of the strap. The relatively thick strap-end is often cast in one piece, leaving a slit at the end between the two protuberances. In many cases, this slit not only looks as if it had been sawn, but actually shows definite tool marks which suggest the use of a fine saw. However, it seems to have been most common to cast the strap-ends in two parts, whereby a gap, in which the belt may be placed and fastened with rivets, remains between the two halves. The process of casting such a strap-end is very simple, because no wedge is needed for the ferrule. At first glance, the two types look strikingly similar, as both usually have parallel sides, a semi-circular end and protuberances for riveting the belt strap.

Surprisingly, the analysis of the cast belt-sets from Leobersdorf revealed that the belt-sets from Late Avar Period III, especially those with strap-ends consisting of two parts, were cast using a different alloy than those from earlier phases, namely so-called “bell bronze”, which contains a high proportion of lead at the expense of copper content.⁸⁴ In the earlier periods, almost exclusively pure tin bronze was used. However, it will be necessary to verify whether we may in fact generalise from this result.

⁸⁴ P. Wobrauschek, W. Haider and C. Strelj, “Röntgenfluoreszenzanalyse von Bronzefunden aus der Awarenzeit”, F. Daim et al., *Das awarische Gräberfeld von*

Belt-fittings which were cast from pure precious metal—gold or silver—occur in the Late Avar Carpathian Basin only in exceptional cases. The half-palmette ornament on the silver belt-fitting from Komárno-ul. Váradiho, suggests that it may have been an import from the Mediterranean region.⁸⁵ On the other hand, in the Late Avar Period, there are a large number of mercury-gilded belt-fittings. The latter have been examined by Gábor Kiss.⁸⁶ There seems to have been a large variety of motifs and ornaments which in some cases have been adopted from the Mediterranean region or even from the Far East. Evidently, the gilded belt-sets seem to have possessed an exemplary function for the costume of the less wealthy population (examples from Komárno-Schiffswerft: pl. 37,5–8) However, not all the “foreign” motifs were imitated, some occur only on the group of gilded fittings. Characteristically, the distribution map shows a concentration of gilded belt-decoration on the fringes of the area of Avar settlement. As not a single (!) grave is known from the Late Avar Period which could compare with the wealth of the princely graves from the seventh century, we should consider that perhaps, this displacement of rich finds to the periphery may also signify a shift of power away from the centre. However, it would also be possible that the leading social stratum adhered to a different type of burial rite. This may even have meant lavish burial rituals, but without grave accompaniments, in analogy to customs practised in the West and the Mediterranean region at the same time. If—as in

Leobersdorf, Niederösterreich 2, Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren 3. Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 194. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 10 (Wien 1987) pp. 45–55, esp. p. 55, fig. 8. A large number of Avar finds were examined by László Koltó using X-ray fluorescence analysis: L. Koltó, “Avar kori bronztárgyak röntgenemissziós analízise [X-ray emission analysis of bronze objects from the Avar age]”, *Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei* 5 (1982) pp. 5–68 [English summary: p. 66]. The following collection of essays demonstrates Hungarian researchers’ interest in archaeometry: *Archaeometrical Research in Hungary*, ed. M. Járó and L. Koltó (Budapest 1988). X-ray fluorescence analysis was also used to examine “Avar” finds from Bohemia and Moravia, as suggested by Nad’a Profantová: J. Frána and A. Maštalka, “Röntgenfluoreszenzanalyse von frühmittelalterlichen Bronzen aus Böhmen und Mähren”, *Awarenforschungen*, ed. F. Daim, *Archaeologia Austriaca* 1. Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren 4 (Wien 1992) pp. 779–801.

⁸⁵ Daim, “Byzantinische’ Gürtelgarnituren”, p. 106, fig. 23.

⁸⁶ G. Kiss, “A késői avar aranyozott övdiszek [Die spätawarischen vergoldeten Gürtelbeschläge]”, *Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei* 11 (1995) pp. 99–126 [German summary: p. 106].

Leobersdorf—at the end of Late Avar Period III, the “classical” custom of grave accompaniments was given up step by step, this development may in fact have been initiated by the Avar elite two or three generations earlier.

The relative chronology of Late Avar belt-ornaments stands on a firm methodological basis, as the individual elements regarding shape and decoration correlate well with technical details. For instance, one would never find a main strap-end decorated with the typical animal-combat scene, “two griffins killing a stag or doe” cast in two parts or with appendages in the shape of animal heads, presumably because at the time when strap-ends cast in two parts and with appendages became fashionable, animal-combat scenes were no longer in vogue. If we assume that certain motifs, shapes and techniques occurred in the same period, all kinds of different combinations of the individual elements should occur.

An almost confusing variety of motifs, styles and workshop traditions is represented in the Late Avar casting industry. Provided they are recorded and interpreted adequately, they may enable us to grasp the numerous cultural trends in the eastern part of Central Europe. For a long time, our perception of this problem was hindered by the belief that in the eighth century, the Avars lived in forced isolation, partly because after their defeat in 626 they were dependent on their own resources and partly because the direct route to Constantinople had been blocked by the foundation of the Bulgarian empire. However, the sources suggest that the situation was in fact quite different.

The methodological problem regarding the study of Late Avar motifs is:

- There is hardly any comparative material from Byzantium, Italy and western Europe north of the Alps, because dress-ornaments are present in burials only in exceptional cases.
- Persistent difficulties concerning the fine chronology of the eastern European archaeological material.

A possible methodological “lever” for decoding Late Avar motifs could be:

- Comparing Avar motifs with contemporary examples as well as earlier and later examples from the same area and adjacent regions.

- Analysis of motif context (which other motifs frequently occur in conjunction with the one in question?).
- Taking into consideration the style used in each case.

In this way we should be able to grasp synchronic and diachronic motif transfer by examining one complex of motifs after another and thus be able to detect both adaptations to personal taste as well as changes of meaning.

The fact that our research is—inevitably—limited to metal objects is something of a hindrance, because even the small number of bone ornaments from the late Early- and early Middle Avar Period demonstrate that certain motifs and types of decoration may have survived on perishable materials and then appeared on belt-sets only much later. We would like to give three examples for Late Avar motifs, the griffin, the flowered scroll and the boar.

The griffin, a lion with wings and an eagle's head, predominantly with pointed ears and a long tail, is a motif which is thousands of years old. It is well known from Oriental, Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Byzantine art. As a symbol of strength, it is often linked with power. In Roman culture in particular it also plays an important role in a sepulchral context and also enters Christian iconography. In Avar art it first appears in the Middle Avar Period, when Byzantine buckles may have served as models. Nevertheless, many other possibilities exist regarding the transfer of this motif. In Late Avar Period I and II, the griffin almost dominated the cast belts (e.g. pl. 36), so that he has been even described as the "heraldic animal" of the Avars. Such an interpretation, however, signifies a lack of familiarity with the chronology of the archaeological material: How can something be a heraldic animal if it was a popular motif on belt-fittings for only 60 out of altogether 250 years of Avar presence? In Late Avar Period II, apart from the simple griffin-fittings, on which an individual animal is depicted in a dynamic position—ready to pounce—there is now also the main strap-end decorated with the characteristic animal-combat scene, where two griffins attack a stag or doe. Interestingly enough, the group of animals is not depicted according to the classical tradition, but in a strange, intertwined manner, so that its "rhythm" resembles that of a scroll with leaves. The latter is frequently present on the reverse of the strap-end. Here, the Avars have depicted an originally Mediterranean motif—the animal-combat scene—in a way which corresponds to their own

artistic tradition of using a sometimes very high degree of abstraction. In Late Avar Period III, the griffin hardly ever occurs. One exception is the equestrian grave 36 from Komárno, where the round harness-mounts and some smaller fittings are in the shape of eagle's heads with ears, thus depicting griffin's heads (pl. 37,8).

Already in the Early Avar Period, the boar's head is found as a decorative detail on some belt-mounts and—for example—on the bowl rim fittings from Kőlked-Feketekapu B, grave 119 (pl. 14). From the end of the Middle Avar Period onwards, boar-shaped strap-ends occur, which, in Late Avar Period III, seem to have replaced the griffin as a symbol of power. Like the griffin, the boar is also a transcultural symbol, however, it is not used much in Christian iconography and if so, predominantly in a negative context.⁸⁷ The boar signifies untamed strength, wildness and vigour. It is a widespread motif among the Romans and the Celts, among the Anglo-Saxons and in the Germanic North it is used to decorate helmets. So far, no connection has been identified between the Germanic boar images of the sixth and the early seventh century and those from the Middle and Late Avar Period, so that—for lack of good alternatives—a Central Asian origin has been suggested for the latter.⁸⁸ The boar's head on the rim fittings belonging to a (wooden) vessel from Kőlked is strikingly similar to some belt-fittings from the late eighth century, for example those from Békés-Vizesbánó (eastern Hungary) and from Holiare 778 (Slovakia),⁸⁹ so that we must now assume that there was in fact a direct link. Possibly, the boar's head in its “canonised” form was used on organic materials in the seventh and the first half of the eighth century, before it was used to decorate belts. Presumably, we can exclude the possibility that an Avar used an “antique” object, which had been found or transmitted accidentally, as the starting point for a new belt fashion.

The reverse of one of the strap-ends in the shape of a boar's head, from Edelstal (Hungarian: Nemesvölgy, present-day Burgenland,

⁸⁷ For an extensive summary see: S. Müller, *Awarische Eber. Ein Beitrag zur frühmittelalterlichen Ikonographie* (unpublished *Proseminararbeit* at the Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Universität Wien, 2001).

⁸⁸ É. Garam, “A böcsi kesőavarkori lelet és kore [Der spätawarenzeitliche Fund von Böcs und sein Kreis]”, *Archeologiai Értésítő* 108 (1981) pp. 34–50, esp. p. 50.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, fig 4,1–2; 5,1.

Austria), grave 22, is decorated with a scroll motif with flowers. The ornament, which in this case is not very clear, may best be seen on the round harness-mounts from Komárno-Schiffswerft 149 (pl. 38,1). A number of the stems, which overlap in some cases, have calices depicted in section, on top of which there are semi-circular petals, predominantly three in number. What distinguishes this decoration from most others of Late Avar date is a stylistic element, namely the treatment of the surface or space: the scrolls are spread out loosely over the large surface, giving the impression of generosity, of unobtrusive elegance. However, the other Avar products seem to follow the principle of completely covering all the available surfaces, similar to the western artistic tradition. Both this particular type of flowered scroll and the same generous treatment of space are also present in Chinese metalwork from the contemporary T'ang-dynasty. The latter, however, was influenced strongly by neighbouring cultures. There are many early medieval cultures which we do not yet know sufficiently well in order to be able to come to a final opinion. In this case, however, it is apparent that there was a connection with Avar workshops. A possible stimulus could have been the Chinese silver cup which found its way into the Carpathian Basin in the Middle Avar Period, together with Byzantine luxury goods, or printed silk which was decorated with similar motifs.⁹⁰ The earliest Avar belt-set which is decorated with this type of flower ornament comes from Kiskörös, grave IX,⁹¹ and belongs to the Middle Avar Period (third quarter of the seventh century).

An important result of research carried out recently was the identification of genuinely Mediterranean belt-ornaments from the eighth century (pl. 34). The main types of multi-part belt-sets from the late sixth and the seventh century whose origin lay within Byzantine culture have already been identified and described some time ago.⁹² This is due to self-evident find circumstances, for instance the treasures from Akalan, Mersin and the finds from the Byzantine

⁹⁰ Daim, "Byzantinische' Gürtelgarnituren", pp. 130 ff.

⁹¹ G. László, *Études Archeologiques sur l'histoire de la Société des Avars*, *Archaeologia Hungarica* 34 (Budapest 1955) p. 30, fig. 9a and pl. VIII,1. I would like to thank Béla M. Szóke for drawing my attention to this piece.

⁹² Werner, "Nomadische Gürtel".

stronghold at Sadovec (Bulgaria), but also to some of the motifs used, such as monograms und Christian symbols of salvation. For the eighth century the situation is not quite so clear and a combination of methods was needed to be able to identify Mediterranean originals in Avar archaeological material outside Avar territory.⁹³ This is because among the objects from over 50,000 Avar graves dating to the eighth century, there are numerous cast belt-sets with obviously Mediterranean motifs: circus scenes, griffins, marine spirits riding on dolphins, imperial portraits, vine scrolls and many more, most of which were, without doubt, produced locally.⁹⁴ Apart from the statistical probability as a result of the distribution pattern observed, this is also suggested by a number of failed castings and semi-finished products found in Avar settlements. However, it is not yet clear from which models the Avars had borrowed (and adapted to their own tastes) the classical motifs. Due to the lack of suitable criteria, Byzantine originals have—to date—not been recognised as such.

Recently, such a belt-set—from Hohenberg, Styria—has been identified as an Italian-Byzantine product (pl. 34,1). Its method of production differs from that of the vast majority of Avar parallels. Moreover, two good parallels have been found recently in Bolzano, and yet another comes from Biskupija (Croatia). A fresco in the church S. Maria Antiqua in Rome (middle of the eighth century) depicts the donator of the north-western side-chapel, Theodotus, wearing a multi-part belt-set of this or similar type. As Theodotus was supreme commander of the imperial troops in Rome, he is presumably shown wearing the official dress of the *dux (magister militum)*. The chapel and with it also the fresco was made between 741 and 752, which fits in quite well with the date established by means of archaeological criteria for the belt-sets of “Hohenberg type”: the third quarter of the eighth century. Written sources from the early tenth century refer repeatedly to precious belts as diplomatic gifts. There are good reasons to suspect that this is valid also for the eighth and ninth century. On the whole, decorated belts appear to have played an important role both in the representation of high-ranking civilian

⁹³ Daim, “Byzantinische’ Gürtelgarnituren”.

⁹⁴ The most comprehensive work—to date—to the motifs from Late Avar belt decoration is J. Dekan, “Herkunft und Ethnizität der gegossenen Bronzeindustrie des VIII. Jahrhunderts”, *Slovenská Archeológia* 20,2 (1972) pp. 317–452, although it does not take into consideration style and provenance.

officials and military officers, as well as in diplomatic relations, and certainly also in trade.

The problem was now to find a way to identify the Mediterranean products—which doubtlessly existed—from among the thousands of Avar buckles, strap-ends and mounts. Trials using a combination of methods have now yielded some first results:

1. The types which are to be recorded on the map are defined so that their main distribution lies outside the area of Avar settlement, while their representatives only occur in the Carpathian Basin in exceptional cases.
2. There should be technical differences between the Mediterranean originals and the vast majority of parallel finds from the Carpathian Basin (e.g. with respect to casting technology, fittings made in the composite technique, soldering technology, granulation, the production of beaded wire and gilding).
3. Iconographical differences may also play a role. The Avars select from the Byzantine repertoire of motifs what appeals to them and/or corresponds to their code of imagery. At the very least, they do not choose motifs which have negative connotations or are “taboo” in their culture. Half-palmette ornament, which is very popular among the Byzantines, occurs rarely in Avar art. Images of birds are, as a rule, not adopted and are, if necessary, replaced by other motifs; frequently the style of the depiction has been altered.

The higher the number of these criteria which is fulfilled by any particular type of belt-set or fitting, the higher the probability that a Mediterranean product has in fact been recognised.

Some of the objects identified so far may be dated with some certainty with the help of associated finds, for instance the mounts from Vrap, Hohenberg and Brestovac. For others, it is necessary to resort to auxiliary constructs. As the formal development of Avar strap-ends and belt-fittings corresponds, by and large, to that of the Mediterranean models, it should now be possible to locate chronologically individual objects of uncertain date with the help of technical as well as formal details, such as the spout, appendices for the rivets and casting in one or two parts. Additionally, strong tendencies towards scrollwork and figural decoration seem to have alternated with each other.

Apart from the belt-set from Hohenberg (middle of the eighth century), there is also evidence for the Mediterranean origin of a number of finds and even entire complexes of finds. The cast gold belt-fittings with scroll- and circular lobe-ornament from the Vrap treasure (Albania) may be dated to the initial third of the eighth century. At least part of this find must have originated in a goldsmith's workshop; the rest consists of valuable tableware, some of which may have belonged to the Church. Buckles, strap-ends and mounts with elongated scrolls (*Bändersträuße*) which occur frequently in the Crimea and in the Volga-Kama-region, belong to the same period. In Austria there is one specimen from Micheldorf, Upper Austria, in Slovakia there are two, from Čataj and Holiare.

The fragment of a main strap-end made of gilded silver from Mikulčice, Southern Moravia (pl. 34,2), may be dated to the middle of the eighth century. The same goes for the main strap-end from Aleppo, Syria (pl. 34,3), which consists of four parts. Both these strap-ends are decorated with images of birds, whereas the Avar imitations depict quadrupeds.

A hinged fitting made of gilded silver from Weiden am See, Burgenland, was produced in the second half or the final third of the eighth century (pl. 34,4). It was put together from more than 70 individual parts. The gold belt-set from the Brestovac treasure (Croatia) belongs to the same period. It will surely be possible to identify further types of Mediterranean origin in the near future.

Although the production of cast and sheet belt-ornaments in the Mediterranean region stems from the same roots, some regions with common forms of dress or local particularities may already be discerned, for instance in Italy, on the Balkans and in the Black Sea region.

The distribution of the Mediterranean originals known to date indicates a significant agglomeration in the new Slav territories, among the Carantanians, in the vicinity of the "Slawendekanie" of Kremsmünster, in Southern Moravia, as well as in the adjacent Avar border region. Further concentrations may be observed in the upper Tisza-region and in the area around Keszthely, at the western end of Lake Balaton. Of course, the objects might have reached the places where they were found as regular trade goods, but it is also possible that they came with Byzantine delegations which were interested in establishing contact in this region, in places where—as was

clearly visible from afar—centres of power were in the process of formation. Some of them were unable to survive in the long run, but about two generations later, the differentiation of society in southern Moravia resulted in the establishment of centres of power in the “Great Moravian Empire”. These diplomatic missions had to bring with them gifts, which were finely graded according to value: silk and other objects which have not survived, as well as the belts as part of official dress which have survived in settlement strata and graves.

Although only a small number (at least!) of Mediterranean originals are known to have been found on Avar territory, strong Mediterranean influences are visible in the decoration of the belt-sets and in women’s jewellery. The burial customs, however, show a high degree of constancy, in which local traditions, apparently, played an important role. The equestrian grave is still as popular as ever, and in exceptional cases, women are also buried with horses. On the fringes of the Late Avar Empire, in the same place that agglomerations of cast gilded bronze fittings occur, we may also observe a significantly higher proportion of equestrian graves. It seems as though the border region had gained greater weight within the Avar Empire. It will not be easy to determine whether this should be attributed to the profit from small-scale frontier traffic, to prominent forms of representation pertaining to equestrian warriors, or alternatively, to the ideological superstructure of groups of border guards. The cemeteries in the area of the city of Komárno are particularly impressive in this respect. In these cemeteries, the proportion of equestrian graves is exceptionally high. In the largest necropolis alone, Komárno-Schiffswerft, 63 out of a total of 153 graves are equestrian burials.⁹⁵ The graves from Komárno-Schiffswerft demonstrate in an impressive manner the variety and partly also the quality of Late Avar bronze objects.

As in the earlier periods, Late Avar pottery shows numerous regional types and preferences.⁹⁶ Generally speaking, the proportion

⁹⁵ A. Trugly, “Gräberfeld aus der Zeit des awarischen Reiches bei der Schiffswerft in Komárno I”, *Slovenská Archeológia* 35 (1987) pp. 251–344; id., “Gräberfeld aus der Zeit des awarischen Reiches bei der Schiffswerft in Komárno II”, *Slovenská Archeológia* 41 (1993) pp. 191–307; F. Daim, “Komárno/Komárom”, *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 17 (2nd edn., 2001) pp. 177–9.

⁹⁶ In future: T. Vida, *Die Keramik der Spätawarenzeit* (working title, forthcoming).

of vessels produced on a slow wheel (pottery “finished on a slow wheel”) seems to increase gradually and eventually displaces hand-made pottery (pl. 33). The vessels which have been finished on a slow wheel are frequently decorated with zones of wavy lines and the rims become increasingly angular. On the base imprints of the axial rod of a potter’s wheel may frequently be observed; in some places there are real base-marks. As in the larger cemeteries, virtually identical vessels finished on a slow wheel frequently occur, and we may assume that there must have been something resembling division of labour regarding the production of pottery within the respective settlement. However, hand-made vessels—and not the more “modern” pots finished on a slow wheel—are often found in the wealthier graves. This implies that those vessels produced with the help of technical resources were not, in fact considered to be more valuable. On the other hand, the Middle Avar vessels which were finished on a slow wheel were the starting point of a typological series⁹⁷ which did not end with the Avar Period, but instead continued—at least on the western fringes of the Avar Empire—well into the thirteenth century.

Apart from the pottery made by hand and on a slow wheel, fine ware which was produced industrially on a fast wheel and sometimes even painted, is also known from the Late Avar Period. Researchers usually refer to these characteristic, frequently pouch-shaped vessels, which often have a spout-shaped mouth, as “yellow pottery” (e.g. pl. 37,9).

Eperjes (eastern Hungary) is the only Late Avar settlement known to date and Csanád Bálint has attempted to give an interpretation of the material, which is as comprehensive as possible.⁹⁸ Although the excavated area is very small, it is possible to gain much information about this population’s way of life by comparing the finds with those from adjacent necropolises and by taking into consideration the results of chemical and physical research. Of course it is not yet possible to say to what extent we may generalise from the situation at Erperjes especially if we know how much way of life and customs can vary between settlements.

In the process of excavation, five sunken, rectangular huts, some with ovens, were examined. There was also a free-standing oven and

⁹⁷ Daim, “Nachgedrehte Keramik”.

⁹⁸ Bálint, *Eperjes*.

several pits. We do not know whether there were also houses which were built entirely above ground. It should be noted that there is also evidence for iron smelting, although it now seems that this was quite a common activity in Avar settlements.

The vast majority of archaeological finds are in fact pottery. Here we find a spectrum of types which by far surpasses that represented in the cemeteries, as the grave goods have been selected consciously. In the settlements—and therefore also in Eperjes—we find hand-made cauldrons and “baking-bells”, as well as fine ware produced on the potter’s wheel.

There is an interesting spectrum of animal bones: The majority of fragments, 59, came from cattle, with 13 from pigs, 17 from sheep/goats, 8 from horses. Apart from that, there were also deer, roe, boar and rabbit bones.⁹⁹ The Avars living at Eperjes must have bred livestock, with a clear emphasis on cattle breeding. Apart from that, hunting also took place, and game not only served as a supplement to the everyday diet, but also yielded raw materials: For instance, deer antlers and presumably also deer tendons were needed to make a composite bow, which was strengthened with lamellae made of deer antlers. We may assume that a considerable proportion of farming is in fact crop husbandry, however, this cannot be expressed in quantitative terms.

Avar cemeteries can grow to a remarkable size, especially if they are used from the Early to the end of the Avar Period, such as Keszthely-Dobogo, with its approximately 4,000 graves, or Zamárdi, with around 6,000 burials. Although no real princely graves—as they are known from the Early and Middle Avar Period (e.g. Kumbábony)—have been found from the Late Avar Period, clear differences in the construction of the grave, dress-ornaments and grave accompaniments may be observed also in this particular period. Among the most remarkable, well furnished graves, which are therefore usually described as “rich”, are, of course the equestrian graves, where the male—in exceptional cases also female—deceased is buried with a horse with its saddle and bridle. The cemeteries of Komárno (Slovakia), which were mainly used in the Late Avar Period, have a particularly high percentage of equestrian graves (pl. 37–38). The tendency to maintain some local burial customs over several generations is

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

particularly interesting. For instance, only a few years ago a well-furnished equestrian grave from Pitvaros (eastern Hungary), which had been constructed as a tunnel grave, was published: The deceased was put in a tunnel leading downwards obliquely, which had been dug outward from the rectangular grave. In the grave itself, a complete horse with equipment of exceptional quality had been placed (pl. 39–41).¹⁰⁰

The majority of Avar cemeteries terminate at the end of Late Avar Period III. However, in some cemeteries we may observe phenomena which suggest that there were radical changes in burial customs or an interruption in the supply of representational goods. In Leobersdorf, for instance, in Late Avar Period IIIb belt-sets are no longer placed in the grave and, although the final graves are large and deep, they contain only few dress components and no grave accompaniments (food).¹⁰¹ Similar observations were made during another excavation campaign in Vienna 11–Csokorgasse: here however, there is no direct connection with the Avar necropolis.¹⁰² In the most recent part of the cemetery at Zalakomár, there is a high number of repaired and replaced belt-sets. Therefore, it seems that this type of dress-component was no longer produced, but that one did not (as yet) wish to adopt forms of representation which were already in common use in Carolingian western Hungary. We must assume that the transition from Avar to East Frankish culture took place with variable speed in the different regions. This may partly be attributed to the skill of local potentates and church officials, but also depended on other organisational, economic and social factors. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to examine this process separately for every population group and every cemetery, and then to compare the results. It is not much use giving statistical generalisations for larger regions or, even worse, for the whole Avar Empire. Given the fundamental changes which are visible in the archaeo-

¹⁰⁰ L. Bende, “A pitvarosi késő avar temető 51—sírja (Adatok a késő avar kori lószerszámok díszítéséhez) [Das Grab 51 im spätawarenzeitlichen Gräberfeld von Pitvaros (Beiträge zur Verzierung der spätawarenzeitlichen Pferdegeschirre)]”, *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve—Studia Archaeologica* 4 (1998) pp. 195–230 [German summary: pp. 210–2].

¹⁰¹ Daim, *Leobersdorf*, p. 171.

¹⁰² E.H. Huber, “Neu entdeckte Awarengräber in Wien, Simmering”, *Fundort Wien. Berichte zur Archäologie* 1 (1998) pp. 117–43, esp. fig. 2 and 5.

logical record at the time of transition from Late Avar Period IIIa to IIIb, and in due course up to the point where the Avar necropolises are abandoned, it is difficult to imagine that these changes are *not* linked to the political turmoil of the Avar wars. In this context, it seems completely exaggerated to place the entire phase Late Avar Period III in the ninth century, because we cannot expect that Avar craftsmen were particularly creative after the year 800. However it must be granted that Hungarian research, and especially the specialist for the ninth century, Béla Miklós Szóke, is correct in criticising the current chronological criteria, which are much too schematic. The Avar wars have initiated a cultural process which certainly had not yet been completed at the time of the first Hungarian invasion in the year 862.

The most important archaeological deposit from the Carpathian Basin is the gold treasure from Sînnicolau Mare (Hungarian: Nagyszentmiklós and present-day Romanian Banat). It was found in 1799 and consisted of 23 gold vessels, which together weighed around 10 kg, and is now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (pl. 42–44). Numerous archaeologists, historians, linguists and researchers from many other fields have studied the Sînnicolau Mare (Nagyszentmiklós) Treasure, often at a relatively late point in their career. Less experienced researchers tend to avoid the topic due to the complexity of the culture-historical problems associated with it.¹⁰³

The historical identification of the treasure is still highly controversial, mainly because it is difficult to establish precise dates, which however, are an important pre-requisite for any historical interpretation. When were the different parts of the treasure produced? When

¹⁰³ N. Mavrodinov, *Le trésor protobulgare de Nagyszentmiklós*, *Archaeologia Hungarica* 29 (Budapest 1943); B.I. Marschak, *Silberschätze des Orients. Metallkunst des 3.–13. Jahrhunderts und ihre Kontinuität* (Leipzig 1986) pp. 308–16; K. Benda, “Souèasny stav studia zlatych nádob pokladu ze Sânnicolăul Mare (Nagyszentmiklós) [Gegenwärtiger Studienstand über die GoldgefäÙe aus Sânnicolăul Mare (Nagyszentmiklós)]”, *Slovenská Archeológia* 13,2 (1965) pp. 399–414 [German summary: pp. 412–4]; G. László and I. Rácz, *Der Goldschatz von Nagyszentmiklós* (Budapest 1983); C. Bálint, *Die Archäologie der Steppe* (Wien-Köln 1989); R. Göbl and A. Róna-Tas, *Die Inschriften des Schatzes von Nagy-Szentmiklós. Eine paläographische Dokumentation*, *Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 240 (Wien 1995), with extensive bibliography at pp. 64–77; F. Daim and P. Stadler, “Der Goldschatz von Sînnicolau Mare (Nagyszentmiklós)”, *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Avarern*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) pp. 439–45. Currently in preparation: C. Bálint, “Der Goldschatz von Nagyszentmiklós”, *Varia Archaeologica Hungarica* (Budapest forthcoming c. 2003).

was the most recent object made? Is there evidence on the most recent vessels which suggests that they were in use for a long period of time? It now appears that the vessels from Sînnicolau Mare (Nagyszentmiklós) were made in the seventh and eighth centuries. As the results of antiquarian analysis of the treasure show that it is most closely related to the Avar material and as Sînnicolau Mare (Nagyszentmiklós) lies within the region of Avar settlement, it is possible that the objects in the gold hoard are in fact “left-overs” from the Avar royal hoard, which remained in the Danube region when most of the treasure was brought into the Frankish Empire after Charlemagne’s Avar wars. This, however, does not necessarily imply that the Sînnicolau Mare (Nagyszentmiklós) Treasure was buried in the course of the Avar wars—this could also have taken place later.

A number of different cultures meet in the treasure from Sînnicolau Mare (Nagyszentmiklós); elements of Byzantine, south Russian/Central Asian, post-Sassanian and Avar origin may be discerned. For now, it may be assumed that the different parts of the Sînnicolau Mare (Nagyszentmiklós) treasure originated in a heavily barbarised, provincial Byzantine environment, and that the customer’s tastes and wishes were taken into consideration when the vessels were made. The technical quality of some of the vessels is of the very highest standard.

The fact that there are few good parallels for the different types of vessels included in the treasure, that they are basically individual objects, and that the ornament of the vessels combines decorative elements which occur—in the archaeological material pertaining to the broad masses—in different chronological phases, makes research on this treasure both difficult and interesting. An international research project currently in progress in Vienna is aimed at providing a comprehensive analysis of the treasure and will, perhaps be able to answer some important historical questions, and at least provide the basis for further research.

Instead of a summary:

Constant factors, influences and breaks in Avar culture

Traditionalist historians frequently ask the archaeologist—finally—to summarise his “historical” results. In fact, the results of archaeological research are usually concerned with other aspects of human life than the written sources. The latter take no notice of what is “obvi-

ous". Archaeological research is restricted to observing long-term structures and processes, in as far as these leave traces in the ground, for instance in types of settlements, burial customs, technology, cultural exchange, crafts and trade. Only in very rare cases is it possible for archaeology to obtain data pertaining to political history. Nevertheless some of our results are on the same level as our written sources, thus shedding light on high politics, structures of sovereignty, international relations, communication and value systems. Without exaggerating, we can say that only the archaeological sources and the results of their careful, methodological evaluation and interpretation permit us to interpret a number of written records. One example of this is the isolated story of an Avar delegation being sent to Constantinople in 678/79 in order to congratulate the Emperor on a victory—in the vicinity of the capital—of the Byzantine fleet against the Arabs. The historian would have many ways to interpret this event, however, only the archaeological sources demonstrate that this diplomatic activity occurred in a period during which Byzantine coins and luxury goods entered Avar territory, and the Avar elite almost exclusively followed Byzantine fashions (see for instance Ozora-Tótipusztá), while at the same time, merchants and/or craftsmen must have also been crossing the western border of the Avar Empire. Only once this delegation is thus integrated into a clear archaeological picture does it make sense from a historical point of view: The process during which the Avar Empire had gradually re-gained its strength had now been more or less completed and, immediately before the foundation of the Bulgarian Empire in 680, Byzantium was looking for allies on its northern border.

However, let us first deal with the basic pattern and the main lines of development of Avar culture:

What now presents itself to us as the Avar culture in the Carpathian Basin was the result of mainly Byzantine but also western influences. It was doubtlessly formed *in situ*, with various eastern traditions grafted onto a local base. The traditions that once constituted the "backbone" of Avar identity can only be glimpsed archaeologically in minute fragments. The myths and songs remain unknown to us, and to be honest we know nothing about the religious ideas; we can only employ analogies as an aid to understanding. Only the way of life and the appearance of the Avars may, if only to a certain degree, be reconstructed. In the course of doing this, one is struck by the impression that the most vital elements of Avar culture—as far as

we can tell—remain the same. The basic concept of the Avar way of life persisted until the end of the Avar Empire (around 800). Although Roman field patterns would have lent themselves to intensive cultivation, crop husbandry evidently played but a minor role. The equestrian herdsman's greatest source of pride is his livestock: all other means of displaying his status are carried on his person. Nevertheless, at best, in the earliest period (until the first quarter of the seventh century) the Avars were nomads. Later, they inhabited permanent settlements, the high population of which did not permit a nomadic way of life. Although cattle still formed the basis of Avar agriculture in the eighth century, the horse occupied a major role in Avar life. Up to the Late Avar Period, equestrian graves appear to be exceptionally well endowed, even though they become increasingly uniform by comparison with the considerable variety present in the first half of the seventh century. Even the Avar warrior of the time of Charlemagne can be assumed to have differed only in small details from his predecessor of the era of Justinian I or that of Maurikios. The heavily-armoured cavalry as described in the *Strategikon* no longer existed in the eighth century. It probably required a kind of "war economy", and would have been impossible to maintain in long periods of peace.

In what respects do the Avar means of representation differ from those of the Byzantines and Franks? First of all, it is apparent that not much attention is being paid to furnishing the home. Although we may assume the existence of valuable tapestries and woodwork, the houses—of the common people, at least—were small and not very comfortable. Certainly, the wealth of an Avar family was determined by the number of cattle it owned, as it had been in the time of their nomadic ancestors. This set of values, which must have comprised specific ideas about the right to exploit the land, had survived the transition to sedentariness. A permanent settlement of the Late Avar Period appears not to have differed in any fundamental way from one of the Early or Middle Avar Period. Despite the Avars' obvious enthusiasm for Byzantine culture, not a single stone building is known from the Carpathian Basin.

The material culture of the Early Avar Period appears to have been culturally heterogeneous: drawing on local, late Roman, Germanic as well as eastern elements, which had presumably been introduced by the Avars and which included some late Hunnic reminiscences, plus Byzantine dress-ornaments, shapes and motifs, as well as tech-

nological know-how. At the same time, there seem to have been decisive influences and imports from Lombard Italy, from southern Germany and—of course to a lesser extent—from other regions of Europe as well. The process of standardisation of Avar culture begins only in the second half of the seventh century, some time after the Avar wars. However, local groups with particular types of dress or burial customs may be observed even in the eighth century. Avar culture remains diverse and very colourful.

Both in the Early Avar Period and in the eighth century, the region around Keszthely, at the western end of Lake Balaton, constitutes an special element within the Avar Empire, although for totally different reasons. In the late sixth and probably still in the early seventh century, in Keszthely there is distinct evidence of connections with the Adria region and Italy; here, on the fringes of the area of settlement, there is a well-organised Christian community linked with Catholic Italy. Even if we have no written sources concerning this, the fact that pilgrimages, perhaps even to the Holy Land, were common, is an argument for a working church-organisation in the area around Keszthely, possibly even in Pécs (Fünfkirchen). Typically Avar cemeteries are found in the region around Keszthely only from the Middle Avar Period onwards (for instance Gyenesdias). Therefore—prior to the struggle for power around the year 626—Keszthely seems to have been the end-point of the route to Italy, virtually the bridge-head of Mediterranean, Late Roman and Lombard culture in present-day western Hungary. It is quite possible that this is linked to the old pact between the Lombards and the Avars. However this may be: after 626, the situation seems to have changed fundamentally. In the Late Avar Period, the Keszthely-culture no longer has anything whatsoever to do with Italy or Byzantium. The almost “baroque” enlargement of once typically Byzantine dress accessories (basket earrings, dress pins) demonstrates, if anything, the local population’s adherence to old traditions. It is not evidence of external contacts and we have no proof of a flourishing Christian community in Keszthely in the Late Avar Period. Neither can the continuation of a burial custom which does not include placing food in the grave, limited to a very small area, be viewed as proof of a Christian community at the western end of Lake Balaton in the Late Avar Period. At the moment, in fact, it looks rather as if the re-organisation of the Avar Empire in the seventh century and the far-reaching isolation of the Carpathian Basin must also have caused

the activities of the Christian community to disappear almost completely. One find which may be perceived as evidence for Christian burial customs in the eighth century is the existence of the iron crosses on coffins from Székkutas. It is difficult to explain these as a tradition without meaning.¹⁰⁴ The other finds which might suggest the existence of Late Avar Christians have no value as evidence, because the transfer of motifs whose original meaning is, however, lost in the process, is common on Late Avar belt-mounts.¹⁰⁵ Apart from that, it was some time ago that it was shown that the escutcheon-shaped hinged fittings with eagle and "cross" from Boldog and Komárno in fact imitate early Byzantine coins with eagle and the numeric symbol X.¹⁰⁶ At a synod in 796, it is reported that in the eighth century, there were Christians living in the Avar Empire, but they had lost contact with their brothers and sisters in faith and were therefore in need of spiritual guidance.¹⁰⁷ With this fact in mind, the archaeological "evidence" for Late Avar Christianity should be interpreted with particular care.

The archaeologist is frequently confronted with inquiries regarding the world of beliefs of the population he is studying. Actually, we know nothing about Avar religion, although the evidence from analogous ethnographic studies seems to suggest that most groups of people living in the Carpathian Basin in the Avar Period practised a kind of shamanism. The evidence for the existence of a Christian contingent in the early Avar Empire has already been mentioned. However, the Byzantine cross from Ozora-Tótipusztá (Middle Avar Period) is rather an expression of the wearer's association with a Byzantine form of representation than of her personal beliefs. The co-existence and the mutual permutation of quite contradictory worlds

¹⁰⁴ K.B. Nagy, "Székkutas-Kápolnadúló avar temető néhány 9. Szászadi síregyüttese [Einige Grabkomplexe aus dem 9. Jahrhundert im awarischen Gräberfeld bei Székkutas-Kápolnadúló]", *Az Alföld a 9. században*, ed. G. Lőrinczy (Szeged 1993) pp. 151–69, esp. fig. 3,22–23; T. Vida, "Neue Beiträge zur Forschung der frühchristlichen Funde der Awarenzeit", *Acta XIII congressus internationalis archaeologiae christianae, Split—Poreč 1994* 2, ed. N. Cambi and E. Marin, *Studi di antichità cristiana* 54. *Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju Dalmatinsku* 87/89 Suppl. (Split 1998) pp. 529–40, esp. p. 534 with note 27 and fig. 7.

¹⁰⁵ Vida, "Frühchristliche Funde", pp. 534–6 and fig. 8.

¹⁰⁶ Daim, *Leobersdorf*, p. 146 with notes 192–197.

¹⁰⁷ W. Pohl, *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa, 567–822 n. Chr.* (München 1988) pp. 319–20.

of beliefs, symbols and images, the syncretism of the Late Migration Period, can frequently be deduced from the archaeological evidence. What we now find so difficult to imagine, seems to have actually existed in the Early Middle Ages: people adhered to several different cults in the same way that nowadays it is (theoretically) quite possible to be a member of two or more different parties. Pictures, amulets etc. could be interpreted according to Christian as well as to shamanistic beliefs. For the early medieval person this must have been, at best, a theoretical problem. He was much more concerned with their effectiveness in daily life.¹⁰⁸ This is the reason why all motifs on objects from the Late Avar Period, which seem to possess Christian meaning, should be interpreted with care.¹⁰⁹ Although we have no positive evidence for a Christian church organisation within the Avar Empire or for successful missionary activities during the seventh and eighth centuries, it is quite possible that some Christian traditions still existed at the time of the Avar wars. Maybe the types of dress in Late Antique tradition, which we find in the regions around Keszthely and Pécs (Fünfkirchen) in the eighth century are in fact evidence for a small Christian community which survived the Avar reign.

There are some exciting new ideas concerning the Avars' cultural orientation after their defeat at Constantinople in 626. If we are correct in assuming that the princely graves from Bócsa, Tepe and Kunbábony belong to the second quarter of the seventh century, they may in fact be interpreted as an attempt to create a representational culture which makes use of Byzantine technology in jewellery-production and consciously looks for models in the East. The act of focussing on a particular cultural root may have been deemed necessary in order to build up the damaged ego and consolidate power. A second way of interpreting the princely graves with golden "pseudo-buckles" would be to perceive them as evidence of an alliance (which was not at all adverse to Byzantium) with Kuvrat's Bulgarian Empire, which was then, after his death, followed by more inten-

¹⁰⁸ On the amulet-capsules: T. Vida, "Frühmittelalterliche scheiben- und kugelförmige Amulettkapseln zwischen Kaukasus, Kastilien und Picardie", *Berichte der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 76 (1995) pp. 219–90, esp. pp. 263 ff.

¹⁰⁹ Vida, "Frühchristliche Funde".

sive relations with the Byzantine Empire. However, it is important to stress that this shifting of the orientation of Avar cultural expression would be evident even if we had no knowledge of Avar political history. It would be a grave methodological error to interpret the archaeological sources from the point of view of the scanty written evidence rather than empirically.

Thanks to the decoding of eighth-century Mediterranean originals in the Avar Empire and its periphery, our perception of the relationship of Avar and Byzantine or Italo-Byzantine culture is now becoming much clearer. We are also aware of the influence which Byzantine technology had on Avar craftsmanship. On the other hand, Avar culture was strong enough to consciously select from what Mediterranean art had to offer, to adapt it stylistically and even to create totally new motifs on the basis of these stimuli. Due to the wealth of archaeological remains, the Avar material and its Byzantine or Italo-Byzantine models are well suited to studying the mechanisms of cultural transfer and illuminating the system of values, their communication through art and even some of their psychological aspects. This set of questions was discussed with reference to the griffin-motif and the boar, the Byzantine birds and the “Chinese” scroll with blossoms.

The archaeological finds will make it necessary to re-evaluate the role of the Bulgarians on the Balkans and along the middle and lower Danube. On the one hand, we can observe strong cultural relations between the Bulgarian centre of power from Pliska and Preslav to Varna, and the Byzantine Adria region (Dyrrachium and surroundings, present-day Albania); on the other hand, there seems to be a strong link with the region of Avar culture. We cannot quite predict at present, where the latest research will lead us; nevertheless, in the eighth century there is a network of connections between the Carpathian Basin, Italy, the Balkans and the Black Sea Region which seems to have been much more intensive than we would have thought possible even a short while ago.

Christianity, which had frequently played an important role in the stabilisation of power and social structure, had not (yet) gained access to eighth-century Avar culture. As a result, when Charlemagne set the army in motion from Bavaria, the Franks were able to use “pagan-war” propaganda as a powerful lever. Apparently, Avar tradition was no longer strong enough: certain members of the Avar

elite changed sides rapidly without being able to build up positions of power of their own.

The fundamental cultural changes which were brought about by the Avars' defeat by Charlemagne and by the re-organisation of the eastern part of the Carolingian Empire are becoming increasingly clear from the archaeological sources. However, some interpretations are hindered by our problems with absolute fine chronology. There is definite evidence for the establishment of political and church centres with a huge input of resources and of a surprisingly high standard (e.g. Zalavár-Mosapurc), and as a result for an attempt to create an extensive church, political and economic infrastructure. There is also evidence for the immigration of settlers from other Slav territories, which was presumably encouraged by the political leaders. There is also evidence of immigration from Bavaria and of the short- or middle-term survival of Avar population groups and settlements. The extent of the latter, however, varies considerably from region to region. At the moment it is still difficult to say, to what extent the cultural integration of the population had been completed when Magyar rule was established in the Carpathian Basin. Archaeological research in areas of Slav settlement near Kremsmünster and in the Enns valley, as well as in the precincts of the "Great Moravian Empire", in the principedom Thunau, have yielded good results. Although in both cases—as the burial customs demonstrate—the Slav ancestry of the population is evident (regardless of their self-perception!), we can also observe a stronger link with Bavarian and East Carolingian culture. The written sources which are available both for Kremsmünster and the Kamp valley, support the archaeological evidence and illuminate the political background.

Avar traditions were strong enough to survive fundamental changes in the political geography of Europe. However, the Avar Empire did not come to grips with the transition to medieval state. This difficult task was achieved, around 200 years later, by the Magyar king Stephen. It is due to him that Hungary has survived until the present day, while the Avars were assimilated by the Carolingian population and are only accessible to historians and archaeologists.

In one respect, the methods used by the historian and the archaeologist are very similar: both must attempt to abandon modern terminological systems and to decipher the early medieval "code". The historian has to use the terminology of the written sources as a start-

ing point and he must then examine what was meant by the names given in the texts. The archaeologist discovers types of artefacts, forms of dress, types of settlements, burial customs, evidence for other customs and much more besides. He has to consider what status each of these cultural elements once possessed within a given semiotic structure and which of them were understood as a criterion for differentiating between groups. We can assume with some certainty that there were just as many possibilities of identification in early medieval society as there are today; some of them manifest themselves in the archaeological material. However it is highly problematic to label one or more of these “cultural groups” as “ethnic”, without extensive spatial comparison. If ethnicity is really a phenomenon of “social psychology”—as defined by Leo S. Klejn—this would imply that we are over-stressing our material by a long way.

[Translated by Birgit Bühler]

Illustration acknowledgements

Figures in the Text

- Fig. 1. From W. Pohl, *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa, 567–822 n. Chr.* (München 1988) map 2, revised. Graphic arts: Franz Siegmeth
 Fig. 2. Graphic arts: Franz Siegmeth
 Fig. 3. *Reitervölker aus dem Osten. Hunnen + Awaren*, ed. F. Daim (Halbturn 1996) pp. 344–5
 Fig. 4. F. Daim et al., *Leobersdorf* p. 168
 Fig. 5. *Ibid.*, p. 148

Plates

- Pl. 1. 1 Hampel, *Alterthümer*, pl. 208; 2–3 drawing by Franz Siegmeth I. Kovrig, “Contribution au problème de l’occupation de la Hongrie par les Avars”, *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 6 (1955) pl. VII
 Pl. 2. 1 Daim, *Leobersdorf*, pl. 153; 2 Garam, *Funde byzantinischer Herkunft in der Avarzeit vom Ende des 6. bis zum Ende des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Budapest 2001) pl. 92; 3 H. Winter, *Avarzeitliche Grab- und Streufunde aus Ostösterreich*, pl. 28; 4 Garam, *Funde*, pl. 94; 5 *ibid.*, pl. 94; 6 Hampel, *Alterthümer*, pl. 180; 7 Garam, *Funde*, pl. 81; *ibid.*, pl. 93
 Pl. 3. Bóna, “A Szegvár-sárpoldali lovassír”, fig. 1
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- Pl. 11. Kiss, "Előzetes jelentés" Part I, pp. 267; 279; 293–4; 304; 319
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- Pl. 17. 1 Bóna, *VII. sz-i avar települések és Arpád-kori magyar falu Dunaiújvárosban* (Budapest 1973) p. 40; 2 *Reitervölker aus dem Osten* p. 378
- Pl. 18. 1 Vida, *Die awarenzeitliche Keramik I (6.–7. Jh.)* (Budapest 1999) pl. 1; 2 *ibid.*, pl. 92; 3 Vida, "Zu einigen handgeformten frühawarischen Keramiktypen und ihren östlichen Beziehungen", *Awarenforschungen*, ed. F. Daim (Wien 1992) pl. 8; 4 *ibid.*, pl. 13; 5 Daim and Lippert, *Das awarische Gräberfeld von Sommerein*, pl. 1; 6 Vida, *Keramik I*, pl. 3
- Pl. 19. E. Tóth and A. Horváth, *Kunbábony. Das Grab eines Awarenkhagan* (Keckskemét 1992) pl. I–IV
- Pl. 20. *Ibid.*, pl. II, XI–XII
- Pl. 21. *Ibid.*, pl. V, VII, XIII, XV
- Pl. 22. *Ibid.*, pl. IX–X, XXV–XXVI
- Pl. 23. I. Popovic', *Zlatni avarski pojasi iz okoline Šimijuma* (Beograd 1997) fig. 14; 16; 22; 24–25
- Pl. 24. G. Fülöp, "Awarenzeitliche Fürstenfunde von Igar", *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 40 (1988) fig. 10; 13–14
- Pl. 25. R. Müller, "Vorbericht über die Freilegung des Grabes eines hohen Militärs aus der Mittelawarenzeit in Gyenesdiás", *Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae* (1989) fig. 2; 5–6
- Pl. 26. *Ibid.*, fig. 5; 10
- Pl. 27. *Ibid.*, fig. 8–9
- Pl. 28. Garam, *Goldgegenstände*, pl. 85–87
- Pl. 29–32. *Mödling—Goldene Stiege*, ed. F. Daim, K. Matzner and H. Schwammenhöfer (forthcoming)
- Pl. 33. Daim, "Zur nachgedrehten Keramik aus dem awarischen Gräberfeld von Mödling—An der goldenen Stiege", *Slawische Keramik in Mitteleuropa vom 8. bis 11. Jahrhundert*, ed. C. Stana (Brno 1994) fig. 1–2
- Pl. 34. Daim, "Byzantinische Gürtelgarnituren des 8. Jahrhunderts", *Die Awaren am Rand der byzantinischen Welt. Studien zu Diplomatie, Handel und Technologietransfer im Frühmittelalter*, ed. id. (Innsbruck 2000) pp. 113; 123; 137 ff.; 167
- Pl. 35. 1 Hampel, *Alterthümer*, pl. 186,4; 2–5 R. Müller, "Keszthely-Kultur I", pp. 292–3
- Pl. 36. Daim, *Leobersdorf*, pl. 69–71
- Pl. 37. 1–4 A. Trugly, "Gräberfeld aus der Zeit des awarischen Reiches bei der Schiffswerft in Komárno I", *Slovenská Archeológia* 35 (1987) pp. 200; 256; 257; 5–9 Trugly, "Komárno I", p. 302
- Pl. 38. A. Trugly, "Gräberfeld aus der Zeit des awarischen Reiches bei der Schiffswerft in Komárno II", *Slovenská Archeológia* 41 (1993) pp. 244; 286; 290
- Pl. 39. L. Bende, "A pitvarosi keso avar temeto 51—sirja (Adatok a keso avar

kori lószerszámok díszítéséhez)", *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve—Studia Archaeologica* 4 (1998) p. 212

Pl. 40. 1–2 Ibid., p. 214; 3 p. 216

Pl. 41. 1 Ibid., p. 225; 2 p. 224

Pl. 42–44. Hampel, *Altertümer*, Vol. III, pl. 288–319

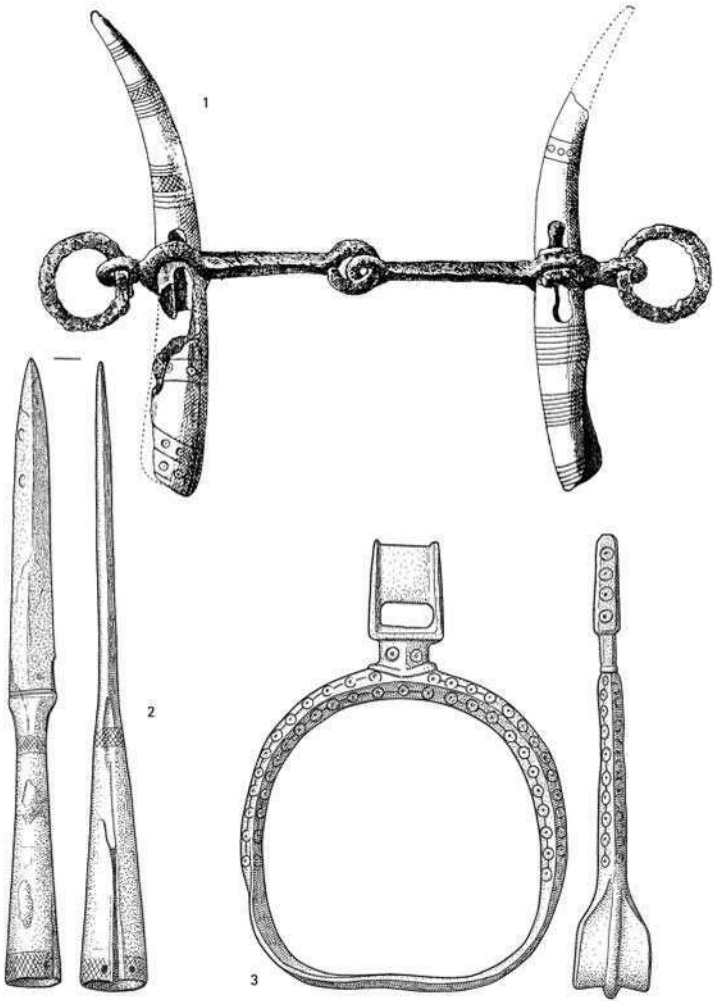


Plate 1:1: Early Avar bit with side-bars made of antler (Cikó, Hungary); 2 Thrust lance (Zámoly, Hungary); 3 “Apple-shaped” stirrup (Bicske, Hungary). Scale: 1:2.

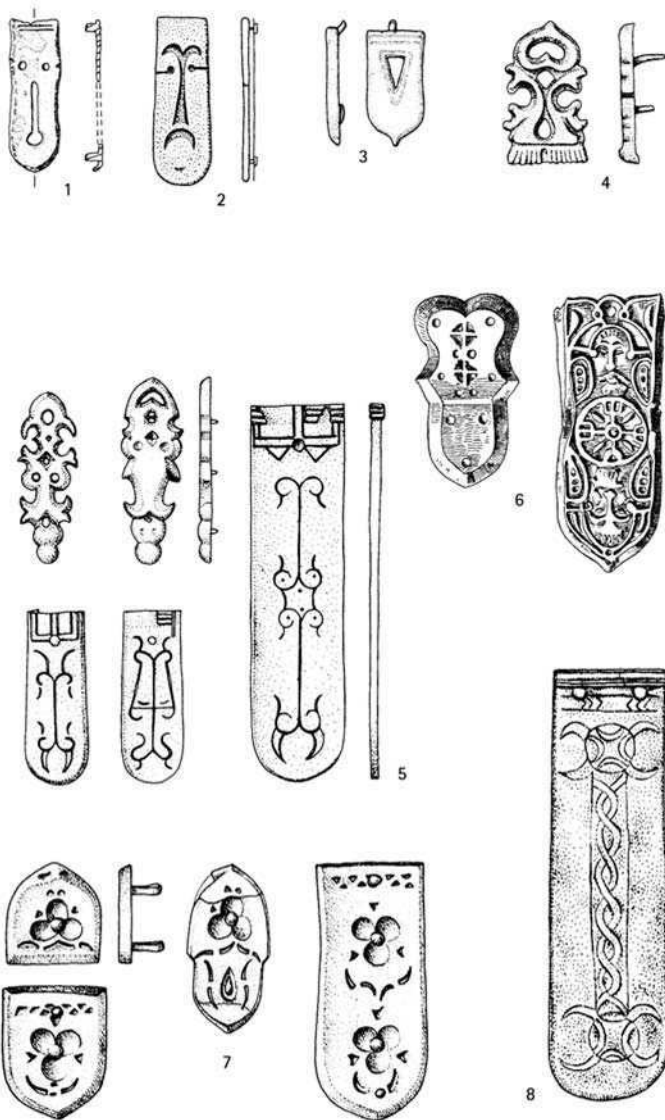


Plate 2: Belt ornaments of Byzantine type from an Early Avar context. 1 Mask fitting (Leobersdorf, Austria); 2 Mask fitting (Szekszárd, Hungary); 3 Cast silver fitting (Bruckneudorf, Austria); 4 Silver fitting with “fringe decoration” cast in openwork (Budakalász, Hungary); 5 Cast silver fittings and sheet silver strap ends (Kiskőrös, Hungary); 6 Strap end and fitting (Keszthely – Fenékpusztá, Hungary); 7 Fittings and strap ends with “triple hemispherical dent” ornament (Keszthely – Fenékpusztá, Hungary); 8 Sheet silver strap end (Cikó, Hungary). Scale: 2:3.

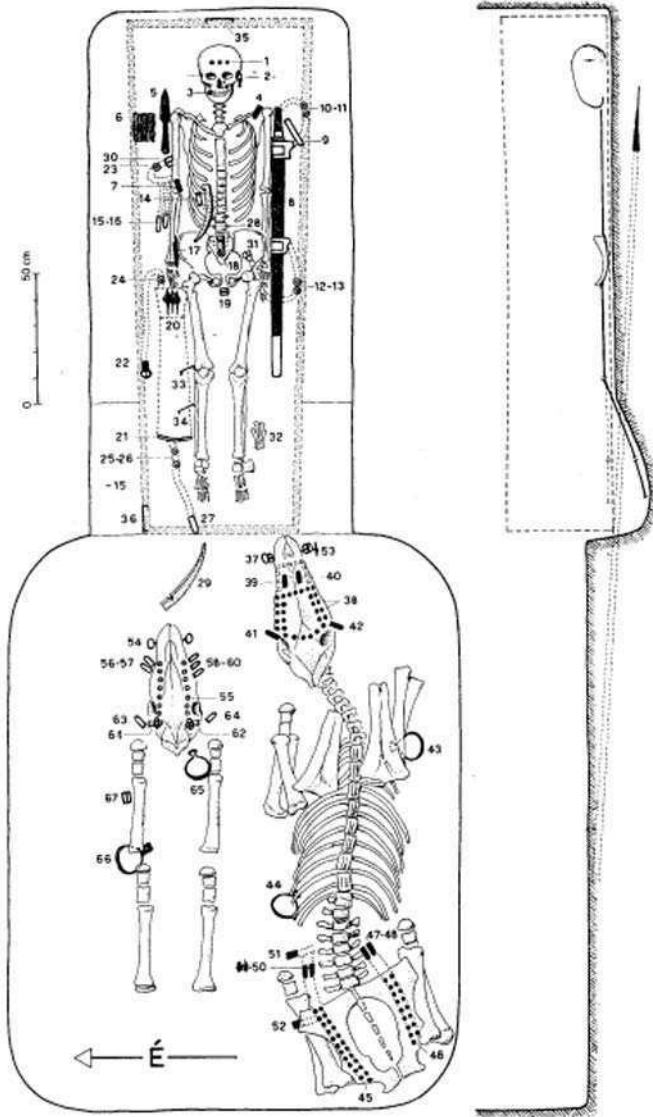


Plate 3: The Early Avar men's grave from Szegvár – Sapoldal (Hungary), with the complete body of a horse and a horse skin as grave accompaniments.

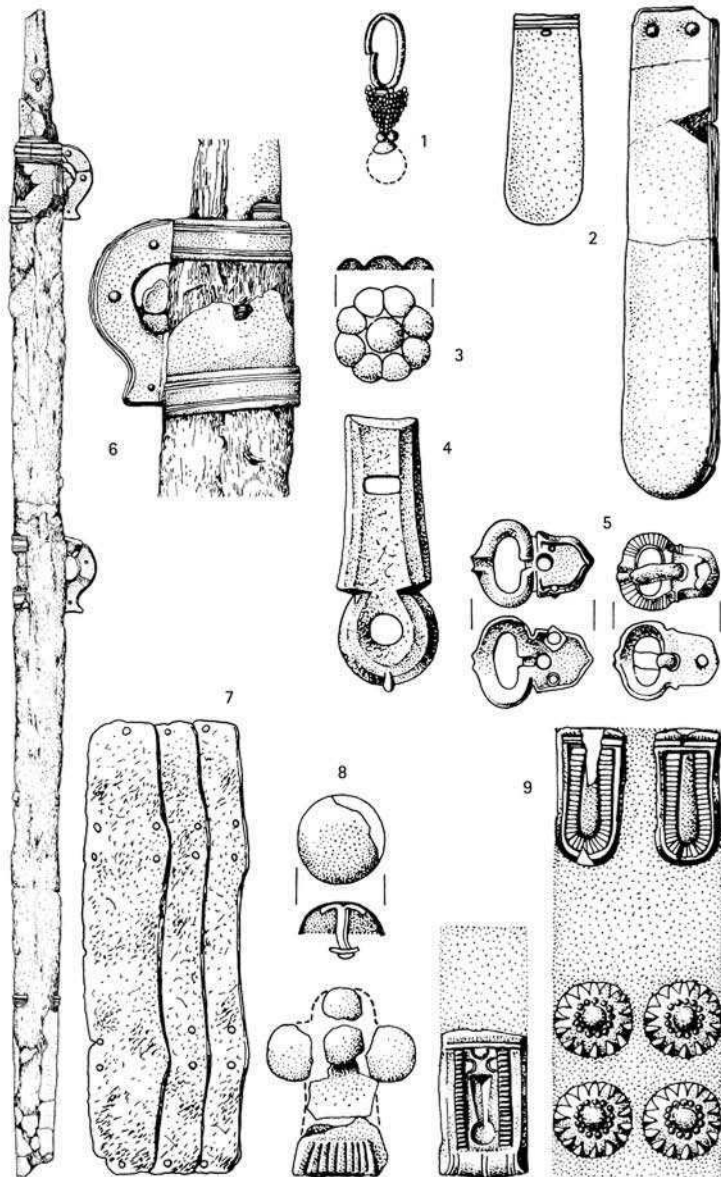


Plate 4: Selected finds from the Early Avar men's grave from Szegvár – Sapoldal, Hungary. 1 Gold earring; 2 Sheet metal strap ends; 3 Rosette-shaped mount, presumably from the quiver strap; 4 Strap-loop made of bone; 5 Buckles; 6 Sword and attachment loop; 7 Iron armour lamellae; 8–9 Harness mounts. Scale: 6 much reduced, the others approximately 2:3.

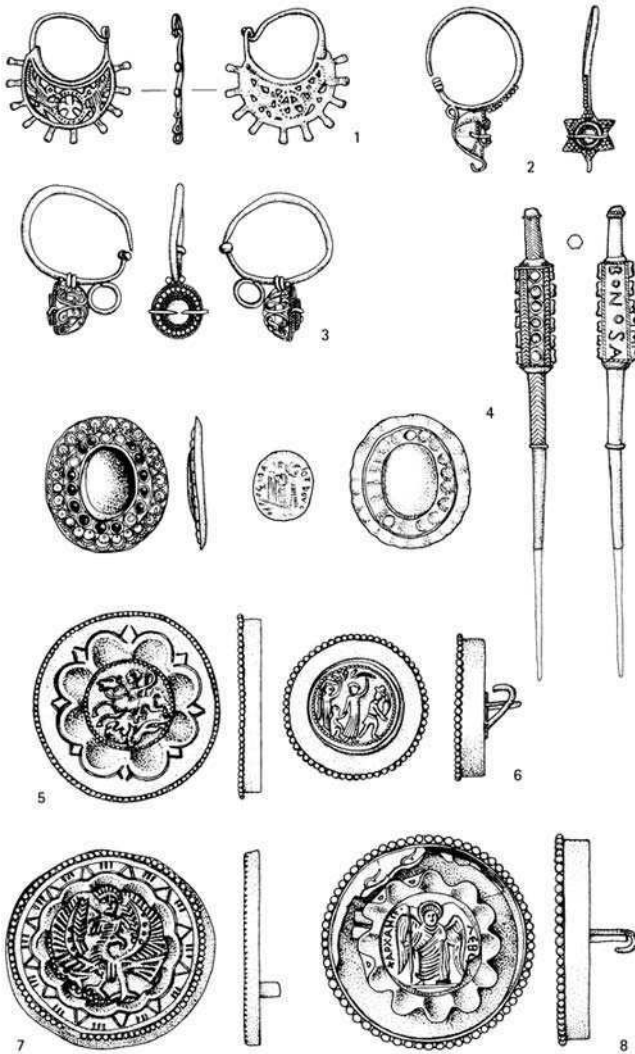


Plate 5: Finds from the early Keszthely-culture. 1 Byzantine gold earring (Keszthely – Fenékpusztza, Hungary); 2 Byzantine gold earring (Bóly, Hungary); 3 Byzantine basket earring (Keszthely – Fenékpusztza, Hungary); 4 Gold disc – fibula (with real pearls and rock crystal inlay) and gold pin (Keszthely – Fenékpusztza, Hungary); 5 Box fibula with Bellerophon/equestrian saint (Keszthely – Fenékpusztza, Hungary); 6 Box fibula with Herkules and Omphale (Keszthely – Fenékpusztza, Hungary); 7 Box fibula with imperial apotheosis (?) (Keszthely – Dobogo, Hungary); 8 Box fibula with archangel (Nagyharsány, Hungary). Scale 2:3.

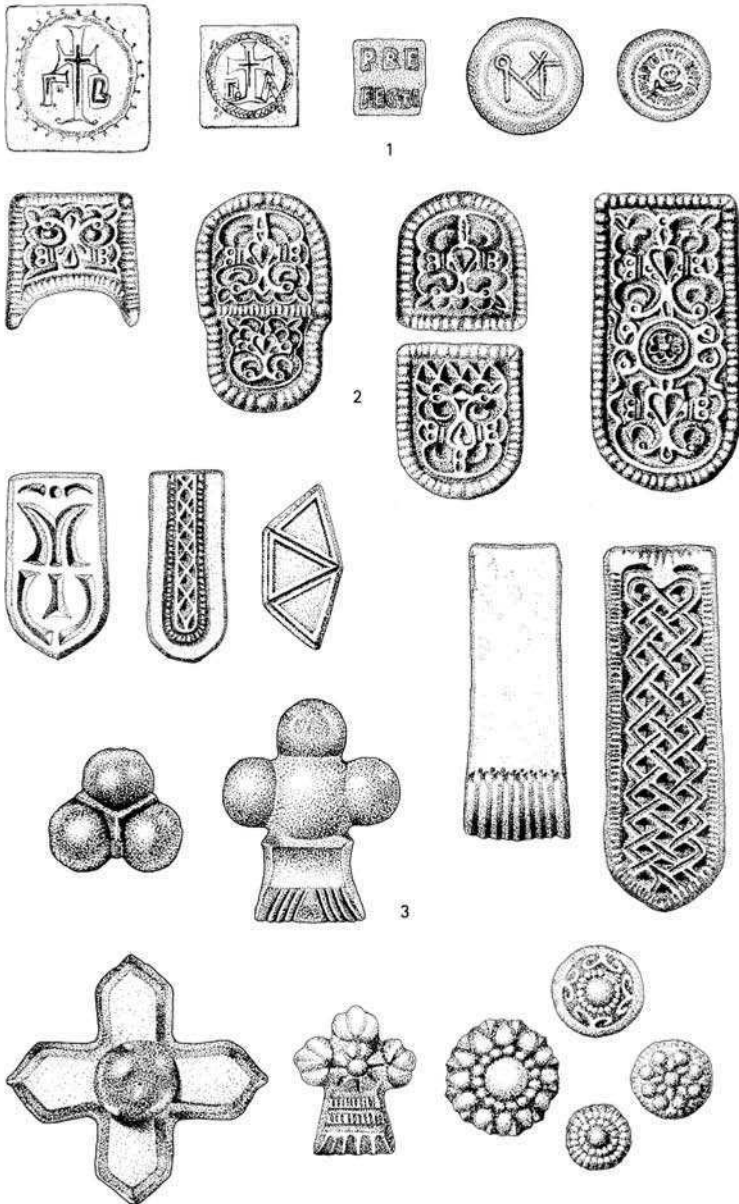


Plate 6: Selected finds from the Early Avar metalsmith's grave from Kunszentmárton, Hungary. 1 Three weights made of copper alloys and two made of glass; 2 Moulds for pressing a belt set of Byzantine type; 3 Mould for pressing earring components, fittings and strap ends. Scale: 2:3.



Plate 7: Selected finds from the Early Avar equestrian grave from Kunágota. 1 Parts of the belt set. Bronze buckle, silvered; gold fittings and strap ends; 2 Gold fingerings; 3 Sheet silver harness mounts; 4 Sheet silver cup. Scale: 2:3.

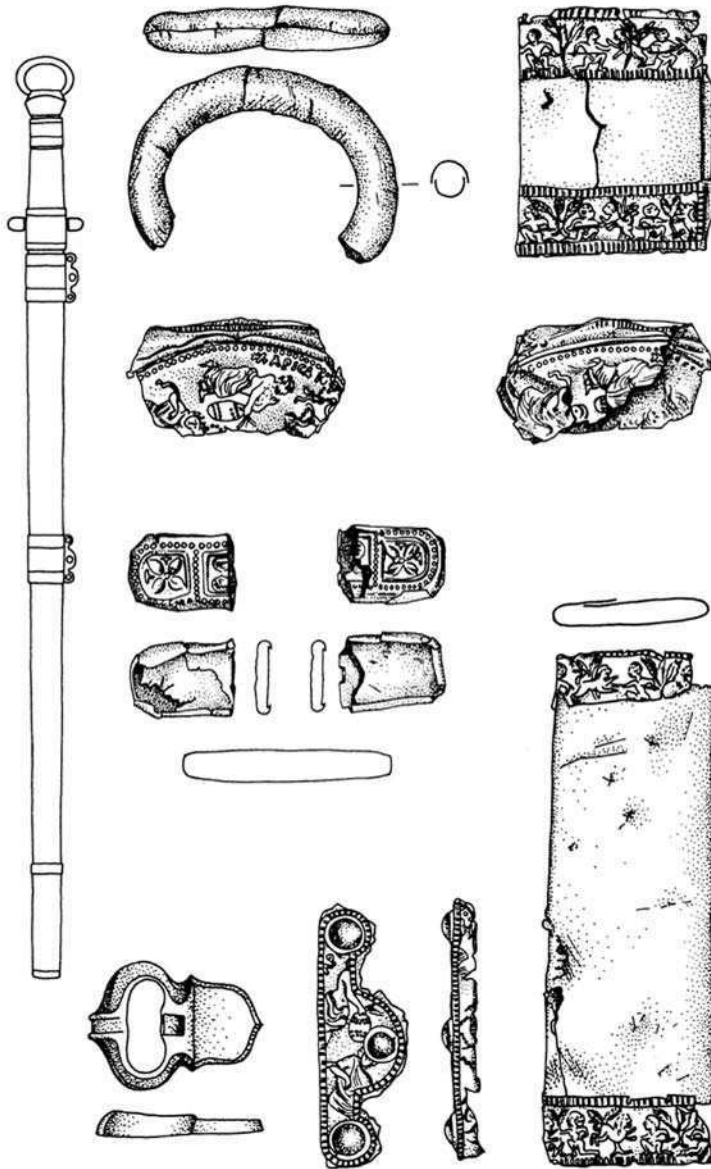


Plate 8: Sword from the Early Avar equestrian grave from Kunágota. Left: Reconstruction; below left: buckle, copper alloy, silvered; functional components and fittings made of gold foil. Reconstruction scaled down considerably, otherwise scale: 2:3.

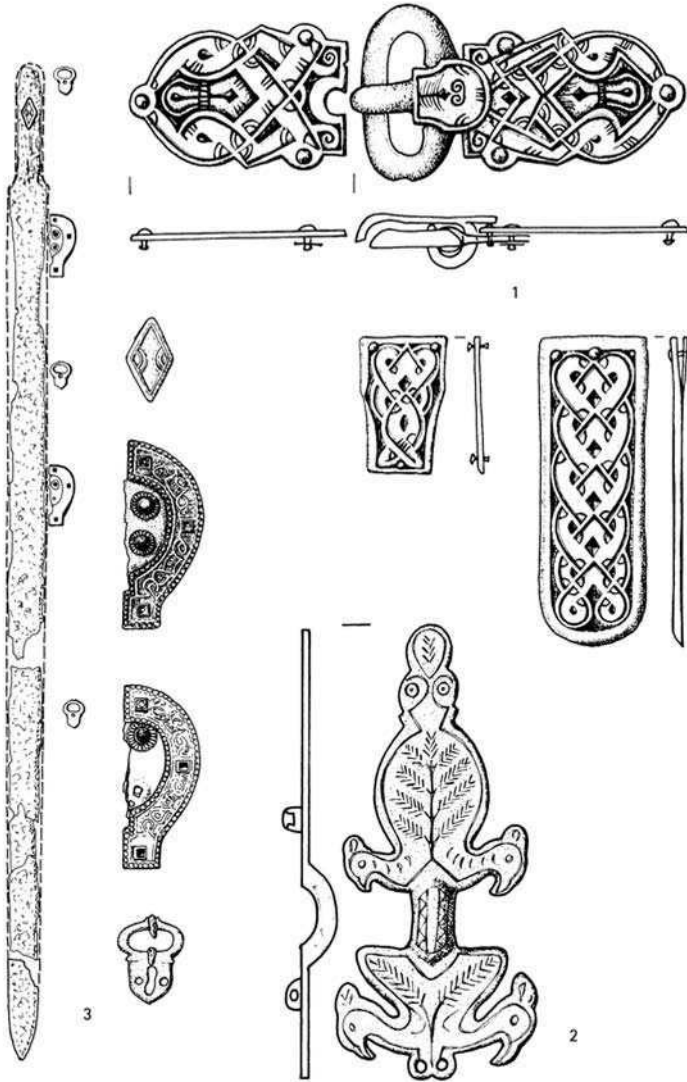


Plate 9: Early Avar finds from cemetery A of Kőlked – Feketekapu. 1 Sword; 2 “Four-part belt set” with “tooth-cut” (“Zahnschnitt”) decoration, copper-alloy; 3 Bow fibula. Reconstruction scaled down considerably, sword components scale 1:2, otherwise M 2:3.

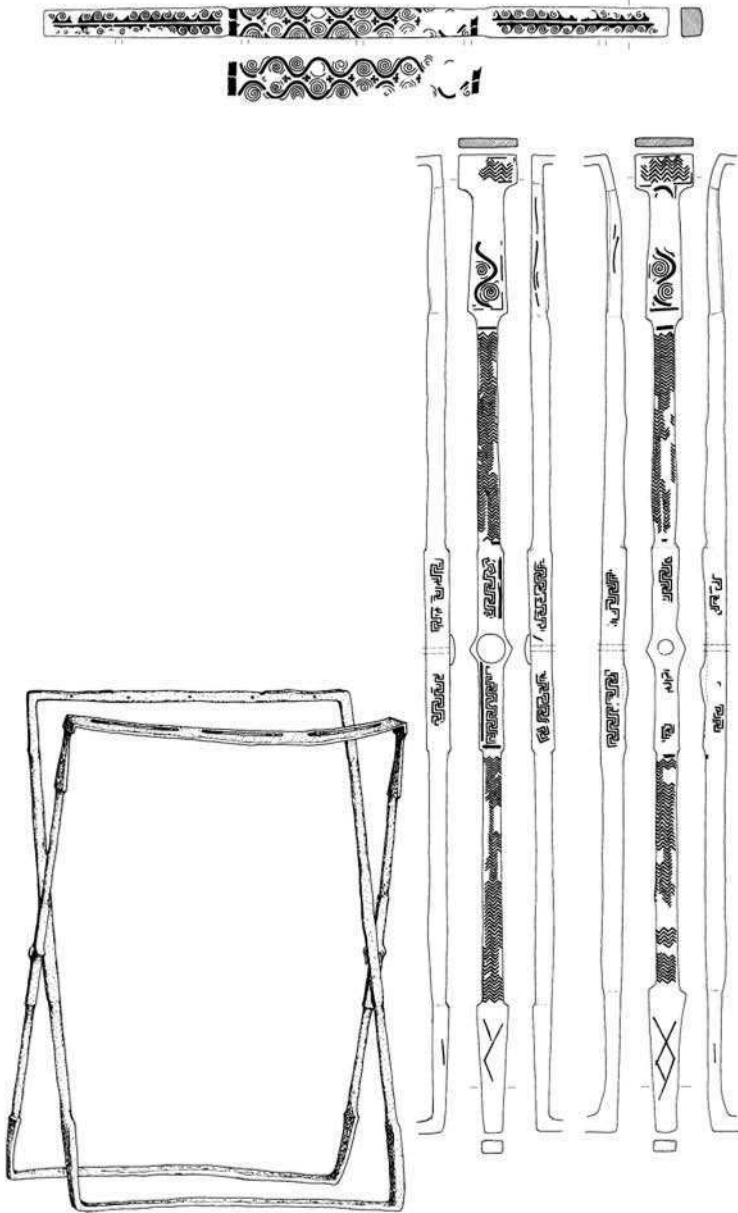


Plate 10: Byzantine folding-chair from an Early Avar grave from Kölked, Hungary. Iron, silver wire inlay. Oblique view scaled down considerably, scale of details approximately 1:3.



Plate 11: Selected finds of Germanic type from the Early Avar women's grave 85 of Kölked - Feketekapú B. 1 Bronze gilded shield-tongue buckle decorated with the image of the Germanic god Tyr (?); 2 Rectangular fitting made of gilded bronze; 3 Cast silver pin head with "tooth-cut" ("Zahnschnitt") ornament; 4 Silver bow fibula of Cividale type; 5 Silver strap end, part of a belt pendant. Scale: 2:3.

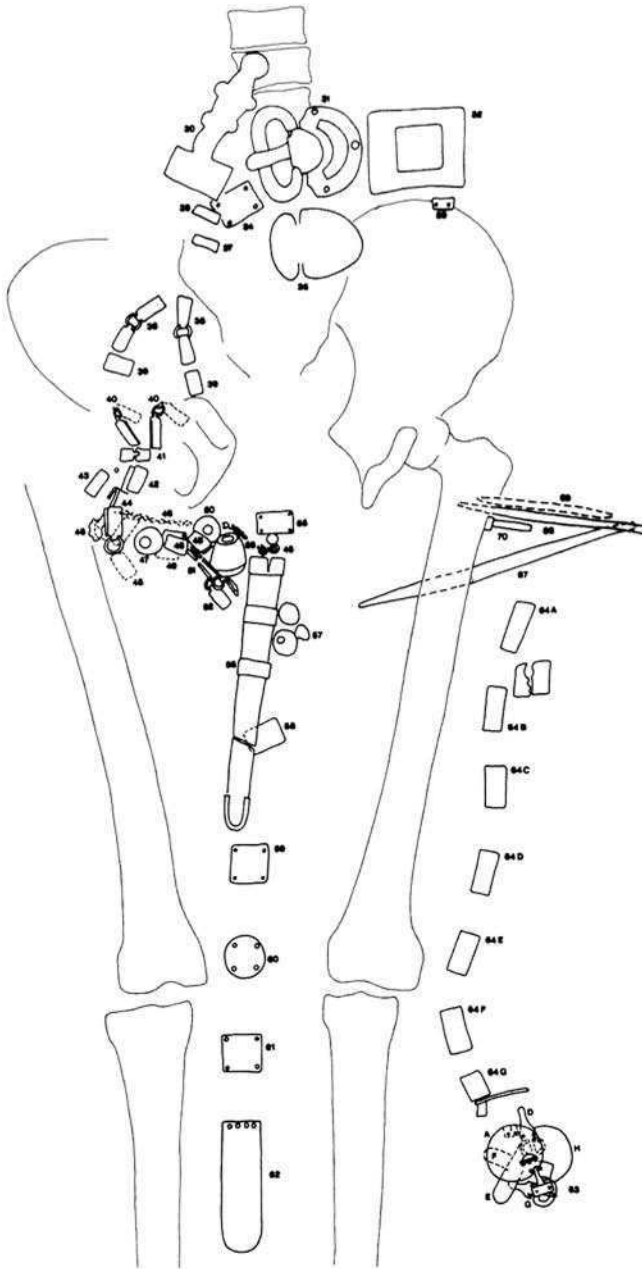


Plate 12: The Early Avar women's grave 85 from Kölked – Feketekapú B: objects found in the pelvic- and upper thigh region.

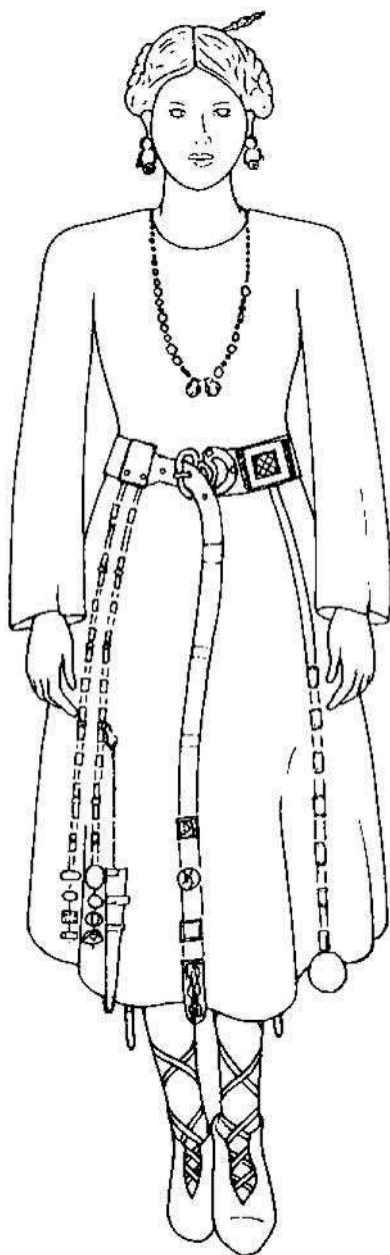


Plate 13: The woman from Kölked – Feketekapú B, grave 85. Reconstruction of dress: Tivadar Vida.

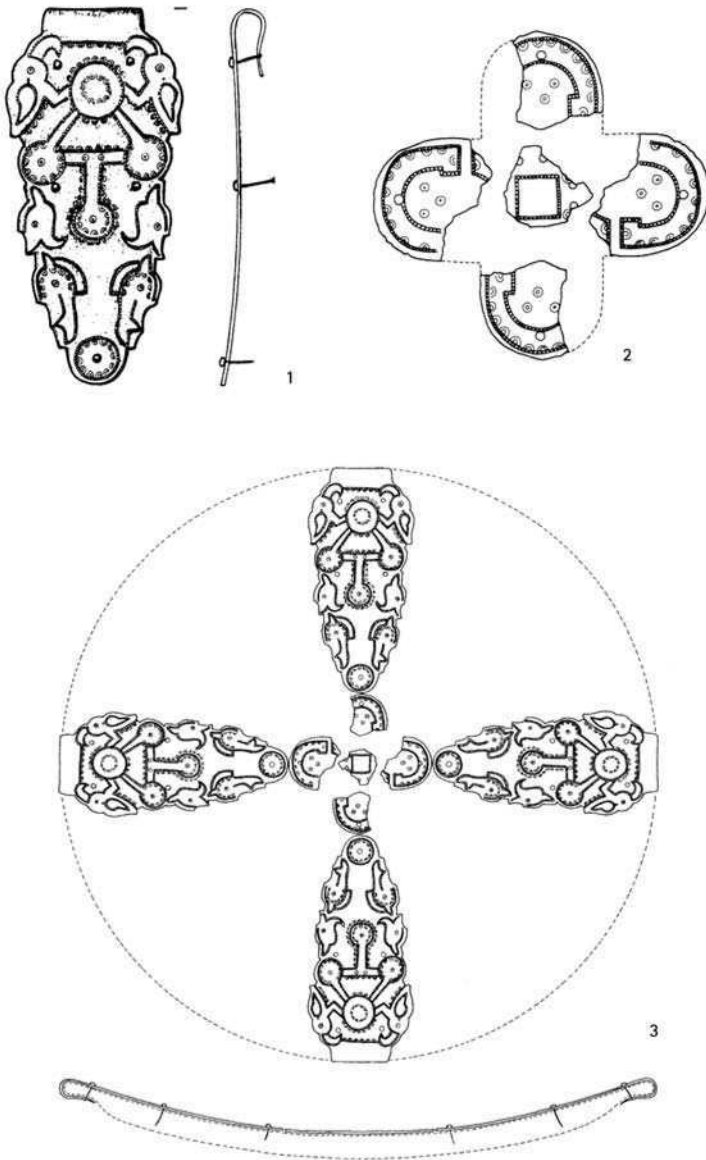


Plate 14: Kölked – Feketekapu B, grave 119. Wooden bowl with silver fittings.
 1 Silver rim fitting with depictions of birds of prey and of animal heads (boar's heads below); 2 Central silver fitting (reconstructed); 3 Reconstruction of the bowl.
 1, 2 scale 2:3.



Plate 15: Early Avar "toothcut" ("Zahnschnitt") decoration. 1 Parts of a gold sword-pendant and a saddle- or shield-mount (so-called "Jankovich-gold", provenance unknown); 2 Parts of a belt-set from Zamárdi, Hungary. Scale 2:3.

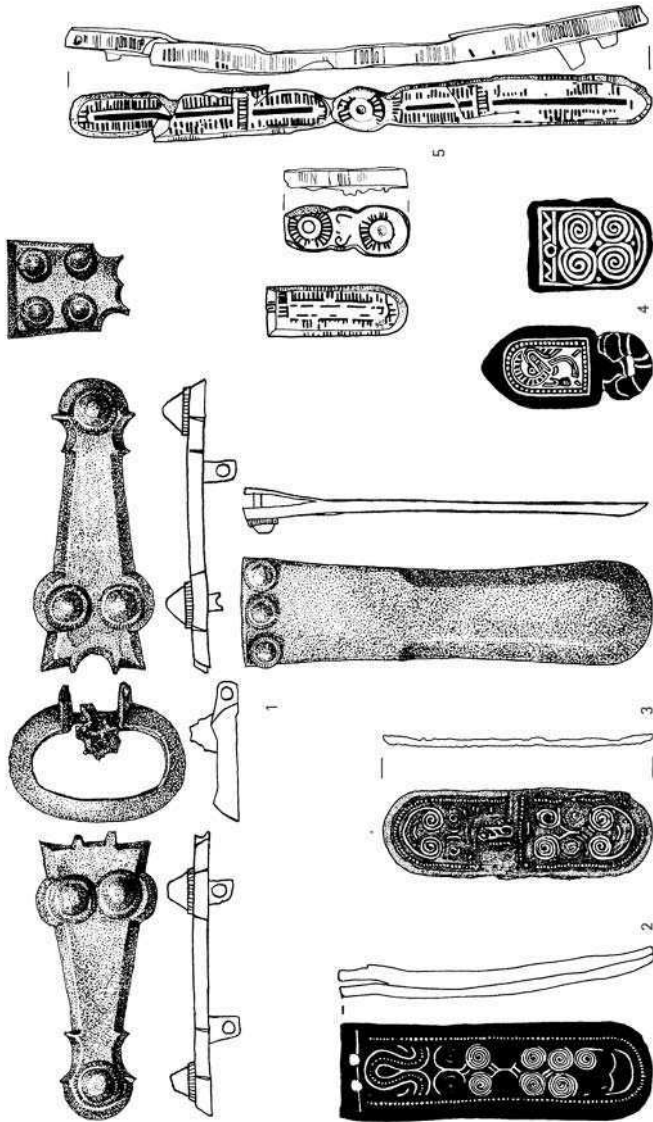


Plate 16: Seventh century belt ornaments of western type from Avar contexts. 1 “North Italian” belt set (first half of the seventh century, Zamárdi, Hungary); 2 Iron strap-end with wire inlay in the form of spiral ornaments (second quarter of the seventh century, Kölked, Hungary); 3 Iron fitting with wire inlay in the form of spiral ornaments (second quarter of the seventh century, Zillingtal, Austria); 4 Fitting and strap end with silver wire inlay (second quarter of the seventh century, Pitvaros, Hungary); 5 Parts of an iron belt set with silver inlay in the form of stripes (third quarter of the seventh century, Sommerein, Austria). Scale 2:3.

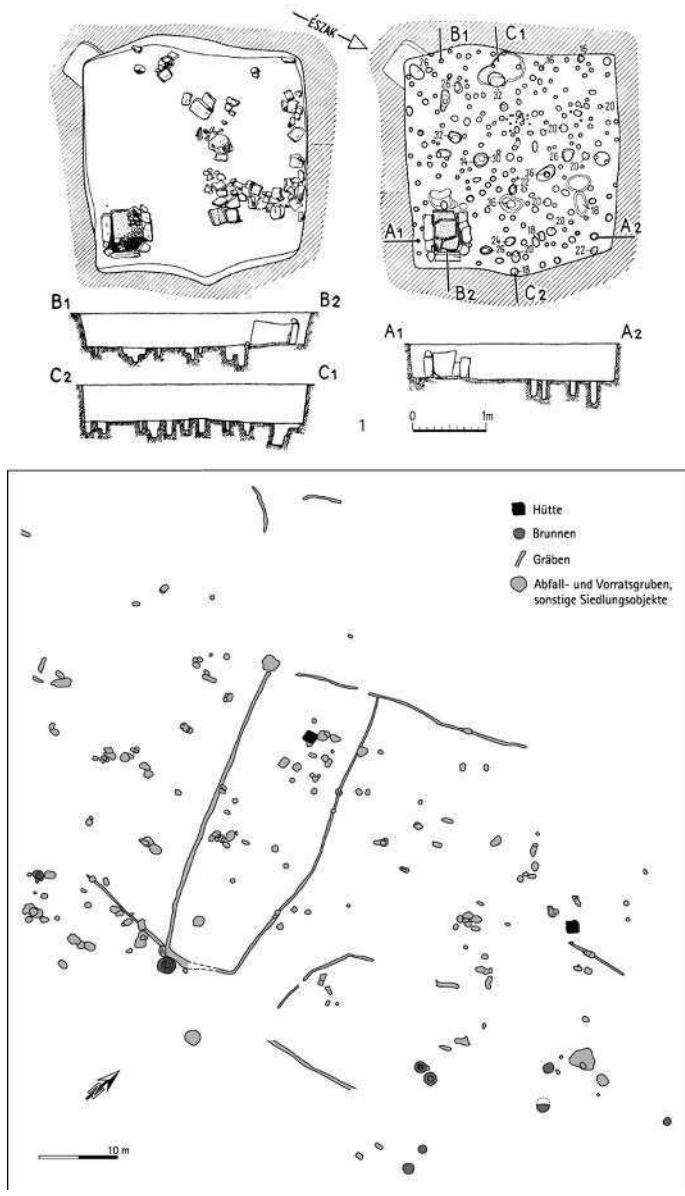


Plate 17: Archaeological evidence of Avar settlements. 1 Early Avar sunken hut with oven from Dunaújváros, Hungary; 2 Settlement with system of ditches and well from Lébény, Hungary.

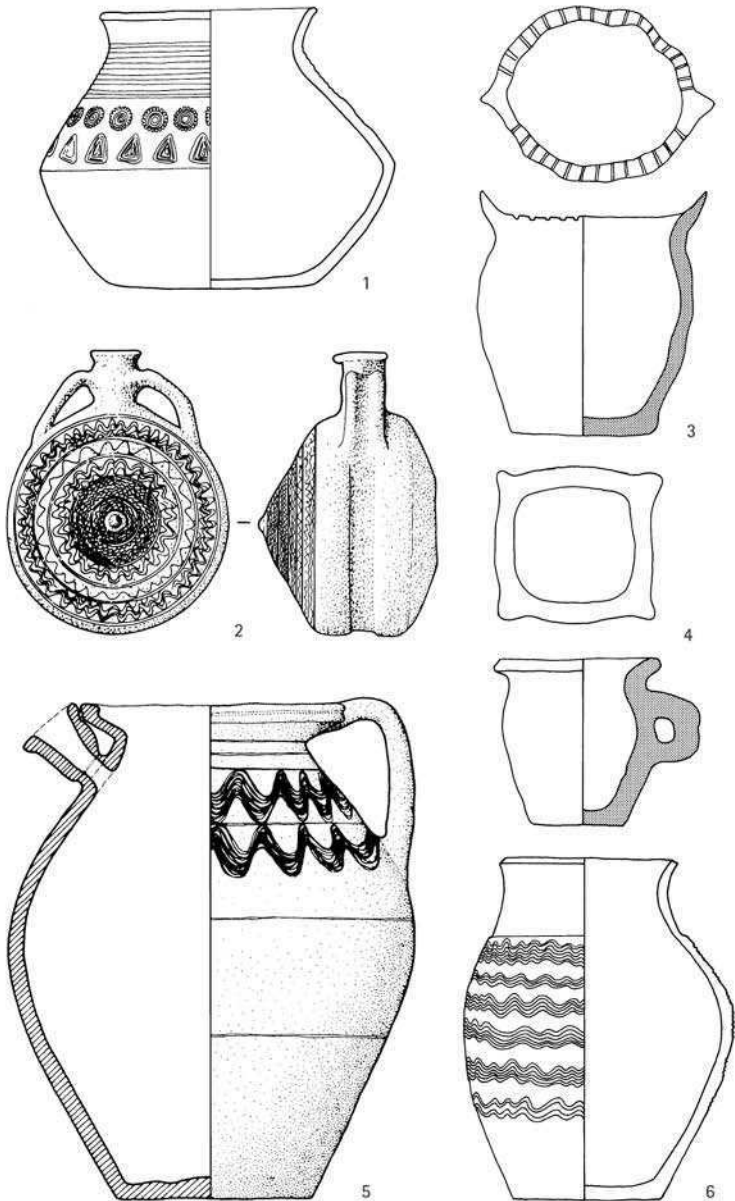


Plate 18: Early Avar pottery. 1 With stamped decoration, of Germanic type (Budakalász, Hungary); 2 “Water bottle”, “grey pottery” (Kiskőrös, Hungary); 3 Hand-made (Szeged, Hungary); 4 Hand-made (Budapest, Hungary); 5 Jug with spout, “grey pottery” (Sommerrein, Austria); 6 Pot, “grey pottery” (Budakalász, Hungary). Scale: 1:3.

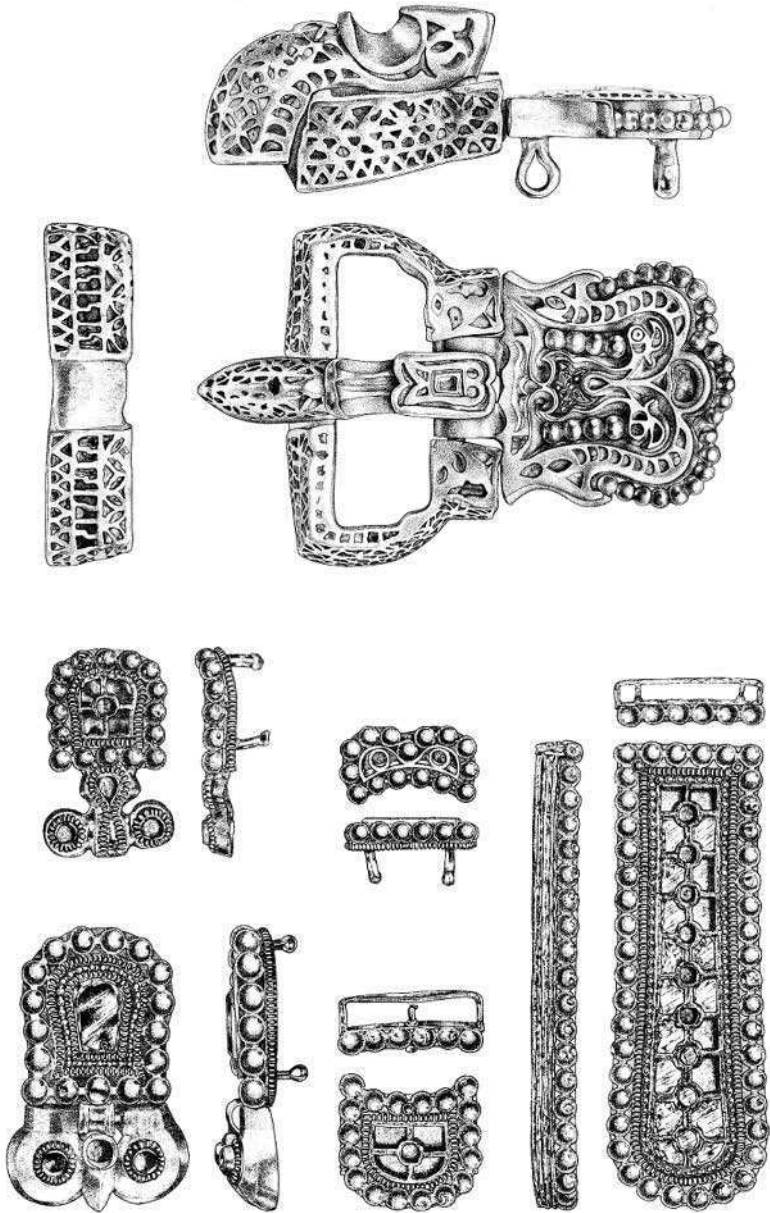


Plate 19: Princely grave from Kunbábony, Hungary, selection of finds. 1 Gold buckle with millefiori-inlay; 2 Fittings and strap-ends made of sheet gold with beaded border. 1 Scale 3:2, otherwise 2:3.

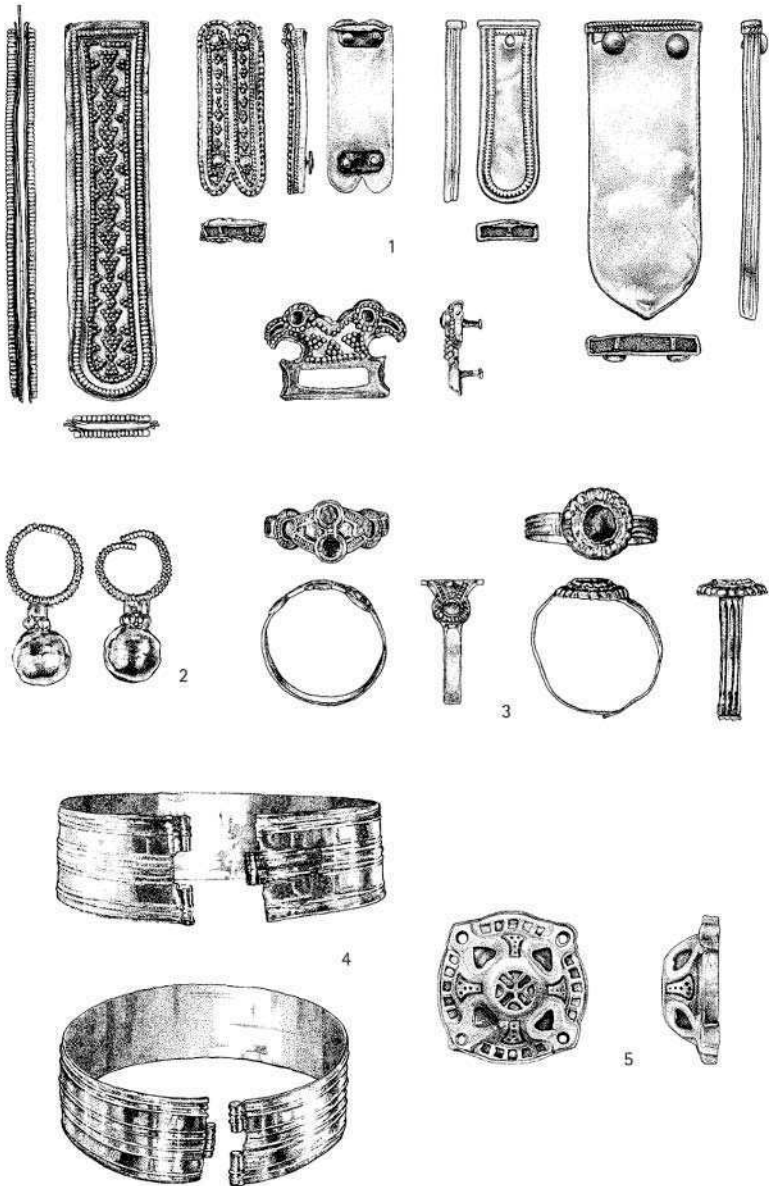


Plate 20: Princely grave from Kunbábony, Hungary, selection of finds. 1 Strap ends and fittings made of sheet gold, partly decorated with granulation; 2 Gold earrings; 3 Gold fingerings; 4 Gold bracelets; 5 Gold fitting with millefiori-inlay and niello-decorated. 5 Scale 3:2, otherwise 2:3.

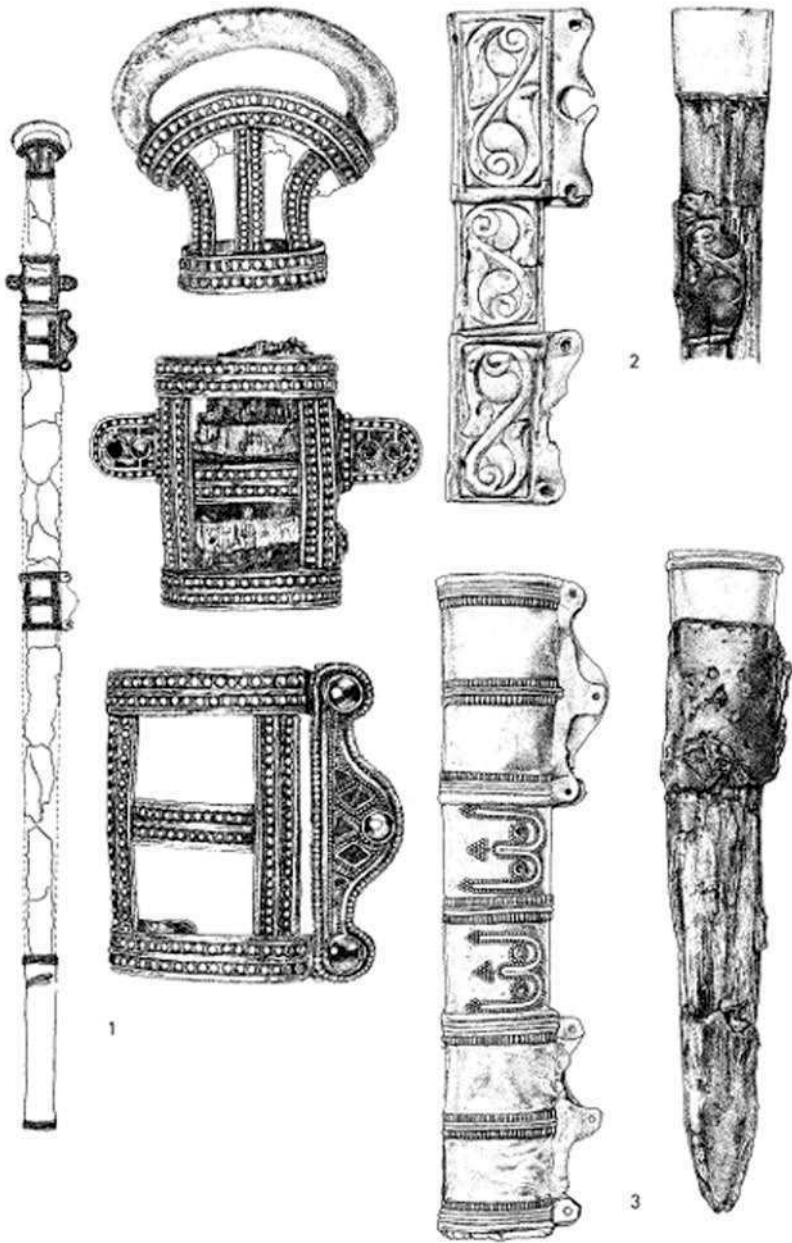


Plate 21: Princely grave from Kunbábony, Hungary, selection of finds. 1 Sword; 2-3 Iron knives with sheaths made of sheet gold, partly decorated with granulation. Sword reconstruction scaled down considerably, scale otherwise 2:3.

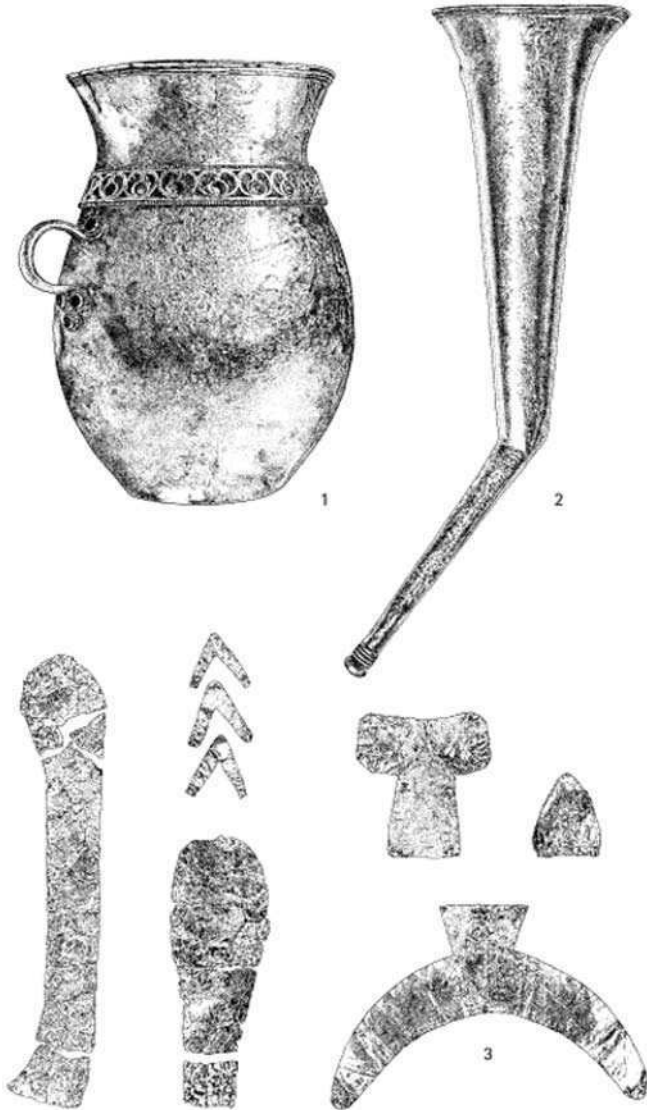


Plate 22: Princely grave from Kunbábony, Hungary, selection of finds. 1 Jug made of gold sheet; 2 Gold drinking-horn; 3 Finger tip ornament (?) and shroud trimming (?), both made of gold foil. 3 Scale 1:3, otherwise 1:2.

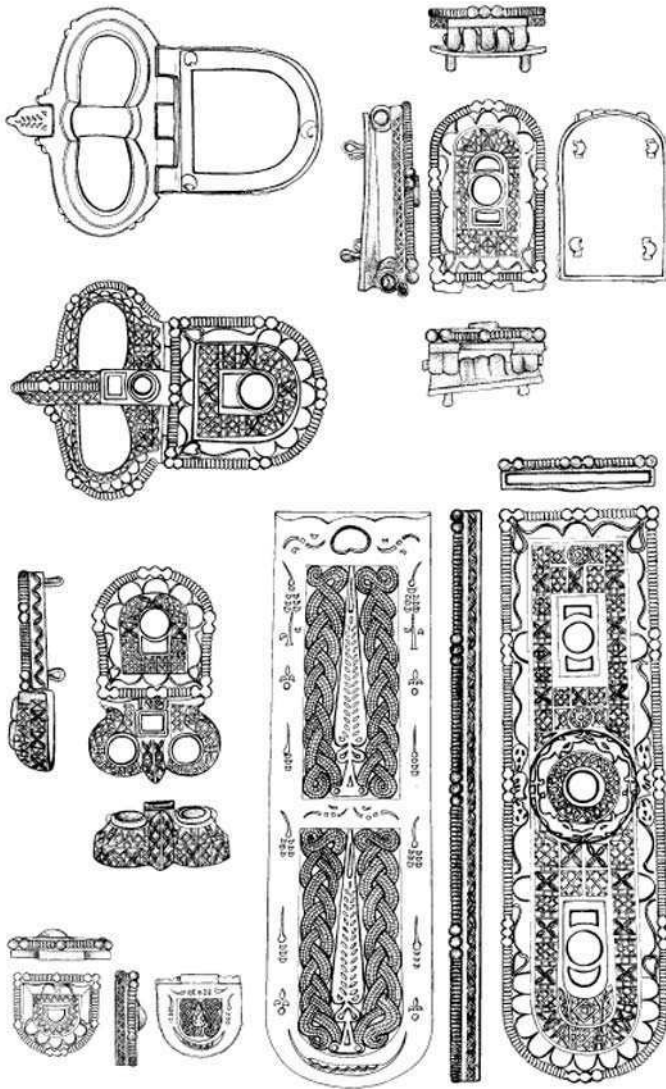


Plate 23: Gold belt set with “pseudo-buckles” from Sirmium, selection. Scale: 2:3.

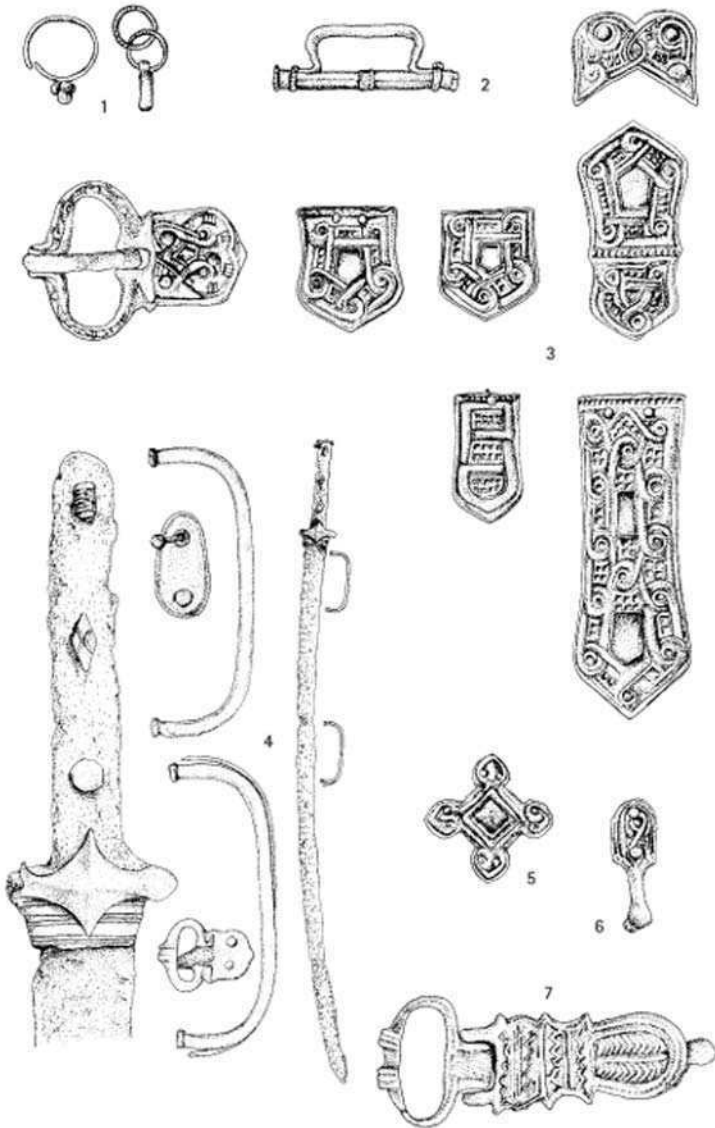


Plate 24: The Middle Avar men's grave from Igar, Hungary, selection of finds. 1 Earring; 2 Plait clasp; 3 Sheet gold belt set with chain ornament, buckle with "tooth-cut" ("*Zahnschnitt*") ornament; 4 Sabre; 5 Decorative mount from the attachment loops of the sabre sheath; 6 Fitting with hook; 7 Buckle of Byzantine type. Sabre reconstruction scaled down considerably, parts of the sabre scale approximately 1:2, other objects scale 2:3.

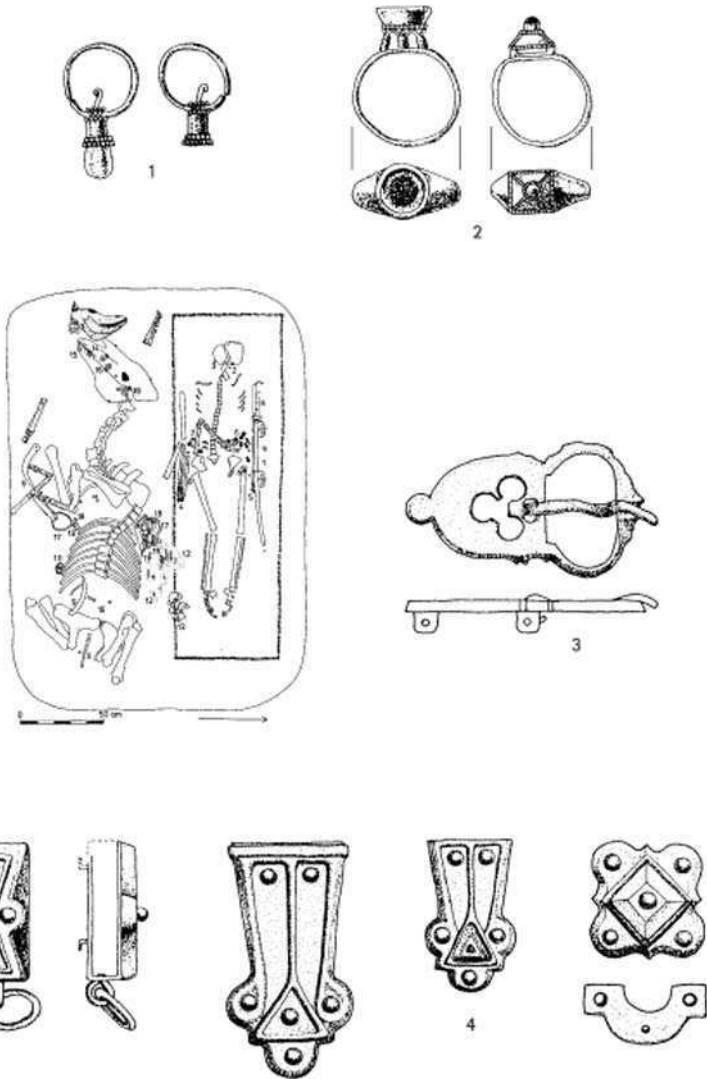


Plate 25: The Middle Avar equestrian grave 64 from Gyenesdiás, Hungary, 1 Gold earrings, 2 gold fingerings, 3 Buckle of Byzantine type; 4 Parts of the belt set. Scale 2:3.

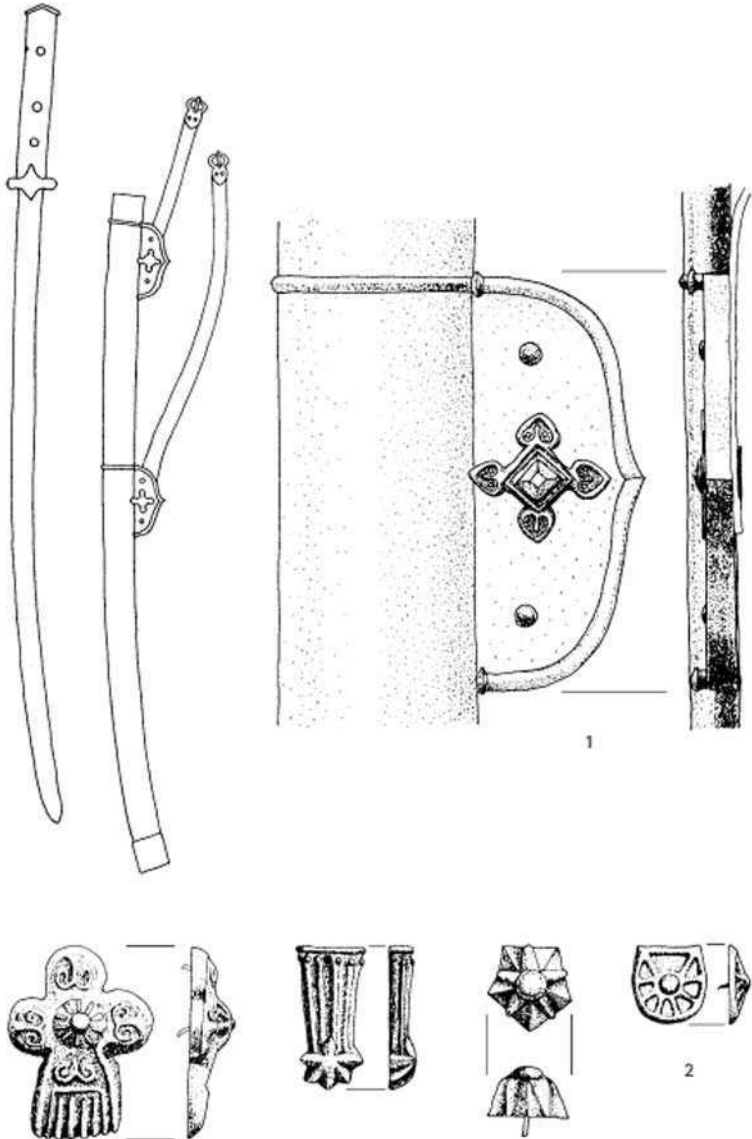


Plate 26: The Middle Avar equestrian grave 64 from Gyenesdiás, Hungary. 1 Sabre; 2 Horse harness ornaments. Sabre reconstruction scaled down considerably, otherwise scale 2:3.

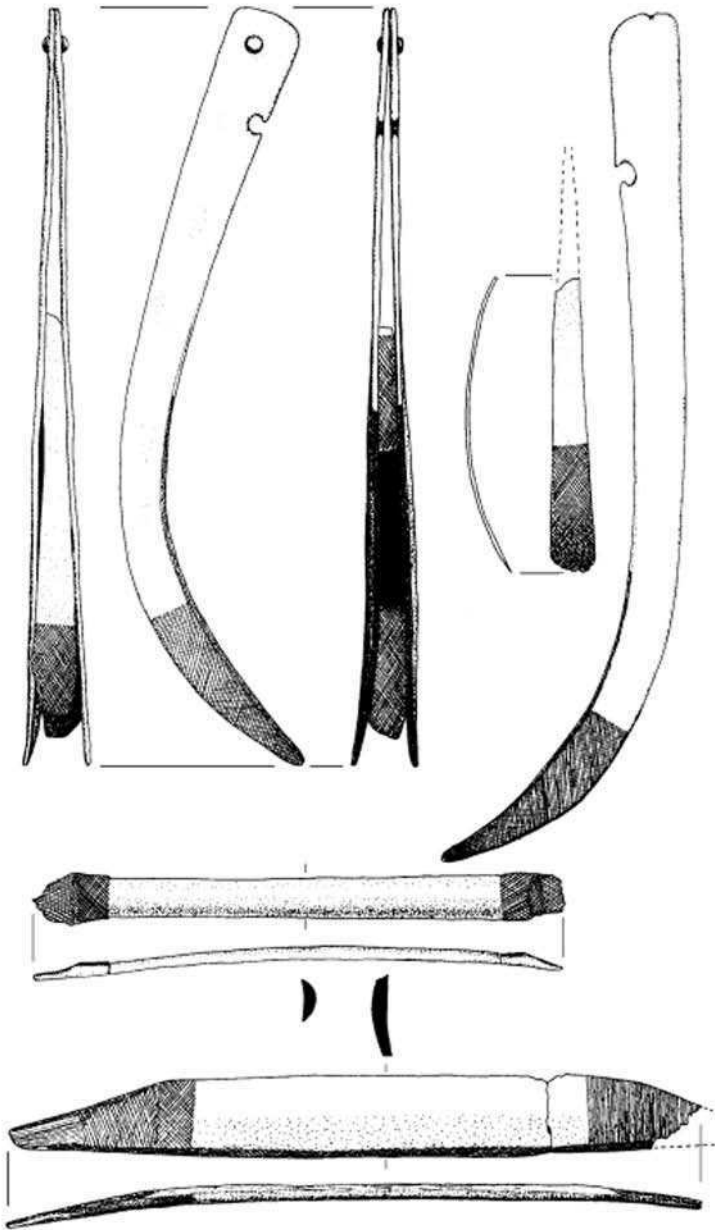


Plate 27: The Middle Avar equestrian grave 64 from Gyenesdiás, Hungary. Parts of the composite reflex bow, made of deer antler. Scale: 2:3.



Plate 28: The Middle Avar women's grave from Ozora, selection of gold objects.
 1 Earrings; 2 Torque with pendant; 3 Byzantine cross; 4 Leaf-shaped pendant;
 5 Part of a coat fastener; 6-7 Fingerings. Scale 2:3.

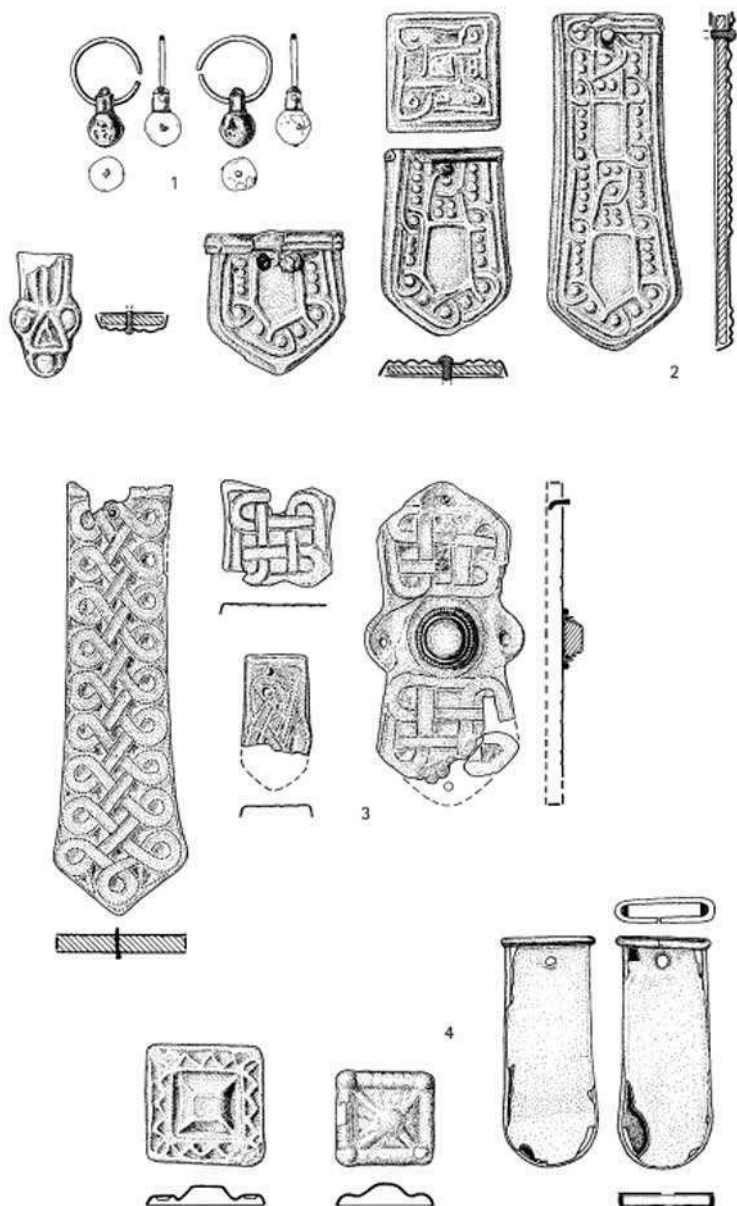


Plate 29: The cemetery of Mödling – An der goldenen Stiege, Austria. Selection of finds. 1 Gold earrings and sheet silver belt ornaments with chain decoration. Grave 35, Middle Avar Period I; 2 Belt ornament with interlace. Grave 93, Middle Avar Period I; 3 Belt ornament from grave 79. Middle Avar Period EL Scale: 2:3.



Plate 31: The cemetery of Mödling – An der goldenen Stiege, Austria. Women's grave 144, Late Avar Period III, selection of finds. 1 Gold and silver earrings; 2 Spiral fingerings; 3 Bead necklaces, 4 Bracelet, 5 Torque. Scale: 2:3.



Plate 32: The cemetery of Mödling – An der goldenen Stiege, Austria. Women's grave 144, Late Avar Period III. Coat fastener, bronze, mercury gilded.
Scale: 2:1.

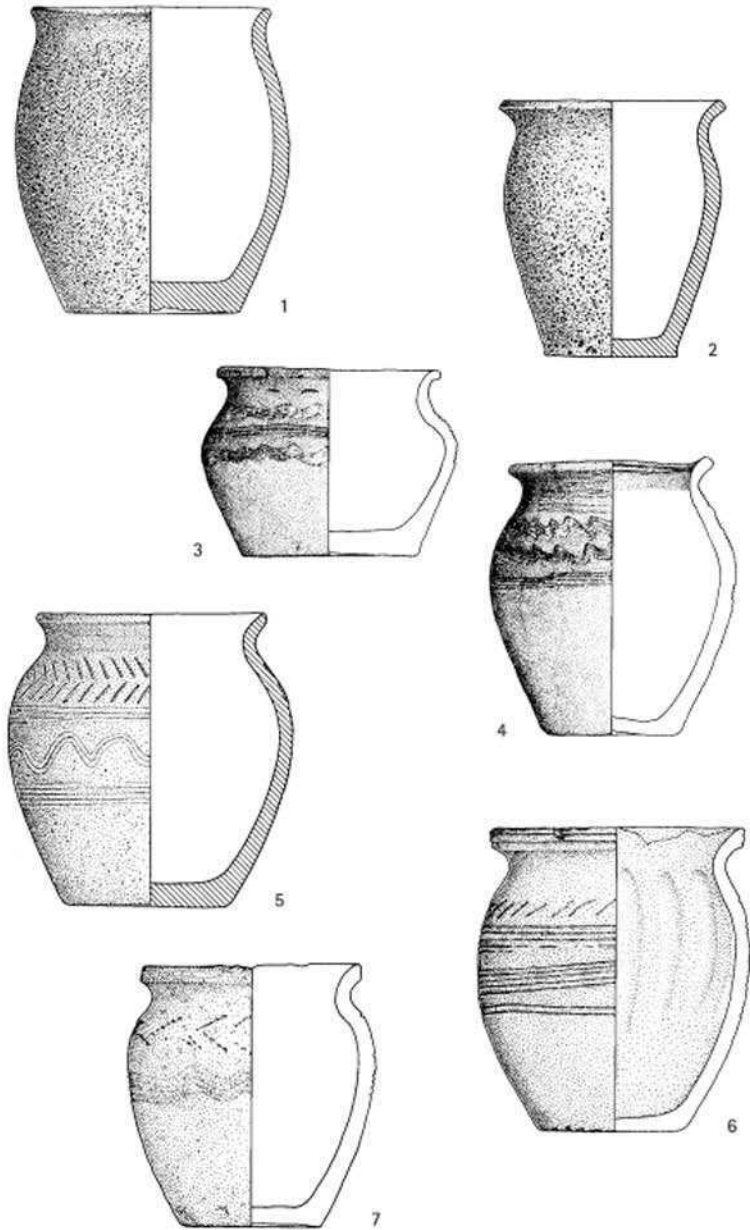


Plate 33: The cemetery of Mödling – An der goldenen Stiege, Austria. Development of pottery “finished on the slow wheel”. 1 Middle Avar Period I (Grave 93); 2–4 Late Avar Period I (Grave 135, 232, 242); 5 Late Avar Period II (Grave 121); 6–7 Late Avar Period III (Grave 311, 505 A). Scale: 1:3.



Plate 34: Mediterranean belt ornaments from the eighth century. 1 Parts of the belt set from Hohenberg, Austria. Brass, gilded; 2 Fragment of a main strap-end from Mikulčice, Southern Moravia; 3 Chased sheet gold strap end from Aleppo, Syria; 4 Silver fitting, gilded. Reputedly from Weiden am See, Austria. Scale 2:3.

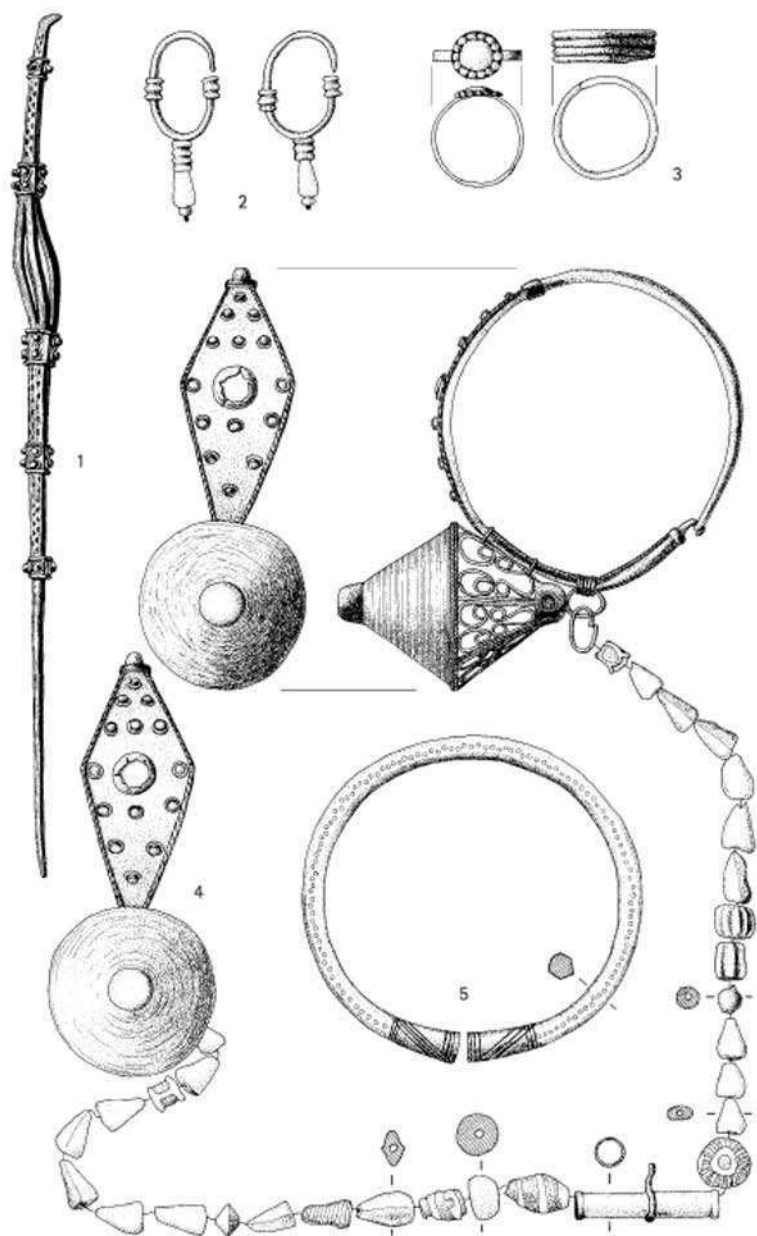


Plate 35: Finds from the late Keszthely-culture (eighth century). 1 Dress pin; 2-5 Selection of finds from Lesencetomaj, Hungary, women's grave 6.2 Earrings; 3 Fingering; 4 Basket earrings with bead necklace; 5 Bracelet. Scale 2:3.

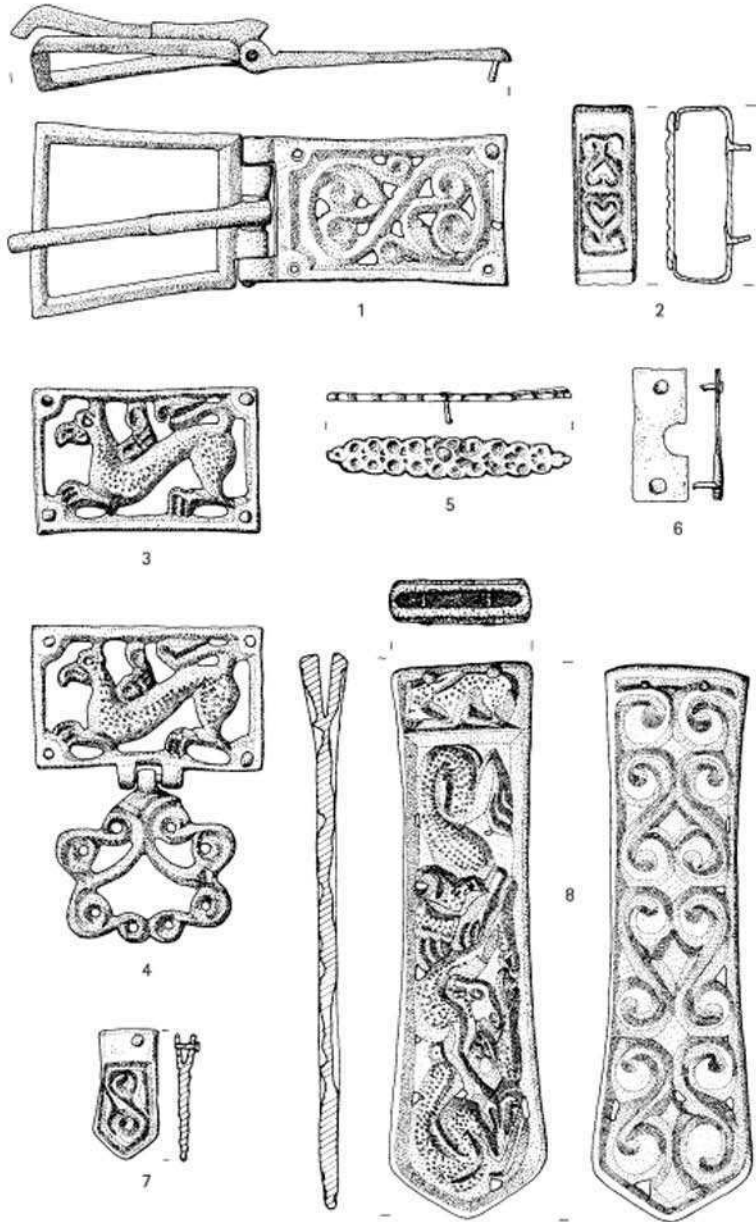


Plate 36: Belt ornaments from the cemetery of Leobersdorf Austria, men's grave 71 (Late Avar Period II), bronze, mercury gilded. 1 Buckle; 2 Strap loop; 3-4 Fittings decorated with images of griffins; 5 Propeller-shaped mount; 6 Hole-reinforcements; 7 Subsidiary strap end; 8 Main strap end with animal combat scene (two griffins attacking a deer). Scale: 2:3.



Plate 37: The Late Avar cemetery of Komarno, Slovakia. Selection of finds. 1-4 Equestrian grave 114:2 Round decorative horse-harness mount; 3 Buckle; 4 Decorative capsule from horse-harness. 5-8 Grave 12:5 Main strap end with circus scene, Bronze, gilded; 6 Subsidiary strap end; 7 Fitting with eagle and numerical symbol X. 9 "Yellow pottery", produced on the potter's wheel, from grave 11.9 scale 1:3, otherwise 2:3.

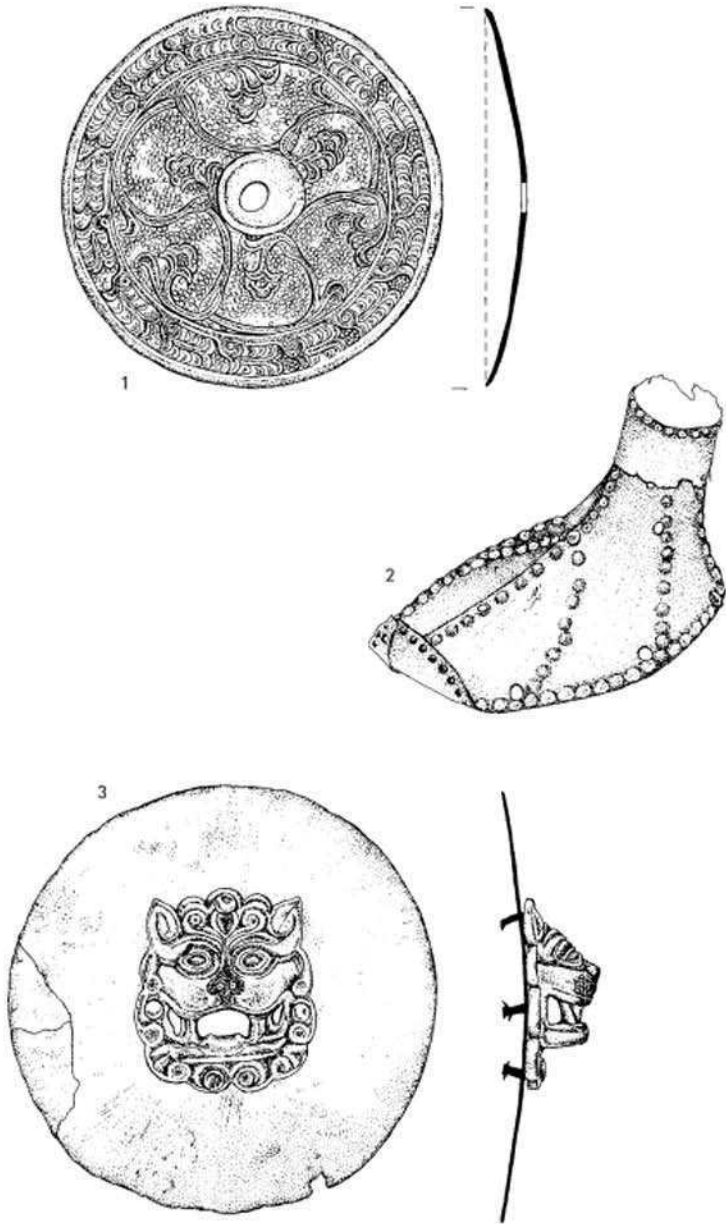


Plate 38: The Late Avar cemetery of Komarno, Slovakia. Selection of finds. 1 Round decorative horse-harness mount with scroll- and flower-ornament of Chinese type (grave 149); 2 Head ornament from horse-harness (grave 142); 3 Round decorative horse-harness mount (grave 103). Scale: 2:3.

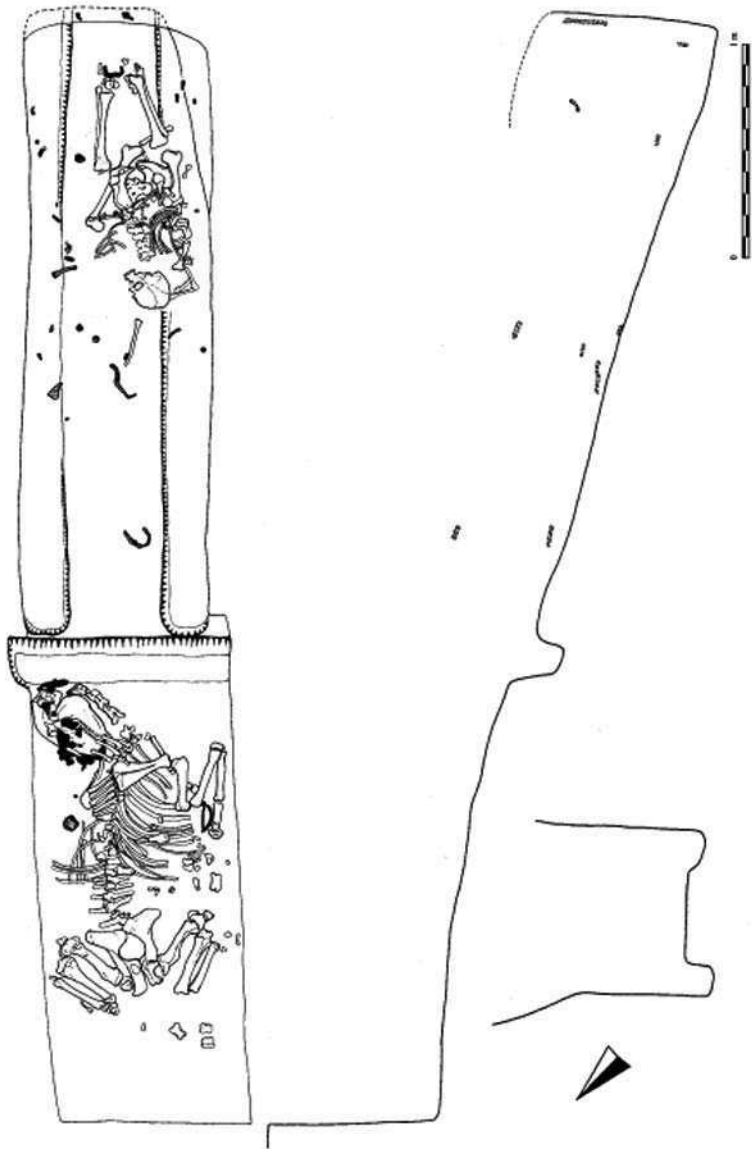


Plate 39: The Late Avar tunnel grave from Pitvaros, Hungary, grave 51. Grave structure. Left: ground-plan: right: cross-section.

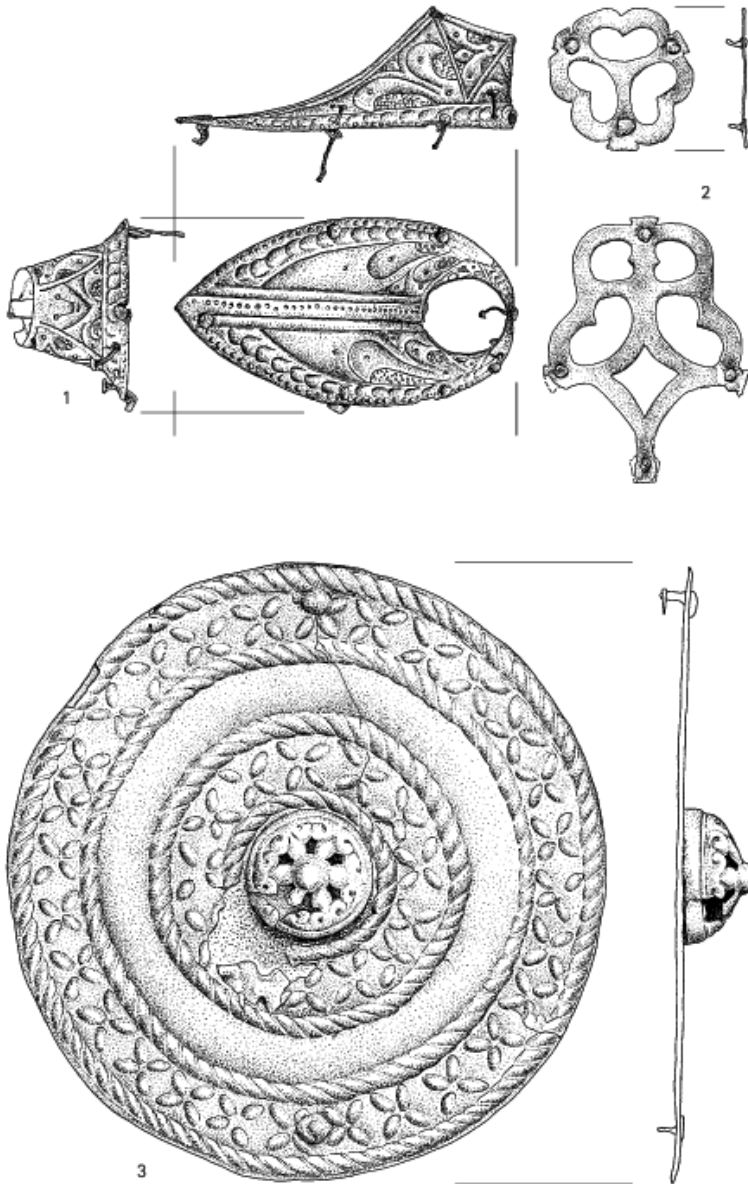


Plate 40: The Late Avar tunnel grave from Pitvaros, Hungary. Horse-harness decoration. 1 Head ornament; 2 Mounts; 3 Round decorative harness mount. Scale: 2:3.

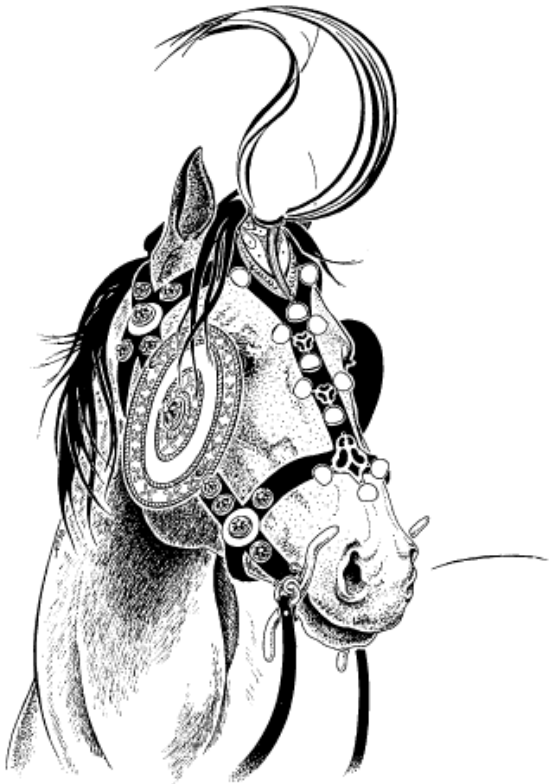


Plate 41: The Late Avar tunnel grave from Pitvaros, Hungary. Above: Horse skull with parts of the bridle; below: reconstruction.



Plate 42: The Sînnicolau Mare Treasure, Romania (Hung. Nagyszentmiklós). Selection of finds. 1 Cup Nr. 11; 2 Bowl with stem Nr. 22; 3 Jug Nr. 3; 4 Drinking horn Nr. 17. (numbers according to Hampel). Scale: app. 1:2.

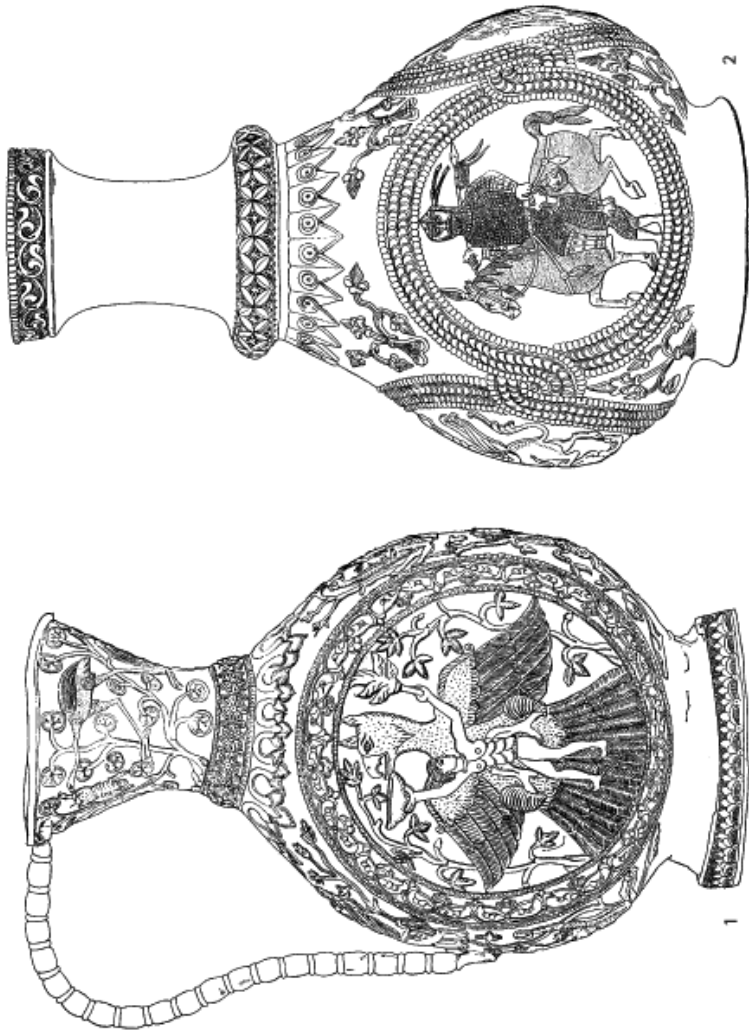


Plate 43: The Simnicolau Mare Treasure, Romania (Hung. Nagyszentmiklós). Selection of finds. 1 Jug Nr. 7; 2 Jug Nr. 2 (numbers according to Hampel). Scale: app. 1:2.

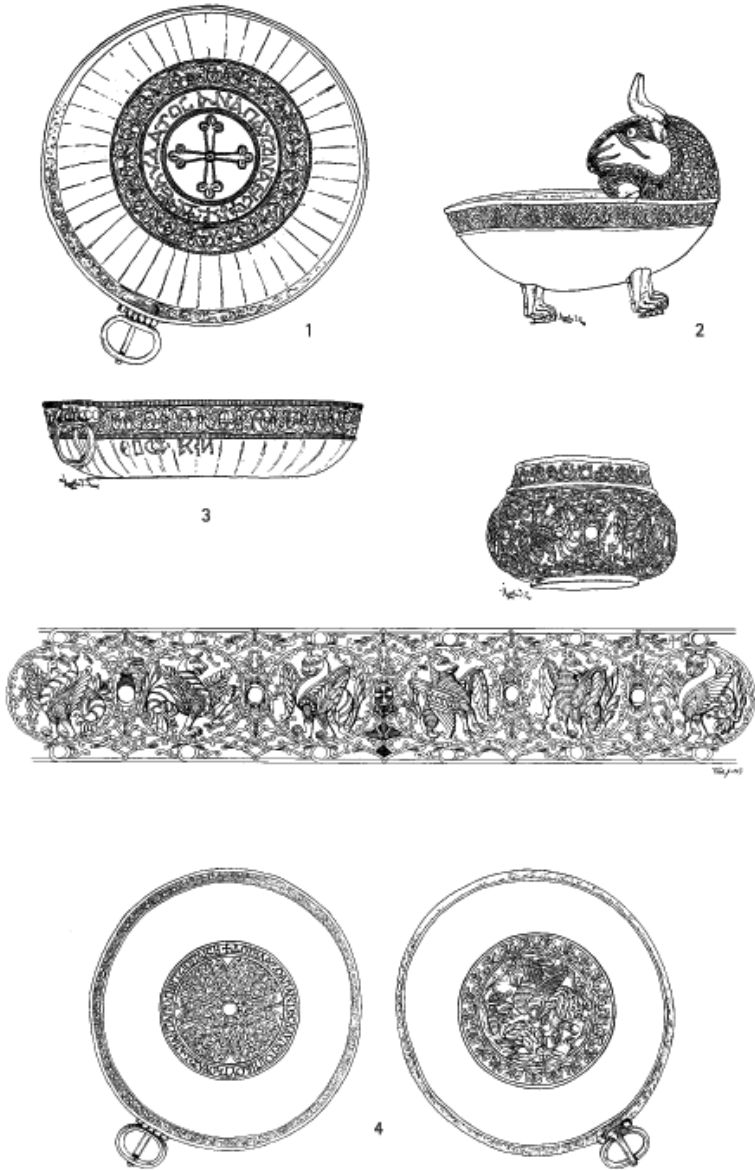


Plate 44: The Sînnicolau Mare Treasure, Romania (Hung. Nagyszentmiklós). Selection of finds. 1 Bowl Nr. 9; 2 Bowl with bull's head Nr. 13; 3 Bowl Nr. 19, with imprint; 4 Bowl Nr. 21. Numbers according to Hampel. Scale: app. 1:3.

A NON-ROMAN EMPIRE IN CENTRAL EUROPE: THE AVARS

Walter Pohl

The role of steppe empires in early medieval Europe

Most of the kingdoms discussed in this volume had their centres in former Roman provinces, and followed the Roman model to some extent, although it may be disputed in every instance what was Roman and what was “barbarian” about them; or, more fundamentally: Is the opposition between “Roman” and “barbarian” (or “Germanic”) an adequate way to describe these kingdoms? For much in these societies had specifically been adapted or developed in the post-Roman period.¹ In every documented instance, supra-regional kingship had to be Christian to be successful, for that (and only that, it seems) allowed the integration of a broad Christian population, and the maintenance of some late-Roman infra-structure and regular communication between different parts of the kingdom. Communities such as the fourth-century Alamanni and Tervingi, the fifth- and sixth-century kingdoms in the British Isles, the sixth- to eighth-century Slavs or the continental Saxons in the eighth century, lacking some of these Roman and Christian foundations, created only a territorially and institutionally limited range of lordship. It is debatable whether Scandinavian kings of the post-Roman period enjoyed a more prominent position;² on the continent, in any case, powerful kingship on a purely barbarian and pagan basis could not be maintained.³

¹ See W. Pohl, *Die Völkerwanderung. Eroberung und Integration* (Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln 2002); with a critique of the binary opposites often used to describe post-Roman societies: I.N. Wood, “Conclusion: Strategies of distinction”, *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998) pp. 297–303. I would like to thank Bonnie Effros for corrections of the English text, and Falko Daim for suggestions.

² L. Hedeager, “Asgard reconstructed? Gudme—a ‘central place’ in the North”, *Places of Power*, ed. M. de Jong, F. Theuvs and C. van Rhijn, *The Transformation of the Roman World 6* (Leiden-Boston 2001) pp. 467–508.

³ This leaves little room for the arguments in favour of a Germanic character of

There is an important exception to this rule, however: the steppe empires based in the Carpathian Basin. These include: first, the kingdom of the Huns in the first half of the fifth century; then, the Avar khaganate; and finally, the Magyars/Hungarians in the tenth century.⁴ They broadly (although with some specific traits) represent a type of state current in the Eurasian steppes from the time of the Scythians in the first millennium B.C. to the late medieval Mongols and beyond. These are often classed as “nomadic” empires, but that is a simplification because the degree and type of nomadism involved varied considerably; especially in European steppe empires, their population (for example, the late Avars) might become rather sedentary although pastoralism remained important. The defining trait was that the ruling groups were steppe warriors on horseback. They were able to build supra-regional networks of communication and dependence that allowed them to control and govern huge areas.

Thus, the steppe empires provide an alternative to the post-Roman model of government which offers valuable points of comparison. Furthermore, they also directly or indirectly influenced the development of the post-Roman societies. It has long been argued that the arrival of the Huns in eastern Europe in c. 375 A.D. accelerated the migration of barbarians into the Roman Empire and thus had grave short- and long-term consequences.⁵ Hunnic dominion showed that barbarians could wield power over a large area, and favoured the establishment of new networks of power that cut across the fron-

early medieval kingship forcefully deployed by Otto Höfler in the 1930s—see O. Höfler, “Das germanische Kontinuitätsproblem”, *Historische Zeitschrift* 157 (1938) pp. 1–26—and shared by the *Verfassungsgeschichte* school of his time; see W. Pohl, “Herrschaft”, *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 14 (2nd edn., 1999) pp. 443–57.

⁴ E.A. Thompson, *The Huns* (2nd edn., Oxford 1996); W. Pohl, *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa*, 567–822 (München 1988); id., “The role of steppe peoples in eastern and central Europe in the first millennium A.D.”, *Origins of Central Europe*, ed. P. Urbańczyk (Warsaw 1997) pp. 65–78.

⁵ A position argued forcefully by P.J. Heather, “The Huns and the end of the Roman Empire in western Europe”, *English Historical Review* 110 (1995) pp. 4–41; the sceptical arguments by W. Goffart, *Rome’s Fall and After* (London 1989) p. 130 (“the barbarian invasions after 370 were neither numerous nor long-lasting”), and M. Kulikowski, “Nation vs. army: a necessary contrast?”, *On Barbarian Identity—Critical Approaches to Ethnogenesis Theory*, ed. A. Gillett (Turnhout forthcoming), should be taken seriously but do not suffice to explain away that there was considerable migration by barbarian warriors in the decades after 375. I would reckon that about 100,000 barbarian warriors came into the Empire between 375 and 410.

tiers. Around 450, the fathers of three successive rulers of Italy—the last emperor, Romulus Augustulus; Odoacer; and Theoderic—were in Attila's service.

The rise of Avar power after 560 also had far-reaching consequences and is much less known. It led directly and indirectly to the collapse of the Justinianic system and the loss of most of the Balkan provinces to the Byzantine Empire. Therefore, rather than dealing with early medieval “non-Roman Europe” in general, this paper, as the preceding one, make an exemplary case of the Avars. One additional reason for this attention is that in early medieval Europe, there is no comparable archaeological record; so far, about 60,000 Avar graves, many of them with grave-goods, have been excavated. The Avars thus also constitute a test-case for the opportunities and the pitfalls of interdisciplinary research, recently an object of heated methodological debate (see below and in Falko Daim's contribution). Written sources are, as may be expected, patchy, but some aspects (for instance, the wars and negotiations between Byzantium and the Avars until 626) are rather well documented in the works of Menander, Theophylact Simocatta and others.⁶

The Avars appeared north of the Caucasus in the late 550s.⁷ It is characteristic that as soon as they arrived in the neighbourhood of the Empire on their flight from central Asia, they sent an embassy to the aging Byzantine emperor Justinian in 558. They agreed to fight for the Empire against unruly barbarians and in turn would receive annual payments and other benefits. In 568, khagan (which was the Avar rulers' title) Baian, as the result of an alliance with the Lombards, took possession of the Carpathian Basin and soon established his supremacy over practically all groups of barbarian warriors along the Danube frontier. Despite growing difficulties with unruly groups of Slavs, his sons managed to preserve this position. They used it to increase the pressure on the emperor and the payments in gold and kind reached the record sum of 200,000 gold solidi (almost 3,000 pounds of gold) shortly before 626. These treasures allowed the khagans to win the loyalty of their growing army; nowhere could a barbarian warrior hope to gain more prestige than

⁶ M. Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian: Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balcan Warfare* (Oxford 1988).

⁷ For all aspects of Avar history, see Pohl, *Awaren*. An English translation is in preparation.

by following the khagan with his legendary victories and dazzling wealth. Paradoxically, victories and successful expansion inescapably led to crisis, for the khagan had to set himself more and more ambitious goals to satisfy the expectations of his growing army. The greatest and most daring attack on the Byzantine Empire was the siege of Constantinople in 626, something that neither the Huns before, nor the Hungarians after the Avars, ever undertook. The Avar army had even carried hundreds of vessels with Slavic boatmen from the Danube to attack the city on water from the Golden Horn. But the siege failed, and the Avar offensives came to an end. With the treasures assembled in the decades before 626, however, the Avar khagans managed to maintain their power over much of eastern central Europe; they preserved their empire unchallenged for an additional 170 years.

Throughout the more than two centuries of their rule, the Avars maintained rather peaceful relations with their western neighbours, Franks, Bavarians and Lombards, with a few minor border conflicts excepted. This may be a reason why the Huns and Hungarians, who repeatedly ravaged western Europe, have been much more prominent in medieval and modern western historiography. On the contrary, it was an attack from the West that led to the downfall of the Avars. In 795/96, Charlemagne's armies destroyed the Avar khaganate, almost without encountering resistance. The name "Avars" fell into disuse within one generation. This did not mean that the Avars had all physically disappeared; nonetheless, it simply proved impossible to keep up an Avar identity after Avar institutions and the high claims of their tradition had failed.

Avar origins

My father, the khagan, went off with seventeen men. Having heard the news that [he] was marching off, those who were in the towns went up mountains and those who were on mountains came down [from there]; thus they gathered and numbered seventy men. Due to the fact that Heaven granted strength, the soldiers of my father, the khagan, were like wolves, and his enemies were like sheep. Having gone on campaigns forward and backward, he gathered together and collected men; and they all numbered seven hundred men. After they had numbered seven hundred men, [my father, the khagan] organized and ordered the people who had lost their state and their khagan, the

people who had turned slaves and servants, the people who had lost the Turkic institutions, in accordance with the rules of my ancestors.⁸

This is how an eighth-century Turkic inscription found in the Orkhon area of central Asia describes the beginnings of a steppe empire. The direct relationship between a new people and its institutions, between *gens*, ruler and kingdom (or khaganate) could hardly be made clearer. It is the military success of a leader that establishes a new community, which he then “orders in accordance with the rules of the ancestors”. Those who have “lost the Turkic institutions” and become slaves of foreign rulers regain their freedom. There is, at this stage, no trace of a myth of common descent. The reference to Turkic identity is implicit, however, it was not particular to the new group. Only later, when the new khagan had subdued all relevant Turkic groups, would his realm become “the” empire of the Turks. We can picture the origin of the Avars, and the relationship between “*gens* and *regnum*” in the khaganate, in a similar manner. Until they became “the” Avars, a rather small and aggressive group had to establish a strong leadership and achieve extraordinary success.

In Latin and Greek historiography, the Avars were quite consistently called *Avari* or *Ἀβάροι*. At the same time, they were identified with the Huns and the Scythians. This was a broad ethnographic category that underlined their way of life as steppe warriors and cattle breeders (not necessarily, but predominantly nomads in the modern sense). However, the central Asian Sogdians and Turks knew the European Avars by a different name: *Varchonitai*, as Menander and Theophylact attest.⁹ In quite an extraordinary manner, these two writers shed light on the central Asian origins of the Avars. The second half of the sixth century, the period of formation of the first Turk empire in central Asia, saw unusually intense exchanges of embassies and information between Constantinople and the Eurasian steppes, as far east as the Altai mountains; a similar intensity of communication along the silk route was only reached again in the thirteenth century, in the heyday of the Mongol empire.

⁸ Pohl, *Avaren*, pp. 164–5; English translation of the text: P.J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations. The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton 2001) p. 94.

⁹ Menander Protector, *Fragmenta* 4,2, pp. 44–6; 10,1, pp. 114–6; 19,1, p. 174, ed. R.C. Blockley, *Arca* 17 [*The History of Menander the Guardsman*] (Liverpool 1985) [henceforth: Menander].

Theophylact Simocatta (who wrote around 640) indeed gives some precious, if confusing information about the origin of the Avars in the context of a description of a diplomatic exchange with a kha-gan of the Turks. The Turks, he writes, after their victory over the Hephthalites

enslaved the Avar nation. But let no one think that we are distorting the history of these times because he supposes that the Avars are those barbarians neighbouring on Europe and Pannonia, and that their arrival was prior to the times of the emperor Maurice. For it is by a mis-nomer that the barbarians on the Ister have assumed the appellation of Avars; the origin of their race will shortly be revealed. So, when the Avars had been defeated, some of them made their escape [to different places. Next, the Turkish kha-gan subdued the Ogurs,] one of the strongest tribes on account of its large population and its armed training for war [. . .] The earliest leaders of this nation were named Var and Chunni; from them some parts of those nations were also accorded their nomenclature, being called Var and Chunni. Then, while the emperor Justinian was in possession of the royal power, a small section of these Var and Chunni fled from that ancestral tribe and glorified their leader with the appellation of kha-gan. Let us declare, without departing in the least from the truth, how the means of changing their name came to them. When the Barselt, Onogurs, Sabir, and other Hun nations in addition to these, saw that a section of those who were still Var and Chunni had fled to their regions, they plunged into extreme panic, since they suspected that the settlers were Avars. For this reason they honoured the fugitives with splendid gifts and supposed that they received from them security in exchange. Then, after the Var and Chunni saw the well-omened beginning to their flight, they appropriated the ambassadors' error and named themselves Avars; for among the Scythian nations that of the Avars is said to be the most adept tribe. In point of fact even up to our present times the Pseudo-Avars (for it is more correct to refer to them thus) are divided in their ancestry, some bearing the time-honoured name of Var while others are called Chunni.¹⁰

Scholars have come up with various interpretations of this story, trying to detect the "true identity" of the Avars behind its narrative: the Avars were in fact Juan-Juan, Hephthalites, Ogurs or possibly other peoples. But Theophylact's account is more complex than that. Probably, the story is derived from the enemies of the Avars, the

¹⁰ Theophylactus Simocatta, *Historiae* 7,7–8, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig 1887) [henceforth: Theophylactus Simocatta].

Turks, who threatened to annihilate the Avars under their hooves and on one occasion strongly reproached the Byzantines for having concluded a treaty with the Avars.¹¹ Byzantine writers had little reason for sympathy with the Avars either. Thus, the account has a distinct anti-Avar flavour; the conclusion that they were in fact only Pseudo-Avars was surely intended as an insult, and Byzantine propaganda might have used it for that purpose. In fact, it is strangely reminiscent of the so-called *Namensatz* in the *Germania* of Tacitus which says that the Germani were given that name because people were afraid of a rather small group that had crossed the Rhine; this story may probably be explained in the context of the propaganda war around the revolt of Civilis.¹² Still, the basic outline of Theophylact's report is trustworthy, for it fits well with what we know about the construction of power and ethnic identity on the steppe. A few basic principles emerge very clearly from the story:

1. Many steppe empires were founded by groups who had been defeated in previous power struggles but had fled from the dominion of the stronger group. This is especially true for European steppe empires (the Hungarians also came to central Europe after defeat against the Pechenegs); the Carpathian Basin was ideally suited for protection against more powerful groups who dominated the central Asian steppes.
2. These groups usually were of mixed origin, and each of its components was part of a previous group. In the case of the Avars, the heterogeneous character of the new unit was conceived of as a dual structure, Var and Chunni, which was also reflected in the name Varchonitai; these in turn were supposed to have formed part of the Ogurs. But Theophylact also insists that only "a small section" of these Varchonitai started the Avar movement westward.
3. Crucial in the process was the elevation of a khagan, which signified a claim to independent power and an expansionist strategy. This group also needed a new name that would give all of its initial followers a sense of identity.

¹¹ Menander 19,1, p. 174.

¹² Tacitus, *Germania* 2, ed. A. Lund (Heidelberg 1988); for an overview of the debate, W. Pohl, *Die Germanen*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 57 (München 2000) pp. 54–6.

4. The name for a new group of steppe riders was often taken from a repertoire of prestigious names which did not necessarily denote any direct affiliation to or descent from groups of the same name; in the early middle ages, Huns, Avars, Bulgars, and Ogurs, or names connected with *-(o)gur* (Cutrigurs, Utigurs, Onogurs, etc.), were most important. In the process of name-giving, both perceptions by outsiders and self-designation played a role. These names were also connected with prestigious traditions that directly expressed political pretensions and programmes, and had to be endorsed by success. In the world of the steppe, where agglomerations of groups were rather fluid, it was vital to know how to deal with a newly-emergent power. The symbolical hierarchy of prestige expressed through names provided some orientation for friend and foe alike.¹³

Other gentes under Avar rule

A successful group could quickly grow as other groups joined it or were subdued. In the case of the Avars, this process of expansion may be reconstructed in some detail.¹⁴ In the course of their march along the northern shore of the Black Sea in the years 559/60, the Avars subdued the Cutrigurs, Utigurs, Zaloi, Sabirs, Antae and others. Whereas the Sabirs and the Antae maintained some independence until the beginning of the seventh century, the Cutrigurs and Utigurs disappeared. 10,000 Cutrigurs are mentioned for the last time as Avar subjects in 568. Before 582, Avar envoys repeatedly demanded the yearly subsidies that Byzantium had paid to the Utigurs for themselves. More central Asian warriors joined the khagan around 580; the sources name the three tribes of Tarniach, Zabender and Kotzagir, alleged to comprise 10,000 men each.¹⁵

Not all of these steppe warriors of different origin simply became Avars, although many of them did. Some ethnic divisions among them were maintained, while others faded away. The names of

¹³ For the origin of the Avars and its context, see Pohl, *Awaren*, pp. 18–43. For the practice of name-giving, H.-W. Haussig, *Die Geschichte Zentralasiens und der Seidenstraße in vorislamischer Zeit* (Darmstadt 1983).

¹⁴ For this and the following, Pohl, *Awaren* pp. 43–8; 225–36.

¹⁵ Theophylactus Simocatta 7,8.

specific groups already disappear from our quite extensive sources in the course of the late sixth century. Soon, a two-layered structure emerges: whereas the warrior elite of the khaganate were called Avars in the full sense, the less prestigious but still free warriors on horseback of largely eastern- or central-European origin (among them, Cutrigurs and Utigurs) came to be known as Bulgars. This name had already been attested to in the 480s along the lower Danube, when Theoderic the Great had defeated them.¹⁶ As Bulgars, they formed recognizable units within Avar armies or acted independently in numbers of a few hundred or thousand. This is repeatedly reported by Theophylact Simocatta and in the sources on the Avar siege of Constantinople in 626. After the siege failed, a Bulgar seems to have laid claim to the throne of the Avar khagan, but was defeated in a bitter civil war. 9,000 Bulgars with women and children fled to Bavaria where the Frankish king Dagobert allowed them to spend the winter. Soon, however, he ordered the Bavarians to massacre them, and only a group of about 700 men, women and children escaped under their duke Alcioeus, a story that Fredegar tells at some length.¹⁷ It seems that the same group later moved on, under a leader of the same name, to the Lombard kingdom, where they were accommodated in the duchy of Benevento.¹⁸ Other Bulgar groups are mentioned in different peripheral regions of the khaganate, especially on the Black Sea steppes, where Khan Kuvrat formed a powerful but short-lived Bulgar empire in the middle of the seventh century. A number of these Bulgars, under the leadership of Asparuch, established an independent khaganate on the lower Danube in the 680s.¹⁹

When the Avars invaded the Carpathian Basin in 567/68, several groups already settled there were drawn into the Avar orbit. Most notably, this included the Gepids whose kingdom the Lombards had destroyed in 567. A minority of them joined the Lombards on their way to Italy, some fled to the Byzantine Empire, but most of them

¹⁶ H. Wolfram, *Die Goten. Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts* (3rd edn., Wien-München 1990) pp. 276–7; P.J. Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford 1996) p. 162.

¹⁷ Fredegar, *Chronicon* 4,72, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SSrM 2 (Hannover 1888).

¹⁸ Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 5,29, ed. L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, MGH SSrL (Hannover 1878).

¹⁹ J. Shepard, “Slavs and Bulgars”, *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2: 700–900, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge 1995) pp. 228–48.

remained settled in separate villages under Avar rule.²⁰ They are mentioned repeatedly as forces of considerable strength in Avar armies. Not all Gepids, however, took part in war, even if it was at their doorstep. In 599, when a Byzantine army victoriously marched along the Tisza river, deep within the Avar heartland, they chanced upon three Gepid villages. Although just a few days after a great battle had been fought in the vicinity, the villagers were caught completely unawares. They had been feasting and were slaughtered by the Byzantines in their sleep at dawn.²¹ The position of subdued *gentes* in the Avar empire, therefore, was not necessarily the same for all. Some Gepids evidently took the opportunity to join the khagan's army to improve their lot, while others lived peacefully as peasants. Another group of (at least partly) pre-Avar inhabitants living under Avar rule in Pannonia emerges from the archaeological material: the Romano-barbarian population at Keszthely, who maintained their own style of craft for centuries (see Falko Daim's contribution).

Especially in the early period, the Avar empire provided room for a variety of groupings and communities. Many of these component groups seem to have been less coherent than under the rule of Attila, who had encouraged royal leadership among his subject peoples, such as the Goths, Gepids, Sciri and others, and thus reinforced their identity. The archaeological evidence seems to reflect both the common social and cultural space created by the khaganate and the wide range of warrior groups it encompassed. Many of these groups were rather small and mobile, as their scattered graves indicate. It is important to note that cultural differences among the inhabitants of the Carpathian Basin under the early Avars that emerge from the archaeological record do not neatly coincide with ethnic divides recorded in the written sources in some cases. Especially the spectacular finds of Zamárdi or of the "Keszthely Culture" in Pannonia do not express separate ethnic identities, although they differ from

²⁰ W. Pohl, "Die Gepiden und die *Gentes* an der mittleren Donau nach dem Zerfall des Attilareiches", *Die Völker an der mittleren und unteren Donau im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert*, ed. H. Wolfram and F. Daim, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 145 (Vienna 1980) pp. 239–305. A monograph about *Die Langobarden* is in preparation. See also id., "The Empire and the Lombards: treaties and negotiations in the sixth century", *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. id., *The Transformation of the Roman World 1* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1997) pp. 75–134.

²¹ Theophylactus Simocatta 8,3,11–13.

the standard early Avar culture that quickly spread across the Carpathian Basin and some adjacent areas.

Minorities and ethnic groups under Avar rule were neither fully absorbed into an Avar culture and ethnic identity, nor did they simply remain as they were. The Gepids, for instance, are still attested to at the end of Avar rule, after 250 years. Others became part of new regional groups that were accepted to a certain degree, as a remarkable story in the *Miracula Demetrii*, dated to the 680s, relates.²² The descendants of Roman prisoners that had been settled in the old province of Pannonia achieved their freedom by participating in Avar campaigns as warriors; then they mixed with Bulgars and Avars so that in time they came to be recognized as a new people. Thus, the khagan sent them a leader, the Bulgar Kuver. As the Romans still nourished the hope of return to their ancient homelands in the Balkans, the new group rebelled, and successfully emigrated to Byzantine territory. There, they were perceived as Sermesianoï Bulgars, the Bulgars from Sirmium. Kuver planned a surprise attack on the city of Thessalonica which, however, failed, and the Sermesianoï dispersed; their core was accepted as a federate unit into the Byzantine army. The story reveals an interesting paradox. The oral traditions of the Romans living in captivity, “the knowledge of their origins and the way of life according to the customs of the Romans”, served as a motivating myth for the formation of a new group of steppe warriors who broke away from the dominant steppe empire of the region to form an independent power. They received a name from the Byzantines who perceived them as Bulgars, as warriors who left the Avar empire were often called. To affirm their position and their identity, they needed a decisive victory. But even in defeat, they represented a military force that was of value to the victorious Byzantines who included them in their army. In many respects, Byzantines and steppe empires played by the same rules. The ways to control and direct military power and to integrate ethnic groups were similar on both sides. The zone of contact and conflict was not characterized by the neat juxtaposition of a universal Christian empire and barbarian ethnic states. A group of Byzantines could

²² *Miracula Sancti Demetrii* 2,5, ed. P. Lemerle, 2 vols. [*Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slavs dans les Balkans*] (Paris 1979/81) vol. 1, pp. 222–34; Pohl, *Awaren*, pp. 278–81.

become a *gens* among others and even be perceived as barbarians, and Bulgars could be received in the Byzantine army although they behaved like barbarians.

Avars and Slavs

The most important ethnic group to live under Avar rule were the Slavs. This is also the most problematic example; the relationship between Avars and Slavs was among the most fiercely-discussed topics in older scholarship. Recently, debate has been reopened on the fundamental question of the ethnogenesis and expansion of the Slavs. The traditional view was that the Slavs are descended from an *Urvolk* that for many centuries lived somewhere north-east of the Carpathians and for some reason began to spread rapidly after c. 500 A.D. because it had become so populous. Usually, these earliest Slavs are identified with the Venethi that Tacitus locates along the eastern frontiers of the Germania.²³ At first sight, this seems very likely because German speakers called (and in some regions still call) Slavs *Ven(e)di*, *Wenden*, or similar. But the analogous German name for their western and southern, Romance-speaking neighbours, *Walchen*, *Val(a)chi*, *Wallones*, Welsh or the like, is derived from the *Volcae*, a people that had nothing to do with these peoples. The hypothesis of an ancient Slavic people that spread through migration has always appealed to Slav nationalists, and is still widely held, but there is little sound evidence to recommend it. Most of all, it fails to make plausible why a regional and hitherto virtually unknown group could take over almost the whole of eastern and east central Europe in a relatively short period from c. 500 to c. 650 A.D. The extraordinary phenomenon that has to be accounted for is that much of the eastern half of the continent became thoroughly Slavicized whereas the more spectacular

²³ Even recently, P. Dolukhanov, *The Early Slavs. Eastern Europe from the Initial Settlement to the Kievan Rus* (London-New York 1996), begins Slavic history in the neolithic, in complete contradicition to the sources that only mention them from the sixth century A.D. For a history of views on Slavic origins see F. Curta, *The Making of the Slavs. History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500–700* (Cambridge 2001) pp. 6–36; id., “From Kossinna to Bromley: ethnogenesis in Slavic archaeology”, *On Barbarian Identity-Critical Approaches to Ethnogenesis Theory*, ed. A. Gillett (Turnhout forthcoming); P. Barford, *The Early Slavs* (Ithaca 2001) pp. 1–26.

migrations in western Europe did not lead to a Germanization of larger areas, with the exception of a strip of land west of the Rhine and south of the upper Danube.

Obviously, the key to Slavicization is not Slavic power. Slavs did not spread by expanding their dominion but under the direct or indirect rule of Avars, Bulgars and other lords. I have therefore tried to explain the expansion of the early Slavs by the attraction of a social and cultural model that implied a lower level of social differentiation and surplus production than both the Byzantine Empire and the barbarian kingdoms. Sixth- and seventh-century Byzantine sources indicate that Slavs, unlike all others, did not enslave their prisoners of war but allowed them to settle freely among them. There is some incidental evidence that the inhabitants of Slavic villages north of the lower Danube were of quite mixed origin. This way of life may have appealed to the rural population in a wide area.²⁴ Their produce had previously gone to the Byzantine state, the Church and/or barbarian warlords, whose abilities to offer protection in return had seriously declined.²⁵ Linguistic Slavicization may have only come later.²⁶

A different, but not necessarily incompatible hypothesis has recently been proposed by Florin Curta. In the sixth century, he argues, Slav was a name given on the basis of wholesale perceptions by the Byzantines. Slavic identity then developed from confrontation with the Empire along the lower Danube; a common Slavic culture may have only developed later. The idea that the Slavs were “invented” by the Byzantines is perhaps harder to argue than the comparable case that, according to a now widely held opinion, Caesar “invented” the *Germani* as an all-inclusive group. Self-perception as Slavs is attested rather early, whereas during the middle ages there is hardly

²⁴ Pohl, *Awaren*, pp. 94 ff., esp. pp. 125–7; see Maurikios, *Strategikon* 11,4, ed. G.T. Dennis, transl. E. Gamillscheg, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 17 (Wien 1981); Theophylactus Simocatta 6,8.

²⁵ See also J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Cambridge 1990).

²⁶ It is puzzling that linguistic reconstructions of Old Common Slavonic have problems to reach back beyond the 8th century; see H.G. Lunt, “Common Slavic, Proto-Slavic, Pan-Slavic; what are we talking about?”, *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics* 41 (1997) pp. 7–67; H. Birnbaum, “Von ethnolinguistischer Einheit zur Vielfalt: die Slawen im Zuge der Landnahme der Balkanhalbinsel”, *Südostforschungen* 51 (1992) pp. 1–19; Z. Gołab, *The Origins of the Slavs. A Linguist's View* (Columbus Ohio 1992).

any proof for a “Germanic” identity.²⁷ But Byzantine perceptions in the sixth century did not necessarily correspond to Slavic self-identification; the sources variously identify or link the Slavs with Huns, Sporoi, or Getae, and treat Slavs and Venethi in some cases as two different peoples and in other instances as one and the same.²⁸

In any case, it is evident that Avar rule and the spread of Slavic population were closely interrelated. On the one hand, the early Avars depended for some of their subsistence on Slavic agriculture, and on the other hand, they protected Slavic settlers from foreign interference. Slavs also played an important part in Avar armies, especially as foot soldiers and boatsmen. For quite some time, however, the Avar khaganate blocked, as far as it could, attempts to form independent Slavic powers. On the lower Danube, this was an interest they shared with the Byzantines (an Avar attack in 578, for instance, was supported by Byzantium). In the course of the seventh century, the decline of Avar rule made the formation of regional Slavic powers on the western periphery of the Avar empire possible. The first one was Samo’s kingdom, probably in Bohemia; another one was the Carantanian duchy in modern Carinthia and Styria. The relationship between Avars and Slavs was thus dynamic and oscillated between Avar dominion, competition and interdependence. But still, Slavic peasants provided an agricultural basis for the Avars which replaced the more differentiated late Roman infrastructure preserved in other parts of the post-Roman world.

Gens and regnum

So what was the relationship between *gens* and *regnum*, or in this case, *gens* and the khaganate, in the Avar empire? The problem is made more complex by the wide range of meanings that ethnic terms had in the world of the steppe. One and the same name, such as Huns

²⁷ Pohl, *Germanen*; self-designation as Slavs is found, for instance, in the Russian *Nestorchronik* 1,27–36, ed. L. Müller (München 2001) p. 21.

²⁸ Sporoi and Huns: Procopius, *Wars* 7,14, ed. J. Haury, transl. H.B. Dewing, vol. 3–5, Loeb Classical Library (London-Cambridge Mass. 1953–54); Getae: Theophylactus Simocatta 3,4; 6,6; 7,2. Sclaveni and Venethi: Jordanes, *Getica* 23,119, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 5,1 (Berlin 1882); *Sclavi coinomenti Vinedi*: Fredegar, *Chronicon* 4,48.

or Avars, could have several meanings. In more or less the modern sense, it could denote a steppe empire that Byzantine (or other) historians knew by that name, which probably coincided with its self-definition. Second, the name could indicate the ruling elite of that empire who distinguished themselves in this way from their subjects. Third, in a slightly more general sense, the name referred to the armed and free population of that empire, except, perhaps, those who belonged to established sub-groups who had joined the army as recognizable units. So far, these three meanings more or less correspond to the significance of ethnic terms in other regna (for instance, the Franks).²⁹ The name mainly indicated those who acted together as Avars. But in the steppe, the same or very similar names could also cover other groups in different parts of the steppe, and somehow suggest a symbolic union of all those who had appropriated this tradition. In this sense, it could also be interpreted as a blood relationship, however fictional (as in the case of the Bulgar myth of five brothers found in ninth-century Byzantine chronicles).³⁰ Finally, certain groups or families within a people could claim to be specifically descended from an eponymous ancestor, such as the Chunni among the Varchonitae/Avars, which probably implied a claim to higher prestige. Ethnic identities pervaded the whole society vertically, from ruling elites to subject groups, and the same names could be used for self-designation or description of groups of very different size. Even in early-medieval western Europe, ethnic groups were not peoples in the modern sense, well-delineated units that integrated societies from top to bottom; for steppe peoples, such a notion would be totally inappropriate.

Still, ethnic identity formed a fundamental part of the political language, and was also used to define power and those who held it on every level. The few short Avar runic inscriptions found so far have (in spite of several attempts) not yet been deciphered, which is

²⁹ I.N. Wood, "Defining the Franks: Frankish Origins in Early Medieval Historiography", *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. S. Forde, L. Johnson and A.V. Murray, Leeds Texts and Monographs. New Series 14 (Leeds 1995) pp. 47–57; W. Pohl, "Franken und Sachsen: die Bedeutung ethnischer Prozesse im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert", 799—*Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn. Beiträge zum Katalog der Ausstellung Paderborn 1999*, ed. C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff (Mainz 1999) pp. 233–6.

³⁰ Nikephoros Patriarcha, *Breviarium Historicum* 33, ed. C. Mango (Washington DC 1990); Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 6171, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig 1883).

partially due to the fact that we cannot be certain what language the Avars spoke (or used for inscriptions).³¹ Seventh- and eighth-century Turkic and Bulgarian inscriptions indicate that power was primarily understood as power over peoples. There is no doubt that Byzantine and western observers also perceived it that way, and this shared understanding was perfectly suitable for complex negotiations with the Avars. In the case of the Avars, furthermore (and quite unusually), the Avar khaganate and Avar identity were so closely related that one could not exist without the other. If we follow Theophylact's report discussed above, the adoption of an ethnic name, Avars, coincided with the elevation of a khagan. Avar identity expressed a political programme and a claim for power; it worked in the way of a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is remarkable that we know only a single khagan's name, that of the first ruler Baian who seems to have died shortly after the occupation of Sirmium in 582. All other khagans were only known by their title, in Byzantine and western sources alike. This is not due to a lack of information; Theophylact could otherwise go into surprising detail, and in some occasions gave the names of even minor Avar commanders. This omission can only mean that the ideology of Avar rulership obliterated the individuality of the khagan; it was inconceivable that there was another khagan. In the late Avar period, a whole hierarchy of titles is attested in Frankish sources; with all of them, the title is used without a name. Only the Christian petty khagans after 800 were mentioned with their names, but by this time, these were Christian names. Even though the hierarchy changed in the course of Avar history, it formed the backbone of Avar identity to the end.

How directly Avar identity was linked to the khaganate becomes evident from a number of observations. In a way specific to the Avars, the khaganate retained a monopoly over the name. We have no evidence for Avars outside the khaganate, and that is extremely unusual. All other important ethnic groups of the period are also attested to in the Roman and Byzantine army, but Avars are not. There is one Byzantine officer with the same name as a commander of an Avar army in the late sixth century, Apsich, but in Byzantium

³¹ Pohl, *Awaren* pp. 223–4; attempt to decipher Avar inscription: A. Róna-Tas, "Die Inschrift des Nadelbehälters von Szarvas (Ungarn)", *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* N.F. 9 (1990) pp. 1–30; language of the Huns unidentifiable: G. Doerfer, "Zur Sprache der Hunnen", *Central Asiatic Journal* 17 (1973) pp. 1–50.

he was called a Hun.³² This does not necessarily mean that no Avar individuals joined the Byzantine side. There was even an Avar magus, or high priest, the Bookalabras, who flew to Constantinople after an affair with one of the khagan's wives; Theophylact presented him as "a Scythian", noting that "he suborned seven of the subject Gepids, and made his way towards his ancestral tribe. These are the Huns, who dwell in the east as neighbours of the Persians and whom it is more familiar for the many to call Turks."³³ If the Bookalabras had intimate access to one of the khagan's wives, he must have belonged to the Avar core group; however, Theophylact carefully avoided calling him an Avar, but, within a short narrative, referred to him as a Scythian, Hun, and Turk. The traditional labels Huns and Scythians were, of course, repeatedly used for the Avars; yet, characteristically, in the following passage of the Chronicle Theophylact presented the Avar ambassador Targitios simply as an Avar.

A similar phenomenon may be observed with warriors and peasants who emigrated from the Avar empire. Whoever migrated from the Avar empire came to be called a Slav if he settled in a rural community in the Slavic manner, for instance in the Peloponnes or in Dalmatia. If he lived as a warrior, conversely, he was perceived as a Bulgar. This is the case of the Alciocus/Alzeco group, or of Kuver's "Sermesianoï Bulgars" who included many Avars, as the *Miracula Demetrii* remembered; no Avars appear in the narrative after the group left the khaganate.³⁴ When, however, within the Avar empire, a Bulgar aspired to the office of the khagan, it was still the Avar khaganate (like the Rugian Erarich who became king of the Ostrogoths in the Gothic war).³⁵ After the Avars were subdued by the Franks, there were repeated efforts by Avar leaders to restore the *honor antiquus* of the khagan with Frankish support; and indeed, for a while, the Carolingians sustained a Christian khaganate in Pannonia. But when these efforts failed, the name disappeared completely from the sources. After 822, apart from reminiscences, there is no trace of the Avars.³⁶ This does not mean that the whole Avar

³² Theophylactus Simocatta 1,14,5; 2,3 (Apsich the Hun); cf. 8,5 (Apsich the Avar).

³³ Ibid. 1,8; transl. Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian*, p. 30.

³⁴ Pohl, *Awaren* pp. 99–100; 243–5; 278–81.

³⁵ Fredegar, *Chronicon* 4,72; Procopius, *Wars* 7,2.

³⁶ Pohl, *Awaren*, pp. 320–8.

population had been eradicated, but that Avar identity disappeared as it had come: with the “ancient honour” of the khaganate. “Gone like the Avars”, seems to have become proverbial among the Byzantines. Thus, it is likely that Avar identity served as an important cohesive factor within the Avar empire, but had no independent existence without it in central and eastern Europe.

Changes and continuity in the khaganate

Archaeological evidence can be interpreted as the remains of a symbolic language used to express identity (ethnic or other), although with great methodological caution. The Avars, with their extraordinary wealth of archaeological evidence, are in fact an interesting test case for this approach.³⁷ Current debate on the possibility to interpret archaeological cultures as indicators for ethnic identities has become rather controversial in recent years, especially in German-speaking countries. The methodological principle put forward by Gustaf Kossinna around 1900 that archaeological cultures necessarily corresponded to ethnic units has long been abandoned for a more pragmatic approach, although often with insufficient methodological debate. Around 2000, we are faced with the opposite assertion by some scholars: that archaeological cultures tell us nothing about ethnicity.³⁸ To spur methodological debate and overcome schematic arguments, this contention has to be taken seriously. But so far, it

³⁷ F. Daim, “Archaeology, ethnicity and the structures of identification. The example of the Avars, Carantians and Moravians in the eighth century”, *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. W. Pohl with H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World 2* (Leiden-New York-Köln 1998) pp. 71–94.

³⁸ S. Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie”, *Germania* 78 (2000) pp. 139–77. Some previous positions: H.J. Eggers, *Einführung in die Vorgeschichte* (München 1959); H. Härke, “All quiet on the western front? Paradigms, methods and approaches in West German archeology”, *Archaeological Theory in Europe. The Last Three Decades*, ed. I. Hodder (London-New York 1991) pp. 187–222; V. Bierbrauer, “Die Landnahme der Langobarden in Italien aus archäologischer Sicht”, *Ausgewählte Probleme europäischer Landnahmen des Früh- und Hochmittelalters. Methodische Grundlegendiskussion im Grenzbereich zwischen Archäologie und Geschichte* 1, ed. M. Müller-Wille and R. Schneider, *Vorträge und Forschungen* 41 (Sigmaringen 1993) pp. 103–72; U. Veit, “Ethnic concepts in German prehistory: a case study on the relationship between cultural identity and archaeological objectivity”, *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, ed. S. Shennan (London-New York 1989) pp. 35–56;

is mainly based on the cases of Franks and Alemanni where identification is indeed difficult, and a clear delineation should not be expected given the rather blurred and dynamic ethnic identities on both sides of the Rhine in the fourth and fifth centuries.³⁹ The Avars are a different case. We have quite precise information on the southern and western limits of the Avars' dominions, and about the core area of settlement in the plains of the Carpathian Basin; the chronological frame of the khaganate between 568 and 796 (with about a generation of scattered survivals) is also well established. The archaeological culture attested in this area at that given time is rather uniform in many respects, and can be connected with the Avar khaganate beyond any reasonable doubt.

Having said that, a few caveats have to be kept in mind. First, "Avar" archaeological culture cannot simply be identified with the extension of Avar ethnic identity in any strict sense; neither does it help to draw the boundaries of the Avar realm. Especially at the margins, finds of "Avar" type materials cannot serve as proof that individuals or local groups inhumed with them considered themselves as Avars, or lived under the khagan's rule. This is especially important for the northern and eastern periphery of the khaganate, where cultural influence and political power did not necessarily coincide. Falko Daim has demonstrated that the eighth-century "Avar" objects found in a Slavic context at Krungl and Hohenberg in modern Austria cannot serve as indicators of Avar rule or identity; some of them are in fact of Byzantine origin, but mainly preserved in Avar graves.⁴⁰ Second, within the cultural sphere of the khaganate, there was a considerable degree of diversity within the overall frame, especially in the early period, which is indicative of, but by no means co-extensive with, groups of non-Avar origin living under Avar rule. Third, the distribution of artefacts over wide areas need not denote

F. Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken*, F. Siegmund, *Alemannen und Franken*, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 23 (Berlin-New York 2000).

³⁹ Pohl, *Völkerwanderung*, pp. 165–75.

⁴⁰ F. Daim, "Byzantinische' Gürtelgarnituren des 8. Jahrhunderts", *Die Awaren am Rand der byzantinischen Welt. Studien zu Diplomatie, Handel und Technologietransfer im Frühmittelalter*, ed. id., Monographien zur Frühgeschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie 7 (Innsbruck 2000) pp. 77–204; id., "Byzantine belts and Avar birds. Diplomacy, trade and cultural transfer in the eighth century", *The Transformation of Frontiers— from Late Antiquity to the Carolingians*, ed. W. Pohl, I.N. Wood and H. Reimitz, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 10 (Leiden-Boston 2000) pp. 143–88.

actual migration, but can result from a variety of forms of communication that may be maintained over several generations.⁴¹ And finally, as Guy Halsall has stressed, ritual and representation used in burial often do not set out to demonstrate large-scale ethnic identities but rather social self-identification on a local level, especially among groups competing for prestige and power.⁴² This need not mean that ethnicity had no part in their symbolic competition, but it should warn us that the symbolic language of grave-goods and burial practices may be rather complex.

All of this does not rule out conceiving of a cultural history of the Avar empire on the basis of material remains; on the contrary, it makes such an effort much more interesting and complex because it allows us to reconstruct some of the ambiguities and contradictions that resulted in a dynamic development of Avar society. Culture should not be treated as a separate phenomenon but as an expression of society as a whole. This also means studying how Avar culture was linked to political power. If we follow Niklas Luhmann's striking definition, power is communication regulated by codes.⁴³ These codes are a cultural achievement, and so is their communication. In the case of the Avars, this language of power has left relatively few traces in written texts, for the speeches by the khagan and his envoys in the chronicles of Menander and Theophylact are literary creations, although surely on the basis of long experience with barbarian neighbours. Some of it can be reconstructed from the Avars' political actions and claims. But artefacts and rituals also

⁴¹ H.W. Böhme, "Kontinuität und Traditionen bei Wanderungsbewegungen im frühmittelalterlichen Europa vom 1.–6. Jahrhundert", *Archäologische Informationen* 19 (1996) pp. 89–103; H. Steuer, "Archäologie und germanische Sozialgeschichte. Forschungstendenzen in den 1990er Jahren", *Runische Schriftkultur in kontinental-skandinavischer und angelsächsischer Wechselbeziehung*, ed. K. Düwel (Berlin-New York 1994) pp. 10–55.

⁴² G. Halsall, *Early Medieval cemeteries: introduction to burial archaeology in the post-Roman West* (Glasgow 1995); F. Theuvs and M. Alkemade, "A kind of mirror for men: sword depositions in Late antique northern Gaul", *Rituals of Power. From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. F. Theuvs and J.L. Nelson, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 8 (Leiden-Boston-Köln 2000) pp. 401–76; see also B. Effros, "Dressing conservatively: a critique of recent archaeological discussions of women's brooches as markers of ethnic identity", *Gender and the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. L. Brubaker and J. Smith (Cambridge forthcoming), for a discussion of the gender perspective.

⁴³ N. Luhmann, *Macht* (Stuttgart 1975) p. 15: "Macht 'ist' codegesteuerte Kommunikation".

formed part of the communication in which power and identity were constantly re-negotiated within the Avar khaganate, and towards outsiders.

On the basis of such an approach, Falko Daim's synthesis in this volume provides interesting insights into the changes and developments in the khaganate. In spite of the methodological problems of harmonizing archaeological periodization with what is known about the history from written sources, the years 567/68 in the Carpathian Basin evidently constitute a clear *terminus post quem* for Avar burials. The basic continuity of the cultural language that drew the Avar "koiné" together corresponds to the continuity of the political system. Just as would be expected from historical sources, some elements of this archaeological culture can be traced as far as central Asia, many came from the steppes north of the Black Sea, but their synthesis was only achieved in the Carpathian Basin. Before 568, the Avars were a large but precarious accumulation of ambitious warriors temporarily united by a common purpose and following a leader whose victories had won him great prestige. Many of these victories, however, had been more symbolic than decisive, such as against the Franks near the Elbe in 566. In this case, the Franks had to supply the Avars with food after their defeat, a condition indicative of the difficulties the Avars found themselves in at the time.⁴⁴ Only settlement in the Carpathian Basin provided the basis for the construction of a stable Avar power.

It took more than a decade until the khaganate was well-established and had subdued the barbarians in and around the Carpathian Basin. Archaeological evidence supplements this picture in interesting ways. The Avars used Roman roads and remaining infrastructure (although they do not seem to have lived inside Roman towns and buildings). According to what has been found so far, larger settlements, if at all, were more common in Pannonia. The khagans accepted ethnic and cultural diversity and communication with neighbouring countries. This was not simply a case of tolerating a regional subject population that continued its lifestyle. The Keszthely culture, as the most obvious case, shows that a new Christian culture with late Roman and western barbarian flavour was actively encouraged

⁴⁴ Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 4,23; 4,29, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SSrM 1,1 (2nd edn., Hannover 1951).

in the region south-west of Lake Balaton; it was probably even reinforced by the settling of Christians from different parts in- and outside the khaganate there. Western influences, especially from Lombard Italy, continued. These cultural contacts correspond with the stable alliance with the Lombards and with the relatively peaceful relationship maintained with the Franks. Avar culture in the narrower sense was not homogeneous, either. Most notably, there is a great variety in pottery styles; types of houses and settlement patterns also varied until the end of the khaganate. Burial custom (for instance, the layout of cemeteries) likewise showed considerable regional differences. One example were the gallery graves (*Stollengräber*) in the eastern half of the Carpathian Basin, a regional custom maintained into the eighth century. These examples indicate that a homogeneous Avar culture was not created “bottom up”, but rather “top down”. It did not involve every-day culture as much as prestige objects, weapons and ornaments.

Crucial to an understanding of the Avar “culture of power” is the relationship of the khaganate with Byzantium, well-attested in written sources up to 626. Negotiations to settle the Avars in a Byzantine border province before 567 remained inconclusive; after the Avars had occupied Pannonia, integration in Byzantine territory was not an issue any more. Khagan Baian’s territorial claims for the city of Sirmium had strategic reasons; when Sirmium was taken after a long siege in 582, no attempt appears to have been made to maintain Roman-style civic life, and soon the city was more or less abandoned. Subsistence in the Carpathian Basin was based upon sedentary agriculture (not least, by Gepids and Slavs) and pastoralism. The Avars thus remained firmly outside the Roman order.⁴⁵ Still, they could not have done so without the help of Byzantium. Yearly subsidies, presents, ransom for prisoners and plunder brought about an enormous influx of riches. Archaeological evidence attests to this “Golden Age” in the Carpathian Basin. Finds of Byzantine coins are relatively rare (mostly as single coins deposited as “oboli” in graves).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See also A. Avenarius, “Struktur und Organisation der europäischen Steppen-völker”, *Popoli delle steppe: Unni, Avari, Magiari*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 35 (Spoleto 1988) pp. 125–50.

⁴⁶ É. Garam, “Die münzdatierten Gräber der Awarenzeit”, *Awarenforschungen* 1, ed. F. Daim, *Archaeologia Austriaca* 1. Studien zur Archäologie der Awaren 4 (Wien 1992) pp. 135–250.

Byzantine high-status artefacts, by contrast, are much more common, but a considerable part of the precious metals seems to have been melted down and used as raw materials by Avar and other goldsmiths.⁴⁷ The distribution of these riches seems to have remained chiefly under the control of the khagan. We do not have any written evidence for the way in which precious objects circulated among the Avars, but may safely hypothesize that gift exchange played an important part. We do know, however, that the khagans remained in control of a huge treasure until 795/96, when Charlemagne's armies seized most of it. Even a generation later, Einhard described the Avar treasure, which was "collected over a long time", and noted: "Human memory cannot remember that in any war fought against the Franks these were more enriched by booty".⁴⁸

Cultural developments in the seventh century, when written evidence becomes patchy, may be linked with some confidence to historical events, especially to the crisis that ensued after the siege of Constantinople in 626. This defeat resulted in civil war (the "Bulgar" revolt) and was in some way connected with the secession of Samo's Slavs, most likely, in Bohemia and perhaps also in Moravia, and of those in Carantania.⁴⁹ Many other steppe empires collapsed in such a situation, whereas the Avar empire was quite successfully transformed into a sedentary state for almost another two centuries. The Avar defeat also meant the end of the substantial influx of Byzantine subsidies (200,000 gold solidi in the years before 626); but the khagans kept control of the treasure acquired up to this point. It seems plausible to assume that without this treasure, there would have been no khaganate. The Avars are thus a curious case of a peripheral society that had lost most of its ties to the Mediterranean world upon which it had once depended, but still relied on the gains and exchanges from a distant past. For the cultural consequences of the crisis, Falko Daim has a very attractive hypothesis to offer in his contribution to this volume. In the second quarter of the seventh century, high-status objects used in "princely" burials such as Bócsa

⁴⁷ A. Kiss, "Die Goldfunde des 5.–10. Jahrhunderts im Karpatenbecken. Angaben zu den Vergleichsmöglichkeiten der schriftlichen und archäologischen Quellen", *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 18 (1986) pp. 105–45.

⁴⁸ Einhard, *Vita Karoli* 13, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SSrG 25 (6th edn., Hannover 1911).

⁴⁹ Pohl, *Awaren*, pp. 256–68.

and Kunbabony maintained their quality, but aimed for a distinctively non-Byzantine language of representation.⁵⁰ From the middle of the century, Byzantine objects returned to high-status graves (such as Ozora-Tótipusztá). The expedition of Constans II to Italy, but especially the foundation of the Bulgar empire on the lower Danube, may have contributed to renewed Byzantine interest in the Avars, although communication never reached the intensity it had before 626.

Written evidence for the whole period from 626 until the late eighth century is scarce, and transformations in the Carpathian Basin may only be reconstructed on the basis of archaeological evidence. Although regional diversity faded, it did not disappear; permanent settlements and cemeteries grew and indicate that the Avars adopted a sedentary way of life. Communication with the outside world did not stop altogether; some contacts (for instance, political exile of Lombards at the Avar court) are attested by written evidence, others (for instance to the Bulgar khaganate) by material traces. It would be fascinating to know what caused the changes in the symbolic language used in the eighth century; most notably, the appearance (and disappearance) of the griffin motif and of the animal combat scenes. These were worn on buckles throughout the khaganate and can literally be found in hundreds of graves. It is tempting to assume that they constituted an emblem connected with rulership ideology and/or ethnic identity; the griffin motif is attested in the culture of the steppe, but also well-known in Mediterranean art.⁵¹

In open contrast to its non-expansionistic, sedentary agricultural way of life, the political language underlined the steppe character of the khaganate. When the Franks arrived at the end of the eighth century, they encountered a number of titles and offices of central Asian origin: among them *tudun*, *tarkhan*, *kapkhan*, *iugurus*, and the title of the queen, *catun*. This type of hierarchy was unknown to the well-informed Byzantine sources of the earlier period, and we do not know when the new formal hierarchy was introduced. In any case, it means that right up to the end, the Avar state followed central

⁵⁰ E.H. Tóth and A. Horváth, *Kunbábony. Das Grab eines Awarenkhagans* (Kecskemét 1992).

⁵¹ F. Daim, "Der awarische Greif und die byzantinische Antike", *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern 2*, ed. id. and H. Friesinger, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse 204. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung 13 (Wien 1990) pp. 273–303.

Asian models and maintained a political structure that was completely different from that of its central European neighbours. Only in the Bulgar empire, some similar titles (but otherwise, a different hierarchy, with “khan” as the ruler’s title) are attested to in the sources.

The military strength of the Avar empire, however, had not been maintained in the long period of its relatively peaceful existence. Defeat against the Franks, or rather, the incapability to put up a serious defence, delegitimated the rule of the Avar *gens* so that the khaganate disappeared altogether. Whether Charlemagne’s wars exactly coincided with the end of Avar cemeteries, may perhaps be debated, as the synchronisation of archaeological evidence with the history of events in general. Especially in Pannonia, however, it does not seem plausible to assume that Avar ways of life could have continued undisturbed much after 800. The achievements of the khaganate are evident from the power vacuum that ensued in the Carpathian Basin throughout the ninth century.⁵² The “people that remained from Huns and Slavs in those parts”, as the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* puts it,⁵³ could not be organized in a sufficiently stable manner in spite of the efforts of the Franks. Bulgars and Moravians intervened repeatedly but could not establish lasting control either. Carolingian order in Pannonia finally collapsed when the Magyars arrived in the late ninth century and established another steppe empire in the Carpathian Basin. Once again, their state followed a non-Roman model, but relied on the riches of post-Carolingian Europe. Only gradually did Christian Europe come to control its ancient periphery of warriors.

⁵² Overview in H. Wolfram, *378–907: Grenzen und Räume. Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung*, Österreichische Geschichte 3 (Wien 1995) pp. 211–75.

⁵³ *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* 6, ed. F. Lošek, MGH Studien und Texte 15 (Hannover 1997): *populum qui remansit de Hunis et Sclavis in illis partibus*.

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REGNA AND GENTES: CONCLUSION¹

Inquiring into the relationship between the early medieval *gentes* and their (corresponding) *regna*, as has been attempted in this volume for each people and kingdom separately, is no doubt a crucial, but difficult enterprise. It is of importance because, at least in the eyes of the Roman contemporary authors, there were “peoples”, and there were “kingdoms” that were named after them; this close, but complex relationship between these two historical phenomena has, however, never been analysed more closely before. It is nevertheless a difficult and problematic question. Hence, it is no less complicated (and should be regarded as a preliminary venture) to attempt a comparative conclusion. It may be prudent, therefore, to recall the inherent problems first.

1. *Some inherent problems*

One of the problems concerns the *terminology* (modern and medieval) of the two central themes of this book. What is meant by a “people”? and what by a “kingdom”? The first question (“what is a people?”) is a relatively obvious problem nowadays as we have become aware of the historicity of peoples, and have hence become reluctant about acknowledging constant ethnic elements.² It seems to be even more difficult in Germany where, on the one hand, *Volk* has become burdened with ideologically incriminating connotations (though, in the final analysis, there is no real alternative to continuing to use

¹ A first draft and the final version of this conclusion was conceived by Hans-Werner Goetz. It owes much to both the group’s discussion in Bellagio and to the helpful remarks and additions made by Jörg Jarnut and the other contributors and respondents, particularly Evangelos Chrysos, Bonnie Effros, Wolf Liebeschuetz, Walter Pohl, Ian Wood and Barbara Yorke. I am grateful to Salina Braun, Barbara Cox and Ian Wood for stylistic advice. Responsibility for contents and wording of the final version and for any insufficiencies remain my own.

² Cf. the introduction, but also the introductory remarks of Wolf Liebeschuetz’s contribution.

this term), and on the other hand, there are subtle nuances in the terminological differentiations between *Stamm* (tribe), *Volk* (people) and *Völkerschaften* (an untranslatable expression). At least it is no longer common practice to speak of “tribes” with regard to the early medieval peoples because this would imply an “archaic” state, but also that “tribes” are still considered as part of an entire “people”. Another aspect of this problem is the relationship between “peoples” and “nation”. Whereas previous research has presupposed that peoples were the original communities and, consequently, that a “nation” was the (inevitable) product of the existence of a people, one of the results of a (predominantly German) project on the so-called “birth” of the European nations has been the recognition that it may well have been the other way round, that is, (new) peoples originating from the existence of (political) nations.

The other question (“what is a kingdom?”) is not as unreasonable as it may at first appear, and becomes more apparent if we consider the “date” of the origin of a kingdom (since there was no official proclamation, as there was, for example, in the establishment of a modern German Empire in 1871): from what time on, then, are we allowed to speak of a (“Germanic”) kingdom, or: when did a community begin to be a kingdom? With regard to the Franks, for example, this raises the question whether it was not until Clovis that the first kingdom emerged, or whether there were Frankish kingdoms before his reign (since we know that Roman authors refer to Frankish kings previous to Clovis)? It will probably be impossible to find common definitions for “people” and “kingdom” that all scholars agree upon. For simplicity’s sake we may just call the (somehow) “ethnic” and political bodies of the early medieval communities “peoples” and “kingdoms”, whilst constantly bearing in mind the ambiguity of these terms. This coincides with the equally ambivalent and wide-ranging meanings of Latin terms (such as *gens* or *natio*, or even *regnum*), and, of course, there is a vast gap or shift of meaning between early medieval and modern terminology. In considering “peoples” and “kingdoms” in the transformation of the Roman world, we have to consider both: early medieval and contemporary terms (and the way they relate to each other).

A second, closely related problem is the use and meaning of the terms “*ethnicity*” and “*ethnogenesis*” which are seen nowadays to denote a process, developing on a political and ideological level and sub-

ject to constant changes.³ Reinhard Wenskus's theories have meanwhile been met with almost general consent, though it has to be acknowledged that they are still embedded in a certain German tradition which exaggerates the "Germanic" character of those peoples.⁴ However, it has been accepted meanwhile that (ethnic) origin is just one element of ethnicity among others, such as language, culture, political cohesion, name, and identification, and that political factors should not be underestimated. The terms for most *gentes* (Franks, Goths, Vandals, Alamans, or Saxons) were "collective terms" for a "multiethnic" conglomeration. Another concept that had once been widely accepted, but is now being disputed again, is that a *gens* was built around some "kernel" (which Wenskus called a "nucleus of tradition", *Traditionskern*), whereas it is very difficult indeed to discern what this "nucleus of tradition" actually was. It should by no means be understood as a stable, unchanging myth, but has to be determined by looking into each the respective situation. Our problem is that we do not know anything substantial about possible "pre-ethnographic, non-Roman traditions" (W. Pohl).⁵ Maybe, though, as Wolf Liebeschuetz warns, we have moved too far from the aspect of ethnicity as common descent (or at least the common belief in it), a factor that no doubt had been overemphasized for a long time, particularly, but by no means exclusively, in Germany, and perhaps there is a tendency nowadays to minimize the relevance of ethnic continuity and of distinguishing between the various *gentes*. At least we should not forget that the early medieval authors believed in the common descent of their peoples. The problem, however, remains in finding methods or indicators on which a concept of ethnicity could be based. It is difficult, for example, to investigate the "psychological" depth of "ethnicity", the consciousness of (a certain) solidarity which no doubt played an important part. Meanwhile, we are also reluctant to assume that language was a reliable indicator;

³ Cf. the introduction, p. 8 above.

⁴ Wenskus' theory of ethnogenesis is, in fact, a general one and not one specific to "Germanic" ethnogenesis, as is illustrated by the contributions to non-Germanic peoples in this volume.

⁵ For the problem, see Walter Pohl, "Ethnicity, theory and tradition: a response" (forthcoming), who meanwhile rejects the theory of a "nucleus of tradition" completely. This position solves the inherent ideological problem, but it does not solve the problem of how to explain the coherence of these new expanding peoples.

when (new) “peoples” were formed from parts of other peoples, there must have been, at least for a while, a transitional period during which several languages were spoken. Finally, it seems almost impossible (and is sometimes ruled out altogether) to determine ethnicity from archaeological findings⁶ which mainly comprise grave goods and reflect only a small fragment of a past reality. Archaeology can only define “cultural groups”, and it has become questionable today (though it is still disputed) whether cultural groups may (if only very cautiously) be identified with peoples (an identification that, in the tradition of Gustav Kosinna, had been presupposed by former research). The distinguishing of *gentes* by archaeological means will only become possible if we define ethnicity according to archaeological criteria (though this would not facilitate a comparison of archaeological results with those of linguistic and historical studies). Moreover, “culture”, as recognizable in archaeological findings, was not a constant value, but a dynamic process (M. Schmauder). Changes in the material culture of the Avars, for example, cannot simply be explained by the migration of new groups (F. Daim). On the whole, the difficulty seems to lie in the fact that we are presupposing the existence of *gentes* when at the same time we are investigating their formation and their ethnogenetic background.

A third problem is the use and *meaning* of “Germanic” in this period.⁷ The more we have reflected upon this problem, the more our uncer-

⁶ Cf. G. Halsall, “Social identities and social relationships in early Merovingian Gaul”, *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. I.N. Wood, Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology 3 (San Marino 1998) pp. 141–65; S. Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie”, *Germania* 78 (2000) pp. 139–77; S. Lucy, *The Anglo-Saxon Way of Death* (Stroud 2000). Distribution maps of individual goods do not in themselves prove ethnic distinction, as is still often assumed and as M. Schmauder rightly observes.

⁷ There has been a long discussion in our group whether we should still continue to speak of “Germanic” peoples and kingdoms while being fully aware of the problems this poses: first, the misuse of so-called Germanic values in former German historiography, second, the result of modern research on ethnogenesis teaching us that the so-called Germanic peoples (as others) were mixed populations, third, consequently, the insight that nobody is able any more to define what “Germanic” really means, and fourth, and most convincingly, that in this volume we are not dealing exclusively with “Germanic” kingdoms. Naturally, these cannot be included under this term. Personally, however, I (H.-W. Goetz) reject the alternative term, “barbarian”, because it would just replace one ideology with another one. I also am reluctant to follow the modern trend of abandoning words once they have become problematic in one way or another. To replace them by other terms is no solution. I would rather advocate that we become aware of the problems inherent

tainty as to the actual meaning of the term “Germanic” has increased. Walter Pohl, therefore, begins his latest survey on this subject with the sentence: “A people that called itself Germanic possibly never existed.”⁸ This term may be applied, of course, to the language, and certainly the members of those peoples spoke their own vernacular language which may have given them a certain sense of unity, but, unfortunately, we have very little evidence of the language(s) used in the kingdoms considered here. It is impossible to say, therefore, which role the Germanic language played in the creation of the *regna*. And whereas former research (again mainly in Germany) has emphasized the “Germanic” character and mentality of the “barbarian” kingdoms and their constitution, recent studies have become wary of such an assumption: most elements that have been classified as being “Germanic” (for example the *Eigenkirchenwesen*, the *Gefolgschaft* and fidelity, or the “sib”, or “sept”) have turned out to be widespread among the early medieval societies—regardless of different ethnic origin, and many developments that were typical of the “Germanic” early Middle Ages had in fact already started in the Late Antique Roman Empire. A comparison between “Germanic” and other (“barbarian”) kingdoms, as, to a certain degree, has been intended here (namely with regard to the Avars, Celts, and Islamic Spain), seems to verify such an opinion. However, even in this respect it is important to remain aware of certain differences: the Avar world, as far as our questions are concerned, reveals significant similarities to the “Germanic” kingdoms, though it had a completely different political structure that followed central-Asian models (W. Pohl). In the case of the sub-Roman Britons, however, there were even considerable differences between the lowlands (with no kings at all, or at least none which are recorded as surviving into the seventh century) and the highlands, including Cornwall, Wales, the Pennines, Rheged and Strathclyde with sizeable kingdoms that lasted into the seventh century or even longer (A. Woolf). Moreover, we acknowledge anew the role and function of the Roman tradition—and of

in (all of) these terms. Thus, in so far as these peoples might be considered as being “Germanic” by their language and tradition, and also by a long historiographical custom, I prefer to maintain the traditional terminology using quotation marks to indicate the problems that are discussed in this passage.

⁸ W. Pohl, *Die Germanen*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 57 (München 2000) p. 1. For the ideological use and development of the term “Germanic”, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 1–7 and 45–65.

Christian ideology—in establishing and stabilizing the early medieval kingdoms, an aspect to be reverted to in a later passage. Apart from an older German “germanophile” tradition, there are also ideological “barriers” elsewhere which have to be refuted as being unhistorical. One example is the tendency of Spanish scholars to consider the Visigothic kingdom as the beginning of a Spanish “nation” (I. Velázquez), which has strong parallels to the older German conviction of having developed from entirely “Germanic” origins.

A fourth (and probably not the last) problem lies in our *sources*. We have to accept the fact that while comparing the different peoples and kingdoms, first, we are relying on completely different evidence for each, second, the sources do not lead us to a “past reality”, but are reflections of the personal and subjective perception of their authors, and third, until the end of the fifth century, our information is based almost exclusively on Roman sources which provide us with Roman perspectives, but lack any insight into how those peoples may have perceived themselves. Sources deriving directly from these peoples were written considerably later and do not provide contemporary insights; they are retrospective accounts dating from a period when the kingdoms were firmly established, such as Gregory of Tours’ chronicles about the Franks, written about 590, or, as an extreme case, Paul the Deacon’s reports about the Langobards, written probably shortly before 796 (and even these early medieval writers continued to use the same terminology, although not necessarily with exactly the same meaning). And, of course, in each case we have to bear in mind the intent behind each script (*causa scribendi*) and the “horizon of knowledge” of each chronicler or author. A comparable problem is inherent in the archaeological evidence which consists mainly of grave goods, whereas there is comparatively little evidence which could throw a light on the settlements themselves. Grave goods, however, are as much a reflection of the concept of “the other world” as they are a mirror of earthly society. Moreover, archaeological evidence, rather than giving an impression of stability, is equally suggestive of dynamic changes (M. Schmauder).

Resulting from all these problems, the central question of this volume cannot be answered directly but has to be tackled from different angles and by different approaches. From an academic perspective, it can be seen from the historian’s, the archaeologist’s and the linguist’s point of view. Most of the contributors to this volume are historians, some are archaeologists (and some both), two are linguists,

and it is a great help that at least some *regna* (Franks, Avars) have been dealt with by both historians and archaeologists. The problem of language and also place-names has been a central point in at least two papers (I. Velázquez, A. Woolf), but has been omitted or only marginally touched on in the others. With regard to the subject-matter, there are several “levels” which lend themselves to dealing with the problem: first, the political level of the historic development; second, the level of peoples and ethnogenesis; third, the level of terminology and contemporary perceptions of the authors of our sources; and fourth, the level of modern theory (of ethnogenesis). Although these levels cannot be separated completely in the process of research, it is advisable to remember which level we are talking (or writing) about at any moment. Finally, a “conclusion” naturally and necessarily tends to generalize. But we should not forget that *regnum* had a history of its own, or, as Ian Wood writes, “each state was created in different circumstances [. . .] and [. . .] ended in different circumstances”.

2. *The relationship between gentes and regna I:
Were there peoples before kingdoms?*

Judging by the names of peoples used in the Roman sources, we might get the impression that some of the “Germanic” peoples dealt with here, such as the Vandals, the Langobards and the Goths, go back a very long way (having already been mentioned by Tacitus and his contemporaries). In these cases, however, we know that far-ranging migrations took place between the first reference in the first or second century and the establishment of kingdoms in the early fifth (Goths and Vandals) or even sixth century (Langobards). It has been believed—both in the Middle Ages and in modern times—that (the) Goths had wandered possibly from Scandinavia to the Black Sea and later on to southern Gaul and Spain (Visigoths) or to Italy (Ostrogoths) respectively; (the) Vandals migrated from Silesia to Spain and, after a brief period of 20 years, further to Africa, (the) Langobards moved from the lower Elbe to the Danube and, soon afterwards, to Italy, and there were no doubt migrations from the Continent to England. In all these cases, we may assume that it was not whole communities, but only parts of these that migrated, and that the migrations were not one great systematic movement but consisted of

many small wanderings, and, in some cases, there is even reason to doubt the historicity of these migrations at all. We can, however, be relatively certain that these later “peoples”, who had retained their original name, meanwhile had changed their (ethnic) character and structure completely during the Migration period. The Ostrogoths who conquered Italy, for example, had been a comparatively recent formation that was not united until the reign of Valamer (P. Heather). The Burgundians of the fourth century lived in very different circumstances from the surviving Burgundians of the fifth century settled around Sapaudia (I. Wood) whilst the Angles, Saxons and Jutes in Britain who were still bearing these names turned out to be newly defined peoples (B. Yorke). The same name does not necessarily mean a continuity of the same people, but there must have been at least some bond (or collective memory) that still allowed them to use the same denomination. The prehistory of these peoples, therefore, may be obscure, but it is not insignificant.⁹ The fact that a new name does not necessarily imply the emergence of completely new peoples has to be taken into consideration; it can equally lead to the conclusion that decisive changes took place. Most of these peoples seem to have been a conglomeration of smaller peoples or tribes, such as the Alamans, the Franks, or the Saxons, expressions that emerge in the course of the third century. The changing of names should be regarded as an important issue even though we do not know if these terms were innovative expressions or if, previous to this period, they had signified just one (name-giving) part of the later people.¹⁰ Such a conclusion might be true for the Bavarians who were to form a (new) people in parts of the formerly Roman provinces of Raetia and Noricum at a time that cannot be fixed precisely, but was clearly not before the second half of the sixth century (M. Hardt). (The endless discussion about the origin of the Bavarians becomes less significant once we acknowledge that they, too, consisted of various communities.) It remains difficult to recognize what it was that held these peoples together or to what extent they regarded themselves

⁹ This argument is emphasized by Wolf Liebeschuetz.

¹⁰ For a theory of these collective terms cf. Karl Strobel, *Die Galater. Geschichte und Eigenart der keltischen Staatsbildung auf dem Balkan des hellenistischen Kleinasien* 1 (Berlin 1996) pp. 131 ff., who compares the ancient peoples with the Germanic peoples. Strobel believes that these peoples' names were their own before they were adopted by others.

as (ethnic) units and developed an ethnic identity. Although we may assume that they shared some kind of solidarity and cohesion,¹¹ it remains uncertain on what elements these were based or if such elements were of greater import than the interests of the individual (W. Liebeschuetz). In most cases, we lack clear indications either of a common religious cult or of a common political leadership. Nevertheless it has to be borne in mind that the Roman (and later on also other) sources perceived all these communities as being peoples (*gentes*) that could be comprehended under one collective name, without making great differences as to their age and origin. From the Roman perspective, there were no great differences between “Germanic” and other non-Roman peoples who were all considered to be “barbarian”. If differences were made at all they were not considered of great relevance (and the term *Germani* was in fact used extremely rarely by the authors).¹² Equally, in the (later) early medieval tradition, there were also *gentes* before there were kings, as in the case of the Franks or the Langobards who instituted a king (J. Jarnut). Similarly, at a later period, Spanish Christian chronicles, such as the “Chronicle of 754”, perceived the Arabs who had conquered Spain as a *gens* which was usually distinguished from the “Moors” in North Africa. They not only described the new realm with the same words, *regnum* and *gens*, and with expressions typical of Christian kingdoms (as if regarding the influx merely as another migration), they even failed to comment on any signs of distinctions between the inhabitants and the newcomers; in fact, they did not even mention the difference in religion in connection with the conquest of Spain, although they knew, for example, that the Saracens who had defeated the Emperor Heraclius had a new religion (A. Christys). Moreover, it seems that the groups which were serving in the Roman army

¹¹ This is emphasized by Wolf Liebeschuetz.

¹² Wolf Liebeschuetz commented on this passage that there was little doubt that all the “Germanic” tribes had common characteristics, besides their language, but that there seemed to be little evidence that they themselves were conscious of this, although it must have made communication between different “Germanic” peoples much easier. This view, however, is not shared by everybody, and certainly many features that were characterized as specifically “Germanic” by former research have to be regarded either as “barbarian” or even as “late antique”, although, as Liebeschuetz argues, Romans that had lived among or campaigned against these peoples noticed that they were different, for example, from the Gauls, but that they shared certain cultural characteristics among themselves.

experienced a stronger solidarity with the Romans than with their own peoples, even to the extent of facing them in battle (which frequently occurred).

Evidently then “peoples” existed on Roman soil before the establishment of large kingdoms that were named after them, however tenuous and prone to change these communities may have been,¹³ and it also seems obvious, at least in many cases, that they were not united by a common leadership before that time. On the contrary, the reports on these peoples suggest that they did not act as a single unit, but that the political and military actions that have been alluded to in various sources were carried out by smaller groups (for example, by Franks but not by “the” Franks). Nevertheless there were kings even in the earlier history of these peoples, and in most cases we have a far clearer concept of these kings than we have of the peoples themselves: The Langobards, contrary to the statements of a later tradition, were probably ruled by kings from the beginning of their historical existence and possibly united even in these early times (J. Jarnut). This may have been an exception to the rule, but going by the Roman sources at least there were other peoples who had their own “kings”: before Clovis, the Franks were ruled by several kings who governed smaller territories (H.-W. Goetz), other marauding groups, such as the Visigoths and also the Vandals, were more or less united under military kings (*Heerkönige*), and also the Avars were associated from their historical beginnings with a kaganate (W. Pohl). There were even indications, though not in all peoples, of a dynastic hereditary kingship (such as, above all, the Merovingians of Tournai, the Vandals under Geiseric’s clan, but also the so-called Ostrogothic “Amals”, the Visigothic “Balths”, or the Burgundian “Gibichungs”). Such dynasties could, however, take on different forms: e.g. as the solidarity of sons (or relatives) but often enough the succession was contested by the sons or brothers of the last king.¹⁴ Some of these kings had a double function, serving as *magistri militum* in the Roman army besides being leaders of their

¹³ This is not a contradiction to the fact that barbarian troops could be a great threat to the Roman Empire, but Alamans who threatened Rome, or Goths who marauded through the Empire, simply were not “the” Alamans or Goths but single groups under individual leaders.

¹⁴ Wolf Liebeschuetz argues that the fact that a people lacked a dynasty was a stronger indication of tribal cohesion than their having one because in this case they depended on their own sense of oneness to unite under a single new ruler,

peoples (or part of their peoples). In some cases, as with Theoderic, the Roman military function seems to have been closely linked with the establishment of a "Germanic" kingdom (even if, as Wolf Liebeschutz argues with regard to Theoderic, he was given a function by the Emperor only in order to be rid of him). Moreover, there was a certain degree of Romanization in these leaders as well as their soldiers and perhaps also in the population of these "barbarian" peoples (for example, the Franks in Gaul, the Ostrogoths in Italy, the Vandals, Alans and Sueves in Spain, the Visigoths in Spain, or the Burgundians); a Romanization that derived from military service in the Roman army, proximity to the Roman Empire, settlement on Roman soil, and cultural influence. Thus, many of the immigrants were not strangers, but already Romanized when migrating into the Empire, a process that was continued in the "barbarian" kingdoms. (It is striking that, later on, we have a similar situation when it was no longer the Romans, but the Franks who were the "model" for new peoples: In Bavaria, for example, the role played by the duke with regard to the Frankish king is comparable with the role of the *magistri militum* towards the Roman Emperor.) The new barbarian peoples that had now become "civilized" and orthodox might even have considered themselves as the representatives of an ancient Roman *Romanitas*, like the Visigoths in Spain according to Isidore's *Historia Gothorum* (I. Velázquez).

Thus we know that there were peoples before the establishment of greater realms and that in many cases they were already led by kings; nevertheless, there are difficulties in "defining" them distinctly. Little can be discerned about the early peoples by way of archaeological evidence (from grave goods, costumes or weapons), and the same applies to their customs and habits which do not reveal clear ethnic distinctions, resulting in a degree of uncertainty regarding their ethnogenesis. The Franks, for example, are not discernible as an archaeological (or cultural) unit, that is, they are not distinguishable *as* Franks, but at least there seems to be sufficient evidence of an (increasing) non-Roman settlement in northern Gaul (which probably was mainly Frankish). And yet even in this respect it is not easy to discern "non-Roman" settlement archaeologically since most objects

whereas the dynasties of the Goths were in fact short-lived, but given invented retrospective pedigrees.

buried as grave goods were of Roman craftsmanship.¹⁵ Archaeologically, the Avars were (and always remained) a heterogeneous conglomeration of various groups with local or regional traditions. From the beginning there were various underlying influences, from Byzantium as well as from the West, and yet their way of life seems to have remained unaltered (F. Daim). Apparently these peoples embodied “mixed cultures” from the beginning (a statement that corresponds neatly with the modern understanding of ethnogenesis), and it seems that acculturation played an important part as can be clearly observed in the case of the Franks in Gaul (M. Schmauder). Nevertheless, we may distinguish between different phases when considering these peoples (or their ethnogenesis) although it remains difficult to say if similar phases can be applied to different peoples. We may clearly discriminate between the early Vandals in Silesia and those in Spain in the early fifth century (even though we are unable to say what differences occurred during the migration of Silingi and Hasdingi from Silesia to Spain). The same can be said about the situation in Africa after Geiseric’s conquests, but it is hard to deduce the degree of impact these phases had on the ethnogenetic development of this people. For lack of evidence, it is also difficult, or nearly impossible, to make statements about a “gentile” identity of these peoples (a phrase borrowed from the German term “*gentile Identität*” in the sense of ethnic identity, whilst at the same time acknowledging and emphasizing the fact that the peoples this term refers to were not really “ethnic” units).¹⁶ It is equally difficult to make any conclusive statement about their common origins, since the written *Origines gentium* (such as the Frankish Trojan myth) deviated to a high degree from historical facts, and in addition were handed down at a later period. Thus they are good indicators of later traditions, but ones

¹⁵ Thus Guy Halsall, in a forthcoming article of the Transformation of the Roman World-series. M. Schmauder still retains the traditional view that the abandonment of burials with grave goods follows the “Roman model”, which is probably true on a large scale (and can actually be regarded more as a “Christian” than a “Roman” model), although both evidently became increasingly intertwined.

¹⁶ There has been a discussion in our group whether it is appropriate to use terms such as “gentile” which might cause misunderstandings, but knowing that, first, alternative terms, and primarily “ethnic” would lead to more misunderstandings, and, second, one inevitably has to “define” these words in some way, I decided to keep “gentile” as a term directly referring to *gentes* (which were not, or at least not necessarily, “ethnic” units).

without great value with regard to the early peoples (see § 7 below). In conclusion, we are forced to accept the existence of early peoples, without being able to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of their nature and without being able to define them as political communities until such time that these peoples turned into kingdoms, which was obviously a decisive factor (see § 4 below). This is confirmed by Arab Spain where, at variance with the Arab point of view, the new (Islamic) “kingdom” was obviously of greater importance to the Christian perception than the new, foreign people (A. Christys). We have to ask, however, if there really was such a development from “people” to “kingdom”, or if the establishment of kingdoms was the consequence of some political formation under the reign of a king, or even if the kingdom (or people) were those prepared to follow or accept the authority of a king.

3. *The relationship between gentes and regna II:
The development from “peoples” to “kingdoms”*

The “development” from being a “people” to becoming a kingdom was a consequence of the collapse of the West Roman Empire (P. Heather) and could occur in various ways. One possibility was a political federation led by kings or warlords that conquered new lands, preferably on Roman soil. Examples include the Vandals’ conquest of Africa under Geiseric (whereas the Alans and Vandals in Spain did not conquer the whole country [J. Arce]), or Theoderic’s Ostrogoths, and then later on Alboin’s Langobards who conquered Italy. In other cases, for example, the Visigoths in southern France, probably also the Burgundians around the Lake Lemán (the Sapaudia region, which was to become the central region of the later realm) and to a certain degree one can also include Theoderic’s early reign in Italy, these “peoples” (or marauding barbarian armies) were officially settled on Roman soil and given duties as federates. Some hordes may also have conquered a country without becoming politically united, as in the case of the Anglo-Saxons who, according to Gildas, subdued the Britons or expelled them from eastern England—archaeologically, we can detect a “Germanization” of the country—in order to form their own, small kingdoms. (Moreover, most historians do not believe that all the Britons were expelled, but imagine

a gradual process in which the replacement of Romano-British culture by a "Germanic" one seems to signal a shift in the balance of power from one side to the other.) We cannot, however, give any definite dates to this process although it seems to have been definitely completed in the late sixth century (and therefore we cannot ascertain any direct development from migrating to establishing kingdoms which, contrary to the Franks, for example, may have been a delayed secondary development rather than an integral part, or result, of that process [B. Yorke]). Bede's "Anglo-Saxons" (or rather *Angli*) were an expression for the whole Anglo-Saxon population; they were, however, divided into several kingdoms. It may have been Jutes who settled in Kent as Bede wants us to believe; the sources, on the other hand, reveal a close-knit relationship between the people and the kingdom of Kent. The king, therefore, seems to have been the decisive factor in this process. In fact, as Barbara Yorke emphasizes in her contribution, *regnum* and *gens* were closely entwined, and all the Anglo-Saxon *gentes* mentioned in Bede had (or were) kingdoms at the same time. Furthermore it may well be that the (archaeological) differences between these kingdoms were not distinctions of the immigrating peoples but were adopted later after their migration to Britain. There may also have been some Frankish influence, or rather model, for the establishment of kingdoms in Britain (B. Yorke). If the Bavarians migrated into their new, formerly Roman settlement area, they certainly did not come as a "closed" people (M. Hardt) and did not really conquer the country, but may only then have grown together to become Bavarians in "Bavaria" itself. Such an immigration was not necessarily a single event but rather a long process, as in the case of the Franks in northern Gaul. It may well be (and would be in accordance with our modern theories of ethnogenesis) that the name-giving peoples originated from a synthesis or even "syncretism" (in the sense of growing together) of various population groups (H.-W. Goetz). At first sight, the Franks seem to be a special case (or one in which several elements were combined) because they did not conquer northern Gaul, but appear to have settled there gradually, in steadily increasing numbers (notwithstanding that single groups, such as the so-called Salian Franks under Julian, were settled, or rather allowed to retain their settlements, by the Romans). Nevertheless, this process may also have served as a model for other peoples, and there may have been a (more or less peaceful) period of settlement before the formation of "barbarian" kingdoms else-

where; this was probably true for the Visigoths in Spain. Settlement, as Ian Wood emphasizes, was not a single event, but a long process. Later on, again, the Franks also conquered important parts of the remaining Roman dominion (the realm of Aegidius and Syagrius) which was to become the basis for their huge kingdom. Unfortunately, we cannot reconstruct this process of settlement by studying place-names because these normally date from a much later period. In France, for example, they may originate from the time before or after Clovis, but in most cases there are no records that can be dated before the eighth or ninth centuries.

4. *The relationship between gentes and regna III:
The establishment of (great) kingdoms*

Consequently, the establishment of a new kingdom (in most cases on Roman soil) could derive from a gradual infiltration into Roman areas, either in the form of expansion (as in the case of the Franks and the Visigoths in Spain), or due to the displacement of the settlement area (as in the case of the Tolosan Visigoths, the Ostrogoths in Italy, the Vandals in Africa, the Burgundians, Anglo-Saxons and Langobards). Nowhere do we discern the formation of a kingdom as a single meditated act. In some cases, for example the Anglo-Saxons, it is nearly impossible to put the establishment of the new kingdoms into any kind of chronological order; in other cases we can only hazard a guess at the formation of new kingdoms over a more or less broad period of time; the Burgundian king Gundobad, for example, seems to have founded a kingdom some time between 474 and 494 (I. Wood). It is significant, though, that Geiseric counted his regnal years only from the year of the capture of Carthage (439), ten years after the conquest of most parts of northern Africa (W. Liebeschuetz). The clearest cases, however, that allow us to date such "foundations" within a comparatively short period, were those where the new kingdom may be seen as the achievement of individual kings: Clovis (the Franks in Gaul), Geiseric (the Vandals in Africa), or Alboin (the Langobards in Italy). At the same time we have to bear in mind that it was naturally also the work of their followers who were normally characterized as their "people" in the Roman sources (a "people" that had probably grown together from various *gentes* and armies). These individuals may have been "men

of exceptional ability" (W. Liebeschuetz), and they hardly ever had successors with comparable qualities, but nevertheless they were most important for the "foundation" and continuity of their kingdoms. Comparing Clovis and Alboin, we discover significant similarities as well as differences between these "founder generations": Both men had been kings of their respective peoples before, but created new kingdoms by conquering large areas. Whilst Clovis enlarged his territory by successive conquests, Alboin found new domiciles in a "foreign" country (Italy) after a migration. Though archaeological findings provide only minor information of political developments, the famous grave of Childeric displays his elated rank, even before Clovis's time. Luxurious graves in other kingdoms (such as the Avars) may also be taken as proof of the existence of princes.

Most of the "barbarian" kingdoms were established on Roman soil (and it would be an interesting question to see how further developments varied in different cases). As Peter Heather claims, they could not have succeeded without at least some kind of coexistence with the Roman world, or population. More than that, it seems obvious that many, if not most elements of the newly built kingdoms were based on the Roman tradition (and, as has been mentioned before, we may assume a certain Romanization of the "barbarian" peoples even prior to that time). As far as we can see, Roman administration was adopted, or rather continued, in all kingdoms on Roman soil, probably with the exception of England, where the severance from the Empire in the beginning of the fifth century marked a stronger separation although it did not necessarily mean a complete collapse of the Roman system (Barbara Yorke). (It could, in fact, prove to be a very worthwhile future project to investigate the differences between the single kingdoms in adopting the Roman system.) The same is true of the imperial demesnes, which now became the basic possessions of the new kings, for the royal fisc, the monetary system, the issue of charters, and the codification of laws. These Roman traditions were maintained, but possibly to a varying degree and in different ways, and sometimes, as in fifth-century Spain, the country remained "Roman" throughout (J. Arce). The Vandals were the first to even restore a stable currency in Roman tradition (W. Liebeschuetz). The "barbarian" kings also adopted imperial titles and epithets, they used corresponding insignia, and chose Roman cities as their capitals, or *sedes regiae*. It is significant that all Merovingian *sedes regiae* were situated in the former Roman province of Aegidius

and Syagrius,¹⁷ whereas the Visigoths chose one of the less important Roman cities as their capital. Only Toledo in Spain and Pavia in Langobard Italy, and probably also Ravenna in Ostrogoth Italy, may deserve being classified as “capitals”.¹⁸ Another, probably even more decisive factor of Roman continuity was the Church. Moreover, we should not underestimate the whole complex of Roman culture surviving, at least to a certain degree, in the successor states. The “Germanic” elite in the Burgundian kingdom, for example, adopted a Roman life-style (I. Wood). Accordingly, it is probable that the Latin language prevailed, as Alex Woolf argues, even in the Celtic world of Britain, particularly in the lowlands. We do not know whether Latin was the official language (or if an “official” language existed at all), but it is at least significant that all the administrative correspondence, and also tombstones, were written or engraved in Latin. (I do not consider this to be just a consequence of the illiteracy of the “Germanic” peoples, because they probably could have developed a “Germanic” literature if there had been a need for it before the later eighth century. And it is not by chance that a considerable vernacular literature was developed in Anglo-Saxon England, and Celtic Britain, where Roman traditions were less dominant than elsewhere.) Finally, the infrastructure (particularly the Roman roads) continued to be used for centuries. But, again, we should not neglect the fact that we still lack a comparative study of Roman traditions in the single kingdoms.

These kingdoms, therefore, may have carried on the Roman tradition in wide areas of political, cultural and everyday life, and, at least in the beginning, the kings themselves may have felt and acted much more as Roman officials than barbarian kings (as Ian Wood claims throughout for the Burgundian kings who should “be considered not just alongside the kings of the Vandals, Visigoths and Ostrogoths, but also alongside Odoacer, Ricimer, Aëtius and Stilicho”).¹⁹

¹⁷ Though one should note the scepticism of Edward James over the size of their kingdom: E. James, *The Franks* (London 1988) pp. 67–71.

¹⁸ Cf. now *Sedes regiae (ann. 400–800)*, ed. G. Ripoll and J.M. Gurt with A. Charvria (Barcelona 2000).

¹⁹ Ian Wood’s suggestion that the Burgundians did not conceive themselves as part of a “Burgundian” kingdom has been questioned during the discussions by at least some members of the group and may be the result of the Roman perspective of our sources. As Wolf Liebeschuetz argues, *Constitutiones Extravagantes* 21, ed. L.R. von Salis, MGH LL nationum Germanicarum 2,1 (Hannover 1892) (*Capitulus quem*

In fact, they were often both Roman “soldiers” and barbarian warlords. Politically, however, they were (or became increasingly) independent, not Roman federates any more, but rulers of independent successor states which had liberated themselves from the imperial claims of a remote Byzantium. It remains to be seen what effects that may have had on their political identity.

These new kingdoms, in many cases at least, may be regarded as the achievement of single outstanding kings, and were based on Roman traditions. Nevertheless it is significant that they were named after peoples. These peoples (or rather their leading classes) may but need not be identified with Wenskus’s “nucleus of tradition” (*Traditionskern*), but formed a demographic minority in most parts of the country. The “people”, therefore, continued to play some part in the king’s realm. This seems to apply to the Franks, although expressions like *rex Francorum* or *regnum Francorum* are not handed down until the end of the sixth century. It may also be true for most of the other kingdoms, and is particularly apparent in Langobard Italy.

In reality, however, these kingdoms were “multinational” territories throughout, including not only the name-giving people, but also the resident Roman population and other “barbarian” peoples (such as Berbers in Vandalic Africa, Slavs, but also Bulgars or Gepids, in the Avar khaganate, or Britons in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, probably also remaining Ostrogoths in Langobard Italy). In most kingdoms, the Roman population formed a vast majority and, though “Roman” by law, was itself of varied origins. The clearest case of a “multinational” (or multiethnic), and also “multi-kingdom” realm is the Frankish kingdom, consisting of the former Visigothic and Burgundian kingdoms and including trans-Rhenian peoples, such as Alamans, Thuringians, and Bavarians. From an “ethnic” point of view, therefore, we find various cultures as well as (or rather: and increasingly) a “mixed culture” in these realms, a phenomenon which is confirmed by archaeological evidence. Nevertheless, for people of the time, these groups still seem to have been distinguishable,²⁰ at least for a while. According to Roman sources, the Vandals remained

domnus noster in conventu Burgundionum instituit) is strong evidence for the existence of a Burgundian assembly, and therefore of a Burgundian people (*habito nunc cum comitibus nostris tractatu, praesenti constitutione decrevimus, quod in populo nostro debeat custodire*). See also Wood’s discussion of this assembly, this volume, p. 256.

²⁰ Again, Wolf Liebeschuetz puts emphasis on this argument.

“Vandals” till the collapse of their kingdom, and, in spite of their assimilation and a process of acculturation, they never became “Romans”. In cases where a kingdom survived for a long period, however, such as the Frankish realm, we can observe an increasing “syncretism” (in the sense of growing together). Nevertheless it is also evident that a process of acculturation began and was achieved much earlier and more successfully in “Roman” Gaul than in the Austrasian parts of the kingdom (where, for example, the custom of grave goods was maintained much longer). The fact that Frankish women in northern Gaul adopted Roman clothing (without fibula) earlier than their men (M. Schmauder), might have been the result of intermarriage (which at the same time would explain the increase of Germanic personal names in all population groups).

5. *The relationship between gentes and regna IV: Development and changes*

The establishment of kingdoms was no doubt a deciding factor which bore an essentially political character. As kingdoms were named after a people that had existed before the kingdom itself, we cannot ignore the relationship between *gens* and *regnum*, but it would be daring to conclude a straightforward development from one to the other. It is, however, only after the formation of kingdoms, that these peoples assumed a more institutionalized character (at least on a political level). The kingdoms, therefore, seem to have been a crucial element and at the same time a caesura in the ethnogenesis of these peoples which consequently underwent changes during the subsequent periods. *Francus/Franci* were ambiguous expressions with connotations that could be ethnic, legal (as in the *Lex Salica*), or political (and even the ethnic term was political since it normally did not mean “the” Franks, but the politically active and responsible Frankish elite). Significantly enough authors used the same term to characterize (or “label”) the people *and* the kingdom. Moreover, in the process of Frankish history, the political (and territorial) connotation prevailed increasingly. First, the people adopted a political (or “regal”) meaning by being the leading people, or the body responsible, in this realm, the *Reichsvolk*. Second, however, due to increasing “syncretism”, the *Reichsvolk* turned into a *Reichsbevölkerung*, the population of the whole kingdom. Consequently, the ethnic terms (again) changed their meaning (H.-W. Goetz). The kingdom became more and more

important to the degree that the significance of the people diminished (unless the people's name had come to denote the kingdom). A similar process can be seen in Visigothic Spain in official documents (Church councils), though here this process seems to have begun and lasted much later: In Toledo III (589), which established a Catholic kingdom, the *gens Gothorum* had indeed become Catholic, although here again the *gens* still did not include the whole kingdom, but was apparently restricted to the Goths as the ruling people (that is, excluding the Hispani), a concept that can also be observed in John of Biclar and Isidore of Seville. Nevertheless, we can note a certain consciousness of unity of the whole of Spain in Toledo IV (633); finally, in Toledo V (636) and VI (638), even this original separation of Goths and Hispani has been abandoned: *gens* had ceased to be an "ethnic" and had become a political term (I. Velázquez). As in the Frankish kingdom, this "growing together" was deeply rooted in the common Catholic religion.

Most kingdoms were characterized by two (seemingly) contradictory features (which can be observed most clearly in the Frankish kingdom): unity and integration on the one hand, disunity and disintegration on the other (H.-W. Goetz). The most important elements of unity were, first, the king and the kingdom itself as well as a tendency towards establishing royal dynasties, *stirpes regiae*, then, the Church (that is, if the Church was Catholic), and the fact that the king was head of this Church, then the (predominantly Roman) administration, and also the social structure. Elements of disunity were the divisions of the kingdoms among the heirs (the king's sons or brothers), as in the kingdoms of the Franks, the Church (in such instances where the "Germanic" peoples were Arians), and, of course, the "multinational" society which, in those cases where the peoples lived according to their own laws, also meant legal disunity, although in some kingdoms, such as the Frankish or Langobard, and also the Burgundian kingdoms, the laws seem to refer to the whole population i.e. to its "Germanic" and Roman parts (P. Wormald). Actually, after the second generation, the Merovingian kings frequently opposed and attacked one another, though there was still a concept, or an illusion, of a united Frankish kingdom. In reality, the parcelled kingdoms (*Teilreiche*) became increasingly independent.

These kingdoms were stabilized by several elements: Catholicism, an *imitatio imperii*, the integration of the conquered population and a further Romanization of the king's people (which actually had begun

long before), and, not to be underestimated, the role of the army (which was also rooted to some degree in Late Roman traditions). The army even gained in significance as the barbarian soldiers to an increasing extent *were* the army, thus playing an important role in the state (W. Liebeschuetz). Moreover, the laws which were codified in most “Germanic” kingdoms (except, however, in the Vandalic realm in Africa) were a significant element of state-building which probably had a stabilizing effect, too. They undoubtedly derived from the Roman model (whereas their contents were mainly “Germanic”, however “adapted and modified” these customs may have been by the “law-makers”), but they equally originated in the king’s duty to preserve justice (P. Wormald). In southern Europe they seem to have complemented the Roman law (which was imitated everywhere), with a “Germanic” version beside a “Roman” one, and in some regions, such as Burgundy, as Stefan Esders has shown in his dissertation, the Roman legal tradition survived into late Merovingian times (the seventh century). These laws, however, which were undoubtedly linked with royal power and legislation, were not necessarily laws that applied to the entire kingdom. In some instances this was the case, but in other instances the laws were applicable only to certain groups that may have been identical with the known “ethnic” groups (though it is also possible that they applied to a certain region). There were several laws in the Frankish kingdom, and the Alamans and Bavarians had laws of their own, though, remarkably enough, these *leges* too, were initiated by the Frankish kings. As such they can be considered to bear a political as well as an ethnic significance (P. Wormald).

When speaking about stabilizing factors, we should not neglect the importance of religion.²¹ Supra-regional kingship had to be Christian to be successful with regard to broad integration, although this does not include the Avars (W. Pohl) where indications of Christianity were an exception (F. Daim). We cannot be sure if Arianism was understood as a relevant sign of distinction between “barbarians” and Romans, or, as Wolf Liebeschuetz argues, was sometimes even used as an instrument to keep them separate; actually both the “Catholic” as well as the “Arian” Church considered themselves to be universal. In some instances, however, Arianism did

²¹ This has again been suggested by Wolf Liebeschuetz.

play an important role, particularly throughout the Vandalic kingdom which, under Huneric, even organized persecutions of Catholics, and in the case of the Ostrogoths who formed a “Homoian” Church in Italy (P. Heather).²² It seems that religious conflicts and tensions between a “Germanic” identity (either heathen or Arian) and a Romano-Christian tradition (which to a certain degree was existent everywhere) were more acute in these two cases than in all other kingdoms, notwithstanding the fact that there were Roman Arians as well as barbarian Catholics. On the other hand, Arianism was often no more than a phase in the history of most kingdoms (such as the Visigoths, and perhaps also the Burgundians and the Langobards; in the case of the Burgundians, however, religion does not seem to have been a clear sign of distinction). In Bavaria, we find different denominations; here, a Christian mission of any import did not start until the first half of the eighth century; significantly, in these years, under Theodo and Odilo, it was organized by the duke as well as by the Carolingian *maior domus* (M. Hardt). In the Frankish kingdom, as a consequence of the baptism of Clovis, Catholicism spread more or less “naturally” as the common belief, although, of course, supported and propagated by the kings and the Church; the fact that Catholicism was the common belief of Romans and Franks in the Frankish kingdom(s) definitely contributed towards the “syncretism” of these populations, and the same is true for Visigothic Spain after 585 (I. Velázquez). In later Langobard Italy, it was even decreed as a “state religion” (*Staatsreligion*), and Anglo-Saxon law-codes contain legislation making certain Christian acts (for example, baptism) compulsory so that Christianity might be said to be a “state religion” in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms as well (B. Yorke). The king’s position as a ruler by God’s grace (*Gottesgnadentum*), a concept which became widespread in all Christian realms, contributed considerably towards the development of stabilizing the kingdom. Catholicism and the king’s sacrality, as Jörg Jarnut emphasizes, were crucial elements in this process. In fact, Catholicism seems to have been an important precondition for successful “syncretism”. And yet, as Wolf Liebeschuetz reminds us, the importance of religion seems to have been different in each kingdom.

²² On the other hand, Ian Wood argues that “there is nothing to suggest that religion acted as a distinguishing mark between Burgundian and Roman”.

The further development of these kingdoms, however, varied greatly from one kingdom to the next. There were those, such as Langobard Italy, where we can observe the growth of political order and stabilization, preferably supported by three elements: increasing centralization, hierarchization, and institutionalization, including the establishment of new administrative offices (J. Jarnut). There were others, such as the Frankish kingdom(s), where similar developments were halted by internal political weakness in a later phase of its history, or the Vandals, where the royal stabilization did not really lead to a comprehensive integration of all its peoples. We should not forget that only some of these kingdoms were of longer duration allowing us to pursue their development over a longer period of time: those of the Franks, the Visigoths in Spain, the Langobards; with regard to the Avars such developments can only be reconstructed by archaeological material. In fact, most of these kingdoms perished after a short while, for the most part because they were conquered by foreign kings: the Visigoths were beaten and conquered by Clovis (507), the Ostrogoths (who themselves had challenged and killed Odoakar) and the Vandals were defeated by the Emperor's generals (Narses, Belisarius), and the Spanish Visigoths were subdued by the Arabs (711) or took refuge in the regions of the Asturias, the Picos and the Pyrenees. The Avars and Langobards as well as (again) the Bavarian dukes were subjected by Charlemagne (though the Avar khaganate had a remarkably long existence of more than two centuries, but in the end was incapable of putting up sufficient defence). Sometimes we hear of heroic resistance (as in the case of the Ostrogoths and Vandals), but in other cases one single battle (Vouillé 507) or a few campaigns decided the destiny of a kingdom (Visigothic Spain, Langobard Italy). This should be taken as an indication of feeble political and social structures as well as a lack of support by the population. As Wolf Liebeschuetz claims for the Vandals, one might argue that the disappearance of these peoples was due to the fact that their *gens* was deliberately broken up; that is, if we define *gens* in other than political terms. One could therefore conclude that kingdoms such as these often rose and fell with their kings.

6. *The relationship between gentes and regna V:
The people(s) inside the kingdom*

As has already been stated above, all early medieval kingdoms included a “Germanic” and a Roman population, that is, a “Germanic” minority and a Roman majority, and some were even “multinational” cultures. The Anglo-Saxons constitute an apparent exception, although this may be because we categorise the Romano-British as British and not as Romans. This is also underlined by the archaeological evidence, which shows that the Merovingian kingdom, for example, was far from giving the impression of cultural uniformity. Different populations were held together by the king’s rule. We may assume that the Roman majority accepted “barbarian” rule, and we know that leading Romans were ready to work with it (W. Liebeschuetz). We may also assume that the leading classes at least were bilingual in so far as they knew Latin besides their native tongue (and perhaps vice versa), even in regions with considerable “Germanic” settlement (as in northern France). In the long run (again, with the exception of the Anglo-Saxons), the Latin language (as the language of the majority) was able to assert itself indicating that the “Germanic” (or rather the non-Roman) population must have adopted it gradually. In Visigothic Spain, we have no clear indication that the Gothic language was prevalent, though certain Gothic words were adopted (I. Velázquez). On the other hand, however, it is also significant that at the same time Roman personal names were decreasing because Roman people obviously preferred to give their children “Germanic” names, a development that can be easily observed in the Frankish and Langobard kingdoms, but also elsewhere. All in all, it is likely that there was mutual influence. On the whole, “Romanization” was dominant in the linguistic sphere whereas the political denominations of the kingdoms remained those of the “barbarian” victors. In England, there was a similar but reverse process: here it was the Celtic (and Roman) language that was superseded by Anglo-Saxon dialects in most areas—there is little evidence of any Celtic influence on the Old English language, except in some place-names and especially in river names—, whereas Latin did not prevail, probably because the Romanization of the population and country had been less intense than on the continent. Whereas Ine’s law still distinguished between “British” (*wealh*) and “Saxon”, 200 years later, in

the reign of Alfred, there were only “Saxons” in Wessex, presumably a sign of the acculturation which had occurred (B. Yorke).

Apparently there were marriage prohibitions in some kingdoms (or at least in the earliest phases of those kingdoms), and there were (several) forms of coexistence, as between “Germanic” peoples and Romans in early fifth-century Spain (J. Arce). In the Italy of that time, the Ostrogoths preserved a sense of distinction between their own people and the Italo-Romans, in spite of the beginnings of assimilation, as Peter Heather argues convincingly contrary to Patrick Amory’s theories, and the same may be said for the Vandals in Africa. It is difficult to say to what extent the Slavs were integrated into the Avar khaganate, but there seems to have been at least a kind of “symbiosis” and cooperation, and the seventh century even saw a rise of regional Slavic powers (W. Pohl). Other (or perhaps most) kingdoms, however, such as the Franks, the early Vandals, and, above all, the Burgundians, who even encouraged immigration, were “open societies”.²³ The Frankish kingdom is a clear case of the increasing “syncretism” of different populations, to such a degree that, from the seventh century on, it often seems impossible to ascertain the “ethnic” origin of the individual. Again, however, it was the political unit, the kingdom, that decided on the “affiliation” for, as has already been stated above, the whole population came to be known as “Franks”, a term which adopted a new, though ambivalent, meaning in so far as it increasingly denoted the members of the (whole) Frankish kingdom: to belong to this kingdom evidently became more important than remembering one’s “ethnic” descent, and an equivalent development can be seen in Visigothic Spain in the second quarter of the seventh century (I. Velázquez). There are no direct parallels of this kind of integrative “syncretism” mentioned in the other contributions to this volume. Nevertheless it cannot be definitely said that this was a specifically Frankish (and Visigothic) feature: As Matthias Hardt suggests with regard to the Bavarians, the integration of the whole population, particularly the Romans, was an important presupposition for successful ethnogenesis.

²³ This has been emphasized by Wolf Liebeschuetz.

7. *The role of a “gentile” (or ethnic) consciousness*

It is difficult to say whether and how the continuity of “ethnic” names on the one hand and the re-formation of these groups in a political kingdom on the other hand affected the self-conception of these peoples, and whether they retained an “ethnic” identity, or regained a new, political one.²⁴ It is true that in Gaul, according to our sources, it was “the Franks” who were the (politically) leading classes, who elected the king, took part in the general assemblies, who went to war or made peace with other peoples and, significantly enough, it was “the Franks” in each of the “parcelled kingdoms” (*Teilreiche*). In many cases, however, these “Franks” were no longer the original “Germanic” people, but, as has already been stated, were obviously—and increasingly—conceived as the (whole) population of the Frankish kingdom, or “parcelled kingdom”. Similarly, in Visigothic Spain, the *gens Gothorum* was the dominating group in the kingdom, and there was a consciousness of group identity at least until the first decades of the seventh century (I. Velázquez). One may assume that it was similar in the other kingdoms although this has not been explicitly stated in the other contributions to this volume.

A “gentile” (or ethnic) consciousness is most clearly recognizable in the so-called *Origines gentium*, which, however, are not handed down in all kingdoms. They are, for example, lacking in the case of the Vandals, the Burgundians (as it seems, the Burgundians of the Sapaudia did not even trace back their origin to the Rhineland Burgundians) and the Bavarians. On the other hand they are well-known and frequently discussed in the case of the Goths, the Franks, or the Langobards. Even so some problems still remain: All these *Origines gentium* were written down comparatively late, and, in the final analysis, we do not know whether they really are testimonies of widespread popular convictions or just scholarly constructions. (This is particularly true of the completely unhistorical Frankish *origo* claiming Trojan origins for the Franks, a theory that obviously had its roots in the writings of Virgil). The Burgundians, according to

²⁴ In my opinion, identity did not derive from a common language, as Matthias Hardt suggests for the Bavarians, because language was not a deciding factor for ethnic distinction.

Ammianus, knew of their Roman descent (I. Wood), whereas Anglo-Saxon elites seemed to have traced their descent from Scandinavian ancestors (B. Yorke). Moreover, judging from the different versions of *Origines gentium* in the case of the Franks and Langobards, there was not just one common belief in the people's origin, but varying myths. Nevertheless, these traditions prove the importance of the belief in a—remote—common origin and also in a long migration, even in (or perhaps particularly in) later periods, that is, in periods where the “people” had already changed considerably in their new environment of a (multinational) kingdom. In contrast to ideological research in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, however, one cannot emphasize clearly enough that all these *Origines gentium* look back to the early history of their respective peoples (as distinct from those of other groups) and that there was absolutely no conception of a common “Germanic” origin. Moreover, it is also significant that all *Origines* associate the origin of their people with the reign of kings, thereby confirming the importance of a political element for “gentile” (or ethnic) consciousness. Burgundian and Langobard law-codes contained kinglists, which indicate the importance these peoples attached to the dynastic line of their kings. Avar identity, too, was so closely connected with the khaganate that one could not have existed without the other, and it is not by chance that the Avars disappear almost completely from our sources once the khaganate had been destroyed by Charlemagne (W. Pohl). Bavarian identity, in its turn, was linked with their dukes, indicating, in both cases, a political rather than an ethnic identity (M. Hardt). On the whole, therefore, our sources point towards the fact that collective identity was linked to a far greater extent to the kingdom than to its name-giving *gens*. Sometimes, however, former *gentes* maintained their identity which can be observed, for example, when the Vandal kings in Spain (and also later in Africa) were called “kings of the Alans and Vandals”.

8. *The role of the kings*

In view of this, the eminent role of the kings should be evident. It has already been emphasized that the establishment of a kingdom was often the achievement of a (single) king, that even before this occurred, the “people” was constituted by a political leadership

(normally also under kings) and that, afterwards, the kingdom changed the structure and “definition” of the people: Kingship, or a comparable political institution, such as the Avar khaganate or the Bavarian *ducat*, seem to have been the decisive element of ethnicity, too, and it is again worth noting, as has already been said, that even the *Origines gentium* were associated with the reign of kings. It is significant that the function (king) sometimes became more important than the individual king’s name, as in the Avar khaganate where all rulers were simply called “khagan” (W. Pohl). The kings, or monarchy, were therefore of paramount importance for this process. The ten-year interruption of royal rulership in the early history of Langobard Italy (574–584) was an absolute exception, and it is significant that it was followed by a prompt and, as far as we know, unproblematic reconstitution of the monarchy. In the course of Langobard history we actually perceive an increasing importance and intensification of kingship which has to be considered as an effective political and military form of organization. According to Jörg Jarnut, the king was not only the central focus of reference of his people, but even the “incorporation” of a “gentile” (or ethnic) consciousness. In Bavaria, the dukes, who by law held a hereditary office, seem to have gained a comparable function as an integrative force, particularly in the beginning under the auspices of the Frankish king; in some periods at least, the power of the Bavarian duke did not differ from that of a royal government (M. Hardt). In regions like Bavaria, therefore, we have to investigate a double role: that of the Frankish king *and* the Bavarian duke. In all these kingdoms, therefore, kingship was not only the deciding factor for political unity, but, since the people, too, was a political unit, it was also decisive in the process of ethnogenesis: this becomes particularly evident after the conversion of individual rulers to Catholicism (in the case of the Franks, the Visigoths and the Langobards). Perhaps one can go as far as to assert that it was the kings who formed the famous “nucleus of tradition” that was the centre of “peoples’ building” in this age, although we should be careful not to become caught in the vicious circle of comprehending a people simply from a study of its kingship. In Langobard Italy, it was the king (and his court) who even defined (by legislation) who was a “Langobard”, by freeing and integrating slaves or members of other peoples into the Langobard army, as Jörg Jarnut argues. If this is true (here and in other kingdoms) it would underline the pivotal role played by royalty in the process of ethnogene-

sis. And yet even this assumption leaves unanswered the decisive question as to the criteria that defined or allowed a person to become a “Langobard” (or member of any other “king’s people”). Any answer to this question would probably reveal an extremely flexible system.

The Langobards, again, were exceptional in another way: they chose (or elected) their kings from various families, namely from the circle of the dukes of the Langobard territories. By contrast, a dynastic system prevailed in most kingdoms, either as a strict dynastic succession (such as, primarily, in the case of the Merovingians who ruled uncontestedly until Pippin’s “coup d’état” of 751, but also the Burgundian Gibichungs, or the Vandalic Hasdings), or, in other cases, where there was at least a tendency towards a dynastic monarchy (as in all Gothic realms: in the Visigothic kingdoms both of Toulouse and Toledo, but also in the earlier Ostrogothic kingdom until the extinction of the Amals). And yet in spite of this Peter Heather warns us not to overestimate the role the dynasty played as a shaping factor.

9. *The role of the Emperor/Empire*

The role of the Emperor, however, seems to have been rather different. 476, of course, was not the end of the Empire, but only of the existence of an Emperor in the western part of the *Imperium Romanum*. Actually connections between the “barbarian” kings and the Emperor in Byzantium continued throughout and there are links between the transformation of *gentes* into *regna* and the Empire (which was also subject to changes [E. Chrysos]). Considering the role of the Empire in this process of ethnogenesis and the formation of independent kingdoms, it seems wise to distinguish different phases, for example, phases of confrontation and integration (as P. Delogu commented at the meeting in Bellagio). The first is represented by various sieges of Constantinople, for example by the Goths in 400 or the Avars in 626 which at the same time constituted a significant caesura in the history of the Avars (F. Daim). The second may be divided into phases of *imitatio*, *aemulatio* and *translatio imperii* (E. Chrysos), though the later kingdoms do not fit entirely into such a scheme. In the early phases, the Emperor undoubtedly had a tremendous impact on the formation of kingdoms, though it is difficult to be concrete about these affiliations. Frequently, the relationship between a certain

kingdom and the Empire changed several times. Sometimes, as in fifth-century Spain, the “barbarian” influence was weak, sometimes the “barbarian” kings governed by permission of the Emperor, or, as in the case of the Vandals and Sueves in Spain, they usurped the imperial throne (J. Arce), or they were even encouraged by the Emperor to conquer new territories (as in Theoderic’s case). In the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, however, when the kings were increasingly governing without the Emperor’s permission, imperial influence declined and imperial policy resigned itself to accepting the development of the kingdoms. Actually, these kingdoms themselves played a crucial part in the disintegration of the Roman Empire. In this age, therefore, we have to distinguish between the role of the Emperor (which was comparatively weak) and the role of the “Empire”, or, rather, the role of Roman structures, or *Romanitas*, which were predominant everywhere. “Barbarian” kingship was often explicitly an *imitatio imperii* (for example, in the name or title *Flavius*, the *sacrum palatium*, the dating of royal charters, or economic structures), and it remained so for a long time, even under the comparatively late rulership of the Langobards (J. Jarnut). The Roman laws which served as a model for the codification of the *leges barbarorum*, and Roman administration, as well as minting and coinage were continued throughout. The cultural impact of *Romanitas* was equally great in the field of literacy and writing as well, and is apparent from the archaeological evidence of all regions that were formerly Roman (and also in the Avar khaganate, though with characteristic adaptations). One is tempted to conclude that *imitatio imperii*, along with a certain “sacrality” of a king who reigned “by God’s grace” was one of the essential sources of royal power (J. Jarnut).

10. *General conclusion*

Finally, it may be prudent to remember the distinction between the early medieval and the modern concepts of *gens* and of *regnum* as well as their relationship. With modern research beginning to withdraw from or even abandon the traditional concept of *gens* as an ethnic community and now emphasizing its political and cultural essence or nature, it seems at the same time to have alienated itself from the early medieval concept which no doubt did include ethnic thinking to some degree. Nevertheless, this is not the whole truth,

and it should be borne in mind that from the beginning the contemporary perception of peoples in those times comprised two elements: an ethnic (or “popular”) *and* a political (or “territorial”) one. It seems that the names of peoples were linked to an increasing extent to the (whole) population of the kingdom, and to the kingdom or the royal house itself (as in the Venerable Bede and in Frankish historiography), and that territorial names derived from these peoples were increasingly used alongside “gentile” (or ethnic) expressions; that is, that political (and territorial) concepts gradually prevailed. From the modern point of view, this development can be interpreted as a sign of successful integration, or as a new phase of ethnogenesis. However, perhaps it is even more important to lay aside a strict (modern) distinction between these two elements (“gentile” and “political”) and acknowledge that they were (always?) linked to some degree in the early medieval mind, notwithstanding that there *were* differences between *gentes* and *regna*: In Bede, for example, the *gens Anglorum* could even comprise several kingdoms. Accordingly, it was not attached to one political unit, but preceded the political unification of the whole of England which was not accomplished until the tenth century. It seems, therefore, as Barbara Yorke suggested, that Bede was aware of certain elements that were shared by all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and which allowed him to “classify” them under one “ethnic” term. It may be that in Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica Anglorum* the *gens Anglorum* had some religious connotation. Nevertheless, it took a long time for *Angli* to become the predominant term for the population of the “Anglo-Saxon” kingdoms (W. Liebeschuetz).

The “standard” case, however, was different. There were (naming) peoples before the establishment of kingdoms that were named after them, but the kings that founded these realms were as important as the Roman tradition upon which they were based. The formation of peoples and kingdoms, therefore, went hand in hand, as Barbara Yorke suggested at the symposium in Bellagio with regard to the Anglo-Saxons. This statement is probably true for all or most cases dealt with in this volume, to a degree that, although the kingdom was a “secondary development”, *gens* and *regnum* were equated (Barbara Yorke). This necessarily meant a decisive transformation of these so-called “Germanic” (or other “barbarian”) peoples in the era subsequent to that of the creation of the kingdoms, a change that included a “politicization” (or a further, important

step of politicization) of these *gentes* whose names were increasingly linked with the(ir) kingdom, whereas the kingdom, or its population, was widely characterized by an acculturation of its different groups (which also holds true for the Avars). It is true that this acculturation always went in two directions, though the Romanization of the “barbarians” seems to have been the more important one. It was embedded, however, in a gradual but fundamental change which we may continue to call the “transformation of the Roman world”. We have to admit that even after thoroughly dealing with this subject in a long project that led to this volume, there are still numerous unanswered questions, problems and enigmatic areas concerning the relationship of peoples and kingdoms. And yet having delved into these questions, however, we see more clearly the distinctions as well as the similarities between the peoples and kingdoms involved. The “transformation” of *gentes* and *regna*, of *gentes* into *regna* and of *regna* into new or altered *gentes* was an essential part of the process of the transformation of the Roman World.

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