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## THE SHAPING OF THE EARLY MEDIEVAL KINGDOM

by Herwig Wolfram

About the year 500 the western part of the Roman empire was split into several kingdoms obviously built upon Roman and non-Roman bases alike. These new states were nearly identical in development. Despite numerous setbacks, despite destruction and decline, they provided the prototypes of medieval statehood which were to spread all over Europe, following a series of, more often than not, painful transformations. By way of contrast, an almost complete break of political continuity occurred in former Roman Britain when the Anglo-Saxons founded their largely Germanic kingdoms. Thus it is safe to confine to Continental Europe and Roman Africa the treatment of the early medieval kingdom as the fore-runner of the European type of state. Here, a distinctive type of Latin statehood came into being in the course of the fifth and sixth centuries.

The new states were established by the kings of a rich variety of ethnic and linguistic groups. Only scarce evidence of documents and semi-official sources, such as inscriptions and legends on coins and medallions, remains. But all of them betray the same fact, namely that these very kings carried Latin titles, issued laws, diplomas, and all kinds of administrative acts in Latin, and used what I would propose to label a "Latin state vocabulary."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I thank Professor Wayne S. Vucinich of Stanford University, and various members of the Department of History at UCLA, which I joined for the academic year 1968-69 as a visiting professor, for informal discussion of a subject on which I have been working for several years: a reevaluation of the concept of medieval rulership. The tools and methods that I apply are mainly those of semantics, diplomatics, and institutional history, as these are the specialty of the Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung to which I belong. Cf. Herwig Wolfram, *Intitulatio I. Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, in the series *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* (MIOG) supp. 21 (1967); *Splendor imperii*, MIOG supp. 20.3 (1963); "Mittelalterliche Politik und adelige Staatssprache," MIOG 76 (1968) 1-22; "Fortuna in mittelalterlichen Stammesgeschichten," MIOG 72 (1964) 1-33; "Constantin als Vorbild für den Herrscher des hochmittelalterlichen Reiches," MIOG 68 (1960) 226-242; "Das Fürstentum Tassilos III, Herzogs der Bayern (748-788)," *Jahrbuch für salzburger Landeskunde* 108 (1968) 157-179. I would also like to express my gratitude to Professors Gerhart

In Carthage a *Rex Vandalarum et Alanorum* reigned over the remains of former Roman Africa,<sup>2</sup> while in the outlying districts of the old provinces several Berber kings had established their Moorish-Roman dominions. One of them was hailed as *Rex Masuna gentium Maurorum et Romanorum*.<sup>3</sup> In this part of the Roman world at least four tribal units were represented by kingdoms: the Vandals, an East-Germanic nation;<sup>4</sup> the Alans, a non-Germanic Indo-European people;<sup>5</sup> the Berber Moors; and the Romans themselves, who were considered to be just a gens, one tribe among others.<sup>6</sup>

A *Rex Sueborum* ruled over the northwestern territories of Spain, while the heartland of the peninsula and vast areas south of the Loire in Gaul stood under the sway of the Visigothic *Rex Gothorum*. The *Rex Francorum* and the *Rex Burgundionum* also ruled over the former Gallic provinces.<sup>7</sup>

In Italy a Gothic king reigned, yet he was no "King of the Goths". The Ostrogoth Theodoric called himself *Flavius Theodericus rex*. The philosophy behind this title might have been derived from, or rather connected with, political ideas developed by Theodoric's predecessor Odovakar. But we are sure at least that this political theory was adopted later by Theodoric's Gothic and Lombard successors in both Italy and Spain in imitation of the Ostrogoth, who was soon to become a model king among the Germanic tribes within and without the boundaries of the former empire.<sup>8</sup> The title *Flavius rex*, significantly, referred to the gens Flavia or, in other words, to the imperial family.

Constantine the Great, to legitimize and strengthen his claim for the throne, had established what we would now call a fictitious relationship between his father and the famous Flavian emperors of the first century after Christ. From the time of Constantine's reign, the former family name Flavius was used as an imperial *praenomen* in addition to *Imperator*,

B. Ladner and Richard H. Rouse, both of UCLA, to Professor Henry Myers of Madison College, and to UCLA graduate students Charles Braver and Michael Metzger.

<sup>2</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 79ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 82ff. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1964) 2.1023.

<sup>4</sup> By far the best work on the Vandals in Africa is C. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris 1955).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. B. S. Bachrach, "The Alans in Gaul," *Traditio* 23 (1967) 476-489. G. Vernadsky, "The Eurasian Nomads and their Impact on Medieval Europe," *Studi medievali* 34 (1963) 1-34. See also Courtois (n. 4 above).

<sup>6</sup> This change in thinking, according to which the universal concept "Romanus" was shrinking to a particular tribal connotation, is, for example, documented by the title of that odd fourth-century pamphlet "Origo gentis romanæ." Cf. H. Beumann, "Zur Entwicklung transpersonaler Staatsvorstellungen," *Vorträge und Forschungen* 3 (1956) 218ff., esp. 223.

<sup>7</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* (n. 1 above) 77f., 87ff., and 108ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 56ff.; O. Höfler, *Germanisches Sakralkönigtum* 1 (1952).

which had been introduced under Augustus.<sup>9</sup> Any member of the imperial family could use the honorific name Flavius as could "barbarian" military officials when they obtained Roman citizenship; *Imperator*, which was both title and *praenomen*, was, of course, reserved for the emperor himself.<sup>10</sup>

With the title *Flavius rex*, Theodoric was able to express his special position as ruler of Italy in place of an emperor to whose family he belonged in theory. This important relationship was reflected in many contemporary utterances, not the least in the pragmatic approach of Procopius, the Greek historian of the sixth century who is our major source for the conflicts between Justinian and the Persians, Vandals, and Goths. Procopius wondered why Theodoric simply called himself ῥῆξ (pronounced *rhix*), "as the barbarians used to name their leaders," although the Ostrogoth reigned like any true emperor.<sup>11</sup>

As the barbarians used to name their leaders! What does this comment on *rhix* mean to us, since we have just stated that those "leaders" themselves used Latin titles? First of all, we would answer that ῥῆξ is the Greek equivalent of *rex*, and it is evident that the Latin term was used in Greek from the second century onward.<sup>12</sup> But this answer is not sufficient. The Latin title *rex* was certainly not the original Germanic word for king with which "the barbarians used to name their leaders." As a Latin term it was quite naturally used by Roman speakers of both Latin and Greek. There is, however, an important source that provides a possible explanation for Procopius's statement, and for the absence about the year 500 of any East-Germanic word to denote a king. Bishop Ulfilas wrote the Gothic version of the Scriptures in the second half of the fourth century. To translate the Greek word ἄρχων ("commander," "governor," "military official"), Ulfilas used the Gothic term *reiks* (pronounced *rix*). At the same time, however, he rendered the famous question of Pontius Pilate to Jesus, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" by "*Thu is thiudans Iudaie?*"<sup>13</sup>

*Thiudans* means "king of the people," both tribal and sacred, since tribe and king alike were held to have a divine ancestor, perhaps the same one. The word itself evidently derives from *thiod*, people, thus making the *thiudans* the people's representative par excellence.

<sup>9</sup> E. Rosenburg, "Imperator," in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 9 (1916) 1145; R. Syme, "Imperator Caesar," *Historia* 7 (1958) 172-188; A. E. Gordon, "Notes on the *Res Gestae* of Augustus," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 1 (1968) 136.

<sup>10</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 57.

<sup>11</sup> *De bell. goth.* 1.1.26; cf. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 40.

<sup>13</sup> Ulfilas, trans., John 18.33.

*Reiks*, however, is not a Germanic word, although it is obviously akin to Latin *rex*, Celtic *rigs*, and Sanskrit *rāj*. We do not know how and why the Germanic languages lost that element of their Indo-European heritage. We can simply state that the Celtic word *rigs* and its derivation *\*rikja* ("realm," "*Reich*") was to become a loanword with the Germanic peoples when the Celtic nations prevailed in Europe. These peoples then founded the first bodies politic larger than small tribal units whose religious and political center was the royal family that provided the tribal king. For the transmission of the word *reiks* it is significant that the first Germanic king to carry a name compounded with *-rix*, a form of *reiks*, was the Cimbrian Boiorix, which literally meant King of the Boii. The Boii were the famous Celtic tribe living in Bohemia who gave the country its name in the Germanic tongues. The Boii actually supported the first Germanic avalanche of peoples to hit the ancient world, or, in other words, the first Germanic *\*rikja*.<sup>14</sup> Yet the Goth Ulfilas still used *thiudans* for king and understood by the term *reiks* only a rank inferior to king, although the loanword *reiks* had originally meant not only "king," but "greater king."

This seeming contradiction can be resolved by a relatively well-founded explanation. From Caesar and Tacitus through Ammianus Marcellinus and Jordanes to Widukind of Corvey and even more recent authors, there exists evidence for two different kinds of Germanic king,<sup>15</sup> one popular, one military.

The king of the people, whom a great many of the sources call *thiudans*, *theoden*, *thiodan*, or the like, was chosen from the royal family; he was the archetype of a tribal king, elected because of his noble origins—*ex nobilitate*. He was the king of the "establishment" of a relatively stable and isolated society. The king of the victorious army started his career as the leader of his followers. He could have been either of nonroyal or of royal stock; the latter would have actually eased his start. The criterion for his election, which was carried out by his retainers, was not his origins but a decisive victory, or an outstanding success in settling newly won territories: in sum, a glorious heroic effort that proved his kingly qualities. He was chosen *ex virtute*.<sup>16</sup> He was the king of a socially mobile society. In other words, the king of the warrior retinue was the "founder king," creating both a new royal family and a new tribe; the king of the people was the successor of kings who had ruled the tribe since "time immemorial."

It was Georges Dumézil who, in systematizing the Indo-European pantheon, discovered this polarity of royal authority in a pair of complementary gods

<sup>14</sup> J. de Vries, "Das Königtum bei den Germanen," *Sacrorum* 7 (1956) 303ff. H. Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (Cologne 1961) 419.

<sup>15</sup> W. Schlesinger, "Lord and Follower in Germanic Institutional History," *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. P. J. Cheyette (New York 1968) 61ff., esp. 72-79. Wenskus (n. 14 above) 576ff.

<sup>16</sup> Schlesinger (n. 15 above) 72, according to Tacitus, *Germania* 7.

like Mitra-Varuna in the Rg Veda religion, and Tiwaz-Woden among the Germanic peoples. There was, on the one hand, a beneficent god who stood for a stable social order as a guarantor of laws and conventions, fertility and peace; and, on the other hand, there was a violent, dangerous, and even chaotic god who acted as a leader of the warrior retinues dedicated to him. Within the Teutonic pantheon, Woden embodied the principle that broke down the somewhat petrified system of the stable *thiudans* society. Woden was to become the god of warlords and their retinues who destroyed the pre-Migration tribes to build new bodies politic.

There is, however, some good reason to assume that the replacement of the tribal kings by warrior kings was not a historical phenomenon confined to the period of the Great Migrations. There is enough evidence for this dialectical process of succession before and after that period of time. Most of the royal families that we know revered mystical or semimystical "founder kings" as their ancestors, and each new founder king was all too eager to meet the needs of rulership by following the sacred patterns of a tribal king. That a victorious battle could even be considered an ordeal eased the new king's attempt to appear as a divine incarnation, and this actually justified his kingship.<sup>17</sup>

The North-Germanic tribes, isolated as they were, maintained a relatively stable society for a considerably longer period of time than the Continental Teutons.<sup>18</sup> The former still clung to the traditional form of sacred kingship even after Tacitus had written his *Germania*. Except for the Franks and Lombards, all the Germanic nations who founded kingdoms on Roman soil were of East-Germanic stock. The East-Germanic Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, Rugians, Herulians, and others derived their origins or, more important, their prevailing political traditions, from Scandinavia, that is to say, from the North-Germanic environment. This is the reason the Gothic version of the Bible still used the old term *thiudans* for king. The relatively new loanword *reiks* came to apply to the *dux*-stratum of warlords who were only potential kings.<sup>19</sup> These leaders seized their opportunity when the Great Migrations began; it is possible to prove that the *reiks* eventually became identical with the East-Germanic kings who founded the first kingdoms on Roman soil.

Although the concept *reiks* must have reached the north and east through West-Germanic routes, the word itself had been forgotten among the West-Germanic peoples by the time the Migrations began. At the same time, the

<sup>17</sup> J. de Vries, "The Present State of Studies on Germanic Religion," *Diogenes* 18 (1957) 86, discusses Georges Dumézil's findings. On the kingly couple *sinistus* and *hendinos* see Wenskus (n. 14 above) 576ff. I consider Jordanes's account of the accession of the Amals, Theodoric's royal family, to be the most striking example of the political philosophy cited above: Jordanes, *Getica* 76ff. Cf. Wolfram, *Intitulatio* (n. 1 above) 99ff.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Wenskus (n. 14 above) 410.

<sup>19</sup> De Vries (n. 14 above) 301ff. Wenskus (n. 14 above) 322ff.

term *thiudans* was also fading or even died out in the center of the Continental West-Germanic areas where tribal kingship long since had been abandoned.<sup>20</sup> The old term *theoden* exists in Anglo-Saxon poetry and occurs as *thiodan* in related Continental Saxon sources. It is, however, assumed that this word was re-introduced by the Anglo-Saxon mission to honor Christ, while the original political concept had already been given up by the *Saxones antiqui*.<sup>21</sup> In official sources, diplomas, and documents, the Anglo-Saxons themselves had long since adopted the Frankish words and concepts of king and kingship.

The Anglo-Saxon king was the *cynig* or *kyning* as the Merovingian king was the *kuning*; the term derived from Germanic *\*kuningaz* but cannot be found in East-Germanic sources. This title was actually the West-Germanic counterpart of *reiks* and developed the way the *reiks-king* did in the East. Beowulf is commonly referred to as *thiod-cynig*.<sup>22</sup> In my opinion, this title connotes and means exactly the same as Theodoric's personal name *\*thiudareiks*: the new type of king has replaced the tribal *thiudans* by assuming his responsibility for the creation and maintenance of a given *thiod*, or people.<sup>23</sup> It was, however, the greater Frankish kingdom that finally gave the word "king" the medieval substance and broader meaning that could be adopted by the Anglo-Saxons, the Scandinavians (including the non-Germanic Finns), and the Slavs. The Merovingian *kuning* created the largest and most enduring realm; he destroyed petty kingdoms in his tribal zone of influence and conquered large foreign kingdoms such as the "Roman" kingdom of Syagrius, the Burgundian kingdom, and parts of both Gothic kingdoms. Thereby the Merovingian king elevated the term *kuning* to a formerly inconceivable degree. The Carolingian successors completed this impressive policy by incorporating the Lombard kingdom into the "Frankish commonwealth" and thus becoming the only Latin kings in Continental Europe.<sup>24</sup>

Most Slavic languages still reflect the rise of the nonroyal king. For example, Russian князь (*knyaz'*), which derives from *\*kuningaz*, means *princeps*, nonroyal lord, whereas король (*korol'*) stands for (foreign) king. It is a commonplace that this term *korol'* derives from the personal name of Charles

<sup>20</sup> Wenskus (n. 14 above) 409ff.

<sup>21</sup> De Vries (n. 17 above) 301. The only known exception to this rule is the archaic alliterative phrase "eorl and ceorl, thegn and theoden" which occurs once in the Anglo-Saxon laws (Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* 1 [Halle an der Salle 1903] 456) and does not mean the king, as two Latin versions of the eleventh century indicate. See *ibid.* 457; cf. also 2.1 (Halle an der Salle 1906) 220.

<sup>22</sup> Beowulf 2579, for example.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Ammianus Marcellinus 28.5.14, where the author distinguished between the Burgundian kings whose name was *hendinos*, and a single *rex sacrorum* (with only priestly functions) whom they called *sinistas*. See n. 17 above. Cf. Wolfram, *Infatuation* 40.

<sup>24</sup> D. H. Green, *The Carolingian Lord* (Cambridge, Eng. 1965) 347f., 507. H. D. Kahl, "Europäische Wortschatzbewegungen im Bereich der Verfassungsgeschichte," *Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanistische Abteilung* 77 (1960) 202ff., 239.

the Great, thus following, for instance, the pattern of *Caesar-kaisar-Kaiser-tsar*. Henrik Birnbaum, who kindly advised me on this difficult topic, points out that *korol'* is not the equivalent of *Carolus* or *Karolus* but of *\*Carolius*; it is not a noun but an adjective. The next question, of course, is: to which noun might this adjective have belonged? Birnbaum considers the possibility that it was *knyaz'*. If he is right, the Slavs redefined the *\*kuningaz-knyaz'* of princely but not royal rank as a *korol'-knyaz'*, that is to say, a Carolingian lord. This is in keeping with the development of the Carolingian rulers and is consistent with the concept and notion of the medieval *kuning* at the height of his power.<sup>25</sup>

As mentioned before, there is strong evidence that the *thiudans* disappeared as a ruling type among the West-Germanic tribes. The reason for this institutional shift is that tribal kingship had been given up by the West-Germanic peoples even before Caesar arrived in Gaul. It is again significant that they followed their Celtic neighbors in abandoning tribal kingship. The attempts to restore this kind of kingship were answered most often by successful resistance, as the fates of Orgetorix, Dumnorix, and Vercingetorix, on the one hand, and Arminius and Civilis, on the other, clearly indicate.<sup>26</sup> The widespread shaping of larger-than-tribal units during the third and fourth centuries<sup>27</sup> and the obvious success of war leaders during the fourth century at the latest brought "everlasting" royal rank to the former.<sup>28</sup> Thus Alaric, the conqueror of Rome in 410, became the *reiks-king* par excellence. He was of noble but nonroyal stock and had to start his career as a nonroyal war leader, as a *dux*, to use the expression of Tacitus.<sup>29</sup> Like Theodoric<sup>30</sup> and Geiseric<sup>31</sup> and many contemporary royal and nonroyal war leaders, he bore a personal name compounded with this very syllable *-rix* that significantly described his *reiks* quality. His victories over the Roman armies proved him to be a true king and his followers made him king. These were Visigoths, of course, but also Ostrogothic groups and other "barbarians," as the sources put it.<sup>32</sup>

In each of the cited cases, those avalanche-like bands of warriors led by a successful, "charismatic" personality would have turned to dust unless the process of consolidation and settlement has been initiated. To achieve this

<sup>25</sup> V. Kiparsky, "Die gemeinlavischen Lehnwörter aus dem Germanischen," *Annales Academiæ scientiarum fennicæ* B 32.2 (1939) 181f., 240ff. Cf. Kahl (n. 24 above) 176ff., 239.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. de Vries (n. 14 above) 304. Wenskus (n. 14 above) 416f., concerning the three Celtic "chieftains," 423, concerning Arminius and Civilis.

<sup>27</sup> Wenskus (n. 14 above) 435ff.

<sup>28</sup> Wolfram, *Splendor imperii* 108ff.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. his *Germania* 7.

<sup>30</sup> Wenskus (n. 14 above) 482ff.

<sup>31</sup> Courtois (n. 4 above) 217f. Wolfram, *Infatuation* 86.

<sup>32</sup> Wenskus (n. 14 above) 476f.; cf. 322.

state of affairs, it took a central political figure, called king,<sup>33</sup> and a given territory wealthy enough to provide the necessary economic base, a kingdom. In other words the king had to turn his kingship into a kingdom, adding the territorial principle to the theoretically still prevailing personal link between himself and his retainers,<sup>34</sup> who had to become a new people.<sup>35</sup> This process of institutional change, however, badly needed the active support of the Romans.

Diplomatic and numismatic sources indicate that about the year 500 the East-Germanic *reiks* and Latin *rex* (both pronounced and often written *rix*) were considered to be homophones or homonyms. Still, the substantial meaning of the two words with quite a different history probably came to be one and the same.<sup>36</sup> The Roman emperor Flavius Claudius Julianus, better known as Julian the Apostate, was proclaimed Augustus in 361 by his Gallic army, like any Germanic war king or king of the victorious army. The soldiers, who were almost all Germanic "barbarians,"<sup>37</sup> elevated him on a warrior's shield after his overwhelming victories over successive waves of Germanic invaders.<sup>38</sup> The Flavian house of Constantine was for the last time able to produce an imperial war leader who was successful and respected enough by the heavily Germanized "Roman" army to use the current trends for reestablishing Rome's physical boundaries and political prestige.<sup>39</sup> With the next generation, the situation started to change radically. The Roman emperors lost their credibility as successful war leaders. Around 400, the East-Germanic *reiks* succeeded in offering himself as the desirable alternative for the Germanic warrior to follow. A hundred years later, the *reiks*-king came to be the king of Romans and Teutons alike. Procopius was actually correct

<sup>33</sup> One of the greatest merits of Wenskus's *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* is to have shown the imperative necessity of kingship for the existence of early medieval tribes and peoples: cf. 485.

<sup>34</sup> Except for the Flavian king title (see above nn. 8, 9), all early medieval royal titles followed the same type, namely "*N. rex gentis/gentium X(Y)*." This gave expression to the political theory that the king is a king of *people(s)* rather than territory. It was not until the beginning of the later Middle Ages that, for example, *Francie* began to replace *Francorum*: see C. T. Wood, "Regnum Francie: A Problem in Capetian Administrative Usage," *Traditio* 23 (1967) 117-147. See also n. 35 below.

<sup>35</sup> This process, of course, implied what I would call the "territorialization" of the tribe for which the Visigothic transmission provides the earliest evidence: King Leowigild, for example, expressed the theory that he reigned the *patria vel gens Gotorum*. This double concept tended to become *Spania*. Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 70.

<sup>36</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 41ff.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Jones, *Later Empire* (n. 3 above) 284-602. For our particular problems, I still prefer E. Stein, *Histoire du bas-empire*, 2 vols. (Paris 1959); cf. esp. 1, 124.

<sup>38</sup> Stein (n. 37 above) 155.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 142ff., attributes this to the enormous victories won by Julian over various Germanic peoples. Julian even crossed the Rhine to attack the bases of potential and actual enemies.

when he mentioned that the barbarians used to call their leader "rhix." He simply failed to add that so did the Romans of Latin and Greek tongues: since about 500 the syllable *rix* (*rhix*) meant almost the same to all of them.<sup>40</sup>

But is this semantic evidence enough to conclude that the Romans supported the new bodies politic, even if we can buttress semantics by historical facts? What was the Roman attitude toward the concepts of "king," "kingship," and "kingdom" and how did it apply to their new rulers and political systems?

This question is threefold:

First, Roman political tradition was antiroyal. Hellenistic anti-Roman propaganda explained Roman politics as almost exclusively determined by hatred of kings.<sup>41</sup> Caesar's fate supported this conviction.<sup>42</sup> The Greek historian Appian, native of Alexandria and born about A.D. 95, notes that the Romans were bound by an old oath not to accept kings as their rulers.<sup>43</sup> How did this attitude change?

Second, the Diocletian reform separated the military power from civil authority and established two kinds of public careers. The military hierarchy, especially of the West, became more and more the exclusive province of barbarians, while the civil bureaucracy, by far the more important means to consolidate and organize a state, for quite obvious reasons remained Roman and intact.<sup>44</sup> How could the king overcome this difficulty and establish himself as head of both powers?

Third, everybody agrees that the tribal units that founded kingdoms were heavily outnumbered by the Roman population. Five percent of the total population might have been non-Roman; in some kingdoms the percentage of newcomers may have been even lower.<sup>45</sup> This has always caused me to wonder why the Romans did not drive out the intruders. How could a Germanic king and his primitive tribal organization get along with that seemingly overwhelming majority of potential enemies?

The three subquestions could be answered as follows:

First, concerning the antiroyal tradition: Appian not only indicates that the Romans might have cursed the name of king, but also states "they [the emperors] are very kings in fact."<sup>46</sup> Cassius Dio (d. 235), a Greek observer

<sup>40</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 41ff.

<sup>41</sup> H. Fuchs, *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt*, ed. 2 (Berlin 1964) 16f.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. G. Dobesch, *Caesars Apotheose zu Lebzeiten und sein Ringen um den Königstitel* (Vienna 1966).

<sup>43</sup> *Romaine* 53.17.1f.

<sup>44</sup> Stein (n. 37 above) 1, 69ff.

<sup>45</sup> S. Katz, *The Decline of Rome and the Rise of Medieval Europe* (Ithaca 1958) 115. L. Schmidt, "Das germanische Volkstum in den Reichen der Völkerwanderung," *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift* 29 (1935).

<sup>46</sup> *Romaine* 53.17.1f.



of Roman history and policy and Roman high official and consul, interpreted the Roman polity since Augustus: "The word monarchy, to be sure, the Romans so detested that they called their emperors neither dictators nor king nor anything of the sort; yet, since the final authority for the government devolves upon them, they must needs be kings."<sup>47</sup> This logical conclusion was in keeping with the traditional theory in both Greek and Latin. We have only to recall Cicero's definition of king and kingdom: "When the direction of all depends on one person, we call this individual a king, and this form of political constitution a kingdom."<sup>48</sup>

We keep in mind that the Greek-Hellenistic interpretation of the Roman monarchy was pragmatic: Augustus' construction could not conceal the reality that authors such as Appian and Cassius Dio described in the proper terms. But the Greek-Hellenistic approach was not only pragmatic, it was also based upon an old philosophical conception of the philosopher king, the ideal monarch. The application of the venerable Platonic concept to the Roman emperor became more and more common as time went on. Marcus Aurelius is the best known of those whom the term philosopher king could actually fit. The final reevaluation of royal rulership was certainly one of the most important features of the general process described as the Hellenization of the Roman political theory.<sup>49</sup>

On the eve of the fourth century, the leading and educated strata of Roman society, we may assume, must have been theoretically well prepared to accept the idea of royal government. Furthermore, the imperial government as established by Diocletian and Constantine must have looked like any Hellenistic kingdom in practice. Little wonder that Constantine took the first step of which we know from theory (writing, reading, and feeling) to institutional realization, when he determined the imperial succession.

Diocletian had organized the empire in four administrative districts, headed by two *Augusti*, full-fledged emperors, and two *Caesares*, second-rank emperors with the right of succession after the *Augusti* to whom they were subject. Constantine tried to fill this tetrarchy with his own descendants, but thanks to his aggressive fatherly love, he had only three sons left. He chose the elder son of his brother to be the second Caesar. But this man had a younger brother, called Hannibalianus. Constantine, to indemnify Hannibalianus, married him to his daughter and made her Augusta. Then Constantine ordered that Hannibalianus should be "King of the Kings and Pontic nations."<sup>50</sup> This title betrays a good deal of political philosophy. Hannibalianus assumed the title of the Persian king, and he was obviously supposed

<sup>47</sup> Cited by F. Dvornik, "Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy," *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 9.2 (1966) 519.

<sup>48</sup> *De Rep.* 1.26.

<sup>49</sup> Dvornik (n. 47 above) 453ff.

<sup>50</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 34f.

to become a king of nations. Therefore, I would say, he was supposed to rule over Christian Armenia, which was continuously disputed between Persians and Romans, or to establish a Roman dynasty in the kingdom of Persia, after having conquered it, of course. There are indications that Roman territory was also to be added to his dominion. If we are right in this, the Roman emperor himself considered the Romans to be a gens, a tribe, a nation like any other in the world, and, of necessity, to be ruled by a king.<sup>51</sup>

None of those plans actually materialized. Constantine's sons killed their cousins, and the final conquest of Armenia or of Persia remained as impossible as ever. Kingdoms were not established on Roman soil until the approach of the next century. In 382, Theodosius the Great came to an agreement with the victorious Visigoths along the lines of the traditional federate system after, however, having changed one most important condition. Up to that time, the Roman government had concluded treaties with tribal units who lived outside the boundaries. The tribes had to provide troops and were allowed to keep their own political organization. It sometimes even looks as if the Romans supported the accession of kings ruling over federates, since it was obviously easier to deal with one dependent king, recognized by a given federate people, than with a plurality of noblemen and chieftains, who would consider themselves to be each other's peers and equals.<sup>52</sup>

In 382, however, the emperor was forced to allow the Visigoths to maintain their political and socioeconomic identity within the Roman polity. At that very moment, the Visigoths did not have a king as a central political figure. But they were soon to make Alaric their king.<sup>53</sup>

The emperor reached the settlement with the tribe, not with a territory called Gothia or Visigothia. But, despite the personal principles according to which the agreement was made, the Visigoths lived in a territory that was populated by Roman citizens. Little wonder that Alaric's successor, Athaulf, already considered the possibility of replacing Romania by Gothia; he did, however, reject the idea as utopian.<sup>54</sup>

In the years to come, more and more Roman citizens were subjected by imperial decision and recognition to Germanic kingdoms.<sup>55</sup> In sum, we can

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Salvian, *De gubernatione Dei* 5.15: "... barbari, qui sunt unius gentis et regis."

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Tacitus, *Germania* 42: "sed vis et potentia regibus ex auctoritate Romana." Italicus, Arminius' nephew, was invested as king over his tribe by the Roman government and upon the request of a strong Cheruscan party; the same group which opposed his uncle's kingship, however, also resisted the emperor-sent king. Tacitus, *Annal.* 11.16, Wenskus (n. 14 above) 321ff.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 477ff.

<sup>54</sup> Orosius, *Hist.* 7.43.3. Cf. G. B. Ladner, "Religious Renewal and Ethnic-Social Pressures as Forms of Life in Christian History," *Theology of Renewal* 2 (1968) 333.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Procopius, *De bell. goth.* 1.1.9: "It was about this same time that the Goths also, who were dwelling in Thrace with the permission of the emperor, took arms against the

say that the imperial policy along with a changed political theory prepared Roman citizens to accept royal government.

Also, we have to consider the role of the Roman bureaucracy. A Sicilian-Vespers-like revolt occurred in Byzantium in July 400 in the course of which the Gothophile government was overthrown and most of its Germanic supporters were eliminated and destroyed. The victory of that "national" Roman movement allowed the thorough reorganization of the army. The results were the following: First, federates were no longer recruited from tribes within the empire. The commanders of those troops were usually Roman natives. For instance, among the twenty-two commanding officers of Belisarius's army were eighteen Roman natives (most of them from Thracia), three Huns, and only one of Germanic origin. Second, the high military command of the eastern empire was decentralized and divided among a college of equals. Third, the emperor had still a certain cadre of crack troops under his immediate command.<sup>57</sup>

By way of contrast, the western government could not or would not take advantage of a similar movement that destroyed the almighty general Stilicho and a great many of his Germanic followers. The Vandal Stilicho, to be sure, had an immediate successor of Germanic stock; but this man could not keep his position either. His fall paved the way for a Roman native to become *magister peditum praesentalis*, that is to say, commander-in-chief of the western Roman army in the "presence" of the emperor. This important shift, however, was not exploited to achieve the same reorganization and decentralization of the high command as had been one decade before in the East. Instead, a cautious reading of the sources reveals that it was this very Roman officer, Constantius, who definitely assumed the office for which Stilicho had failed to receive final imperial recognition. It is even more surprising and against Roman political experience that Constantius, having become the third emperor of this name, did not abolish this "superoffice" that so obviously paved the way to become Augustus.

Constantius was the first to be called *patricius et magister peditum praesentalis*. This position allowed interference in civil affairs, although Constantius was primarily a military officer. Until then, "patrician," meaning "father of the emperor," was a title usually given to top civil officials. Now things had completely changed: a new superoffice came into being, which semiofficial sources called "patriciate of the West," and this was the antecedent and prelude to the Italian kingdoms and the Exarchate of Ravenna directly, and of the Gallic kingdoms indirectly. In Gaul, the head of the army was the *magister equitum Galliarum*; he certainly was inferior to the Italy-

Romans under the leadership of Theodoric, a man who was of patrician rank and had attained the consular office in Byzantium."

<sup>56</sup> Stein (n. 37 above) 1.235-241.

stationed commander-in-chief in the presence of the emperor, but he became eligible for the desirable patrician dignity in the course of the fifth century.<sup>57</sup>

As time went on, the Gallic patriciate as well as the higher Italian patriciate of the West was reopened to Germanic war leaders, among whom Rikimer was the most effective and famous general. He ruled over the shrinking territories of the western empire, which were without a resident emperor, with a single Augustus in faraway Constantinople. Rikimer's nephew Gundobad, who was to become his successor, had yet to leave Italy. On his return to his Burgundian tribe in the Rhone valley, he was made king. Thus he was the first to show the links between patriciate and kingship, between office and royal rulership.<sup>58</sup>

Odovakar stressed that mutual relationship even more. He deposed the emperor Augustulus and killed the patrician of the West, who was the real father of the emperor; Odovakar was then made king by mostly-Germanic federates, called the Italian army. But although he was of royal blood, the new king considered his kingship only a valuable object of bargaining for imperial recognition. He offered his kingship to the emperor in Constantinople in exchange for investiture as patrician of the West under the same conditions granted to Rikimer. Odovakar could not fully make the bargain with the emperor; yet Theodoric, who by imperial command set out for Italy to fight the Italian king, considered a *tyrannus* by the imperial policy, did so not as a king of the Goths but as an imperial officer, as *consul et patricius*.<sup>59</sup> The theory behind this imperial construction, however, was clearly outdated, at least as far as the Germanic polity and its need for kingship was concerned.<sup>60</sup> For the third time in his life, Theodoric was made king by an ad hoc body of retainers; this time his *comitatus* felt that the final victory over Odovakar was just a matter of time. They elected him king without awaiting the permission of the new emperor.<sup>61</sup>

Now it was up to the imperial government to keep pace with the creation of kingdoms by bestowing imperial offices upon the kings, especially if they were as powerful and successful as Clovis, the king of the united Frankish peoples. Clovis was formally invested as patrician by imperial grant and privilege after he destroyed and conquered Visigothic Gaul. Although there are doubts about the nature of the office bestowed upon Clovis, most recent research has shown that it was the patriciate.<sup>62</sup> Among other evi-

<sup>57</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 45ff. Stein (n. 37 above) 265ff. A. H. M. Jones, "The Constitutional Position of Odovakar and Theodoric," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962) 126-130.

<sup>58</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 87ff.

<sup>59</sup> Stein (n. 37 above) 1.398, 2.54ff. Cf. n. 55 above.

<sup>60</sup> See n. 33 above.

<sup>61</sup> Anonymous Valesianus, in MGH Auct. ant. 9.306ff.

<sup>62</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* 2.38, interpreted by K. Hauck, "Von einer spätantiken Handkultur zum karolingischen Europa," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 1 (1967) 30ff. See



dence<sup>63</sup> there is the famous Theodoric letter, written to the emperor in Constantinople immediately after the day at Tours in 508 when Clovis was invested as patrician. In the letter the Gothic king judges the step taken by the imperial government to be very unfriendly, and blames the emperor for having broken the special state of confidence and peace prevailing between the empire and its *imago*, its copy, the kingdom of Italy. Theodoric's kingship implies precedence among the "kings of the nations" by virtue of its specific political tradition and base—that is to say, in succession of the patriciate of the West. This means, further, that Italy was ruled by a Flavian king instead of the Flavian emperor, and not by the king of any tribe. It is evident that this political theory must have been heavily threatened by the imperial investiture of Clovis with the patrician title. But it was not only theory which was at stake. Theodoric, a patrician king of Italy who had destroyed another patrician king of Italy, must have realized the real dangers which could come from that victorious Frankish patrician king Clovis.<sup>64</sup>

Throughout the fifth, sixth, and even seventh and eighth centuries, the mutual relationship between Latin kingship and western patriciate came to be one of the most important political and theoretical factors. Finally, it was still a patriciate—even if modified—of the West which paved Charlemagne's way toward his imperial coronation on Christmas Day 800.<sup>65</sup>

To sum up the second point of the investigation of the Roman attitude toward kingship, we can say: The imperial recognition of federate kingship on Roman soil was originally valid for the tribal unit alone. This kingship necessarily combined military command and civil authority. The tribal unit occupied Roman soil; among the Romans, the tribe and its king often were the only effective executive power in a given area. Thus, the territorial principle was quickly introduced; the king became the only authority in a given territory to be supported by imperial recognition and decision. The kings of the federates were automatically high Roman military officials. In Gaul and especially in Italy, the king's Roman military office merged with a new Roman superoffice, the patriciate of the West, established against Diocletian reform principles in the civil bureaucracy.

The third of these considerations concerns the lack of resistance from the Roman population. As mentioned before, the "national" reaction against

Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 126, where I have submitted my questioning the whole "honorary consulate" theory. Now I would stress my doubts even more. Perhaps we would do more justice to Gregory's account if we understand Clovis as "consul et patricius" by which formula the Frankish king could have reached the Ostrogoth, Theodoric, against whom the Byzantine-Frankish alliance was devised.

<sup>63</sup> In the table of contents of the second book of his *History of the Franks*, Gregory calls chap. 38 "De patriato Chlodovechi regis."

<sup>64</sup> Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1.1.1. Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 51 n. 103, concerning "Theodoric."

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 45-54, 225ff.

the Germanic infiltration succeeded in the East and failed in the West. Many scholars see this inability of the western half of the empire as a sufficient indication of the critical conditions in those areas. Nobody can deny the difference between West and East. The eastern half of the empire was better off economically, geographically, and demographically. But the Germanic intruders were only five percent of the total population. Moreover, it is simply a fairy tale that the Romans were unable to fight and to become soldiers. There has remained, for example, the Frankish tribal saga according to which King Childerich, Clovis's father, was driven out for his unseemly behavior with the Frankish ladies. In his place, the Franks chose the "emperor-sent Roman commander-in-chief and patrician Aegidius" as their king. This account is rather confusing, but it sufficiently indicates the high prestige of a Roman warrior and general with the Germanic allies of the empire that he represented.<sup>66</sup>

In contrast, it took the armies of Justinian twenty years to reconquer Italy, because the support by the "Romans" of the peninsula was so poor. Isidore of Seville belonged to a Roman family who rejected the Byzantine reconquest of parts of Spain as invasion. Isidore's literary production justifies the Gothic rule over Spain.<sup>67</sup> The Vandal kingdom, moreover, was overthrown by the Moors rather than by Belisarius's army, as the late Christian Courtois showed in his brilliant *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*.<sup>68</sup>

The Germanic invasions were, of course, invasions and not polite occupations. It would be a romantic glorification in terms of the "noble savage" pattern of yesteryear to call those invasions liberation from the yoke of slavery that the late Roman empire had imposed upon its own subjects. Furthermore, there was a strong religious conflict between the Catholic Romans and the Germanic Arians that was successfully avoided only by the Franks, who converted directly from heathendom to Catholicism. We know of anti-Germanic Roman movements active under Germanic rule as late as the end of

<sup>66</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.* 2.12. R. Wenskus, "Bemerkungen zum Thunlingus der Lex Sallica," *Festschrift Percy Ernst Schramm* (1964) 217ff., tries successfully to explain this strange account. Aegidius was, however, not the only Roman representative considered worthy and able to become a Germanic king. After his first victories on Italian soil, a large group of the Ostrogoths offered Belisarius the Gothic-Italian kingship and kingdom. Procopius, *De bell. goth.* 2.29.17-27. Cf. Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 47f.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Procopius, *De bell. goth.* 3.11.10: "So spoke Belisarius. But no one of the enemy came over to him, neither Goth nor Roman." 3.12.8: "And this also you must know well, my master, that the majority of those serving in your army have deserted to the enemy" (Belisarius to Justinian). On Isidore of Seville, see H. Messmer, "Hispania-Idee und Göttenmythos," *Geist und Werk der Zeiten* 5 (1960). Jones (n. 3 above) 2.1059, contradicts his own statement, 2.1022.

<sup>68</sup> Courtois (n. 4 above) 353ff.

the sixth century.<sup>69</sup> But we have to admit that all those efforts must have gained weak support, since they failed everywhere before long.

Yet there are indications that the "process of acculturation" worked the other way. Throughout the Migrations, conservative Roman patriots complained that their fellow Romans, especially the aristocratic youth, spoke Germanic tongues, wore Germanic clothes, and had Germanic hairstyles—they had a sort of Germanic hippie outlook, we would say nowadays.<sup>70</sup>

The conclusion remains that the Romans cooperated with the intruders at an early stage. Maybe there is no perfect solution to the problem of a lack of resistance. But I think that what might be called the "process of re-archaization" worked faster and more radically in the West than in the East. By the term "re-archaization" I mean:

1. Particularism and provincialism, alienation, and detachment from the empire as political reality grew with fatal speed in the course of the fifth century.<sup>71</sup> The Gallic senatorial class, for instance, was finally frustrated by the fall of "their" emperor Avitus.<sup>72</sup>

2. Destruction of the citystructure of the empire and thereby of those classes who identified themselves with the empire, was caused mainly by a mistaken tax policy toward the cities.<sup>73</sup>

3. The converse growth of huge holdings anticipated the medieval dominion over land and dependent people. Incidentally, those vast holdings of the leading senatorial class were actually called *regna*, "kingdoms," in contemporary sources. The same term *regna* was also applied to the whole empire, which the contemporaries could no longer consider to be a monolithic entity.<sup>74</sup> The classic Roman theory according to which the empire was a confederation of cities came to be replaced by the interpretation of the empire as a plurality of *regna*.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>69</sup> E. Zöllner, "Die politische Stellung der Völker im Frankenreich," *Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 13 (1950) 94. Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 52.

<sup>70</sup> K. F. Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (1948), provides sufficient evidence beyond the one-sided statement of Salvian, *De gubernatione Dei* 5.23: "quam quod plerique et honesti et nobiles et quibus Romanus status summo et splendori esse debuit et honori, . . . compulsi sunt, ut nolint esse Romani." Cf. 5.37. See also Claudius Claudianus, *In Rufinum* 2.11.78-85. D. Sinor, "The Barbarians," *Diogenes* 18 (1957) 51. Wenskus (n. 14 above) 537. Zöllner (n. 69 above) 107ff.

<sup>71</sup> Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform* (Cambridge, Mass. 1959) 251ff. One of the scholars who saw this phenomenon of alienation clearly is M. Rostovtzeff in his famous work *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, ed. 2 (Oxford 1963) 1.534ff. In my opinion, however, he overstates the "class" conflict, which no doubt existed, at the expense of the particularistic tendencies prevailing in various parts of the empire, which came to be called *regna*.

<sup>72</sup> Stein (n. 37 above) 1.368-373.

<sup>73</sup> M. Rostovtzeff (n. 71 above) 1.513ff. Jones (n. 3 above) 2.734ff.

<sup>74</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 35.

<sup>75</sup> Jones (n. 3 above) 2.712. Rostovtzeff (n. 71 above) 1.533ff.

4. This simplification of Roman political theory and philosophy reflected the simplification and change of the Roman institutions and vice versa. Irrational and mystical concepts of blood, innate power, and virtue became more and more important with the Roman ruling class itself, and not just with the Germanic kings and noblemen who were considered to be incarnations of, or at least derived from, Woden and other pagan gods. Cassiodorus, Theodoric's "prime minister," devised a genealogy of the Gothic kings of Italy which, modeled on the pattern of the mystical seventeen kings of Alba Longa from Aeneas to Romulus, named Gaut-Woden as the first king of the Goths. This was presented to the Roman senators with the following justification: "As you believe yourselves to be of old and venerable stock, so, too, are the kings who have to rule over you." This seventeen-king succession was of such a strong appeal that even a Lombard king of the seventh century used it for legitimization.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, the Holy Scriptures stressed the non-Roman concepts of king, nation, and the God-chosen state. The Scriptures also provided strong anti-Roman traditions that could easily merge with the popular anti-Roman feelings still alive in the western provinces of Spain and Gaul.<sup>77</sup> On a lower level, the Roman veneer was ripped off. Saint Jerome noted that the people in the countryside around Trier, one of the four imperial capitals at this time, spoke a Celtic idiom, not Latin.<sup>78</sup> The "rebirth" of nonclassical traditions and modes is reflected by the "name fashion" that favored non-Roman and nonurban rustic names.<sup>79</sup>

In sum, it was this very process labeled "re-archaization" that prepared the economically, geographically, and demographically weak West to lose its political identity; or to find a new identity in the smaller dimensions<sup>80</sup> of a

<sup>76</sup> Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 99ff.

<sup>77</sup> Fuchs (n. 41 above) 19ff.

<sup>78</sup> Jones (n. 3 above) 992f. J. B. Russell, "Celt and Teuton," *The Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. L. T. White, Jr., UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Contributions 3 (Berkeley 1966) 240.

<sup>79</sup> See "Prosopographie" in Stroheker (n. 70 above).

<sup>80</sup> The following consideration is more a feeling as yet than something known or even proved by sufficient evidence. But, considering the succession of centralization and decentralization in European history, on one hand, and refuting the rather primitive but popular description of this phenomenon as succession of order and chaos, on the other, I would say that one "trend" in European history has been the "thorough organization of the smaller space" after the universal body politic had failed to provide sufficient external protection and internal prosperity. From this point of view, the rise of the Frankish principalities during the dismemberment of the Carolingian empire could be much better explained as replacement of ineffective forms of government rather than as mere usurpation, as aristocratic chaos, and so on. The same would hold true for the territorial principalities in Germany, Italy, and elsewhere. Certainly, to assume this point of view, it was necessary to abandon the nineteenth-century belief in the growing, centralized, and universal national state as a "good thing."

Germanic kingdom that in turn largely depended on the cooperation of the Romans, especially of the senatorial class. It is also true that the senatorial class in Italy, Spain, and Gaul was courted by the new rulers. With royal support and permission, the senators achieved even more power and prestige than they had known before under the Roman emperors. This order became the backbone of the ecclesiastical organization, which transmitted a sort of administrative continuity to the new bodies politic; and, although theoretically not represented, it was in fact responsible for the kingdoms of the Franks, Burgundians, Goths, Lombards, and, to some extent, even for the African Vandals virtually becoming Latin kingdoms.<sup>81</sup>

The conclusion of all those considerations concerning the shaping of the Latin kingdom of the early Middle Ages could read as follows: The early medieval kingdom was founded by a *reiks* or *kuning*, a king of a victorious warrior retinue, whose rulership was institutionalized and incorporated into the western Latin half of the Roman empire by means of the federate system. This was actually an old Roman institution. It, however, was modified in favor of the king involved when the emperors or their representatives lost the image and credibility of being successful leaders of warrior retinues by themselves. The treaty of 382, settled between Theodosius and the Visigoths, made way for the maintenance and organization of non-Roman political structures on Roman soil. In the following decades, one king after another was allowed by imperial order and recognition to establish his kingdom on Roman soil. As leader of a federation, the king was automatically the highest military official in a given area. In Italy and Gaul, the king was able to occupy (or at least to attach himself to) the late Roman position of the patrician and commander-in-chief in the presence of the emperor. This highest magistrate abolished the Diocletian system that had separated military command from civil authority. Thus, it provided the best possible foothold for the king to become the head of the civil bureaucracy of each dominion. The kings in Spain and Roman Africa did not have this institutional link, but despite this disadvantage, their kingdoms followed the same patterns as did those in the north. Thus we are able to speak of the early medieval kingdom as a specific type of institution.

According to the treaties concluded by the Vandal and Spanish-Gothic kings with the empire, the local bureaucracy was required to obey the kings. The lack of the patriciate in Africa and Spain, however, decreased the loyalty of the kings involved to the empire. The kings of Roman Africa and Spain were the first to "shake off the yoke of the treaty," to become completely independent, almost sovereigns in the modern sense of the word. This evaluation, however, must not be considered to express a contemporary value judgment, since it is evident that Theodoric, who observed the closest relations

<sup>81</sup> See "Prosopographie" in Strohecker (n. 70 above).

to the empire, enjoyed the highest esteem among his contemporaries and fellow kings.<sup>82</sup>

An early medieval kingdom was a multiracial or polyethnic, yet Latin, successor state of the empire. It was called, to be sure, after the prevailing tribal element or elements. Except in the little-known Berber kingdom in and around Altava, the Romans were theoretically not represented. Personal law and right, however, secured their special status and national identity as it did for the other ethnic groups. The prevailing tribal element provided pre-Christian sacred traditions concerning king and kingship, and these were familiar and general enough that the Romans and other ethnic groups could identify with them. Christianization of the king and the inner circle of his people by no means abolished or weakened those traditions.<sup>83</sup>

The kingdoms were Latin, since the official language for expressing political, legal, and socioeconomic matters was usually Latin.<sup>84</sup> This fact mirrored the conviction of the newcomers that Latin was the only adequate means of communication for effective statehood; or, in other words, that Roman statehood, modified and re-archaized though it was, could be the only possible form of government and administration.<sup>85</sup> This image of "Romania" as a plurality of *regna*, ruled by powerful kings to whom one might belong one day, must have been established with the ruling class of the Germanic peoples when the majority of them were still outside the empire and before the final effort was made to create a kingdom on Roman soil.<sup>86</sup> Such a kingdom, finally,

<sup>82</sup> Wolfram, *Splendor imperii* (n. 1 above) 108ff.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* 126.

<sup>84</sup> To Jones (n. 3 above) 2.992, must be added Wolfram, *Infatigatio* 42, as far as the Gothic language is concerned; Gothic was used for legal texts of which, however, nothing has remained.

<sup>85</sup> See n. 54, above.

<sup>86</sup> I consider the following evidence to be very important proof for this assertion. In 1927 a solid gold medallion, weighing one pound, was found at the Russian-Polish border. On the obverse it showed two crudely rendered emperors on horseback and a legend: REGIS ROMANORUM. I wrote to Philip Grierson, the expert in this field, about this strange legend on a strange piece of gold. He answered that the medallion was a contemporary Germanic copy of a Roman medallion of which no specimens are known. Since an inscription REGIS ROMANORUM on the original was quite inconceivable, Grierson imagined that the obverse of the original had no inscription at all, and that the legend on the Germanic imitation was an invention of the Germanic and evidently Latin-writing copyist. Finally, Grierson concluded on certain convincing grounds that this medallion was made from the plunder taken at Adrianople in 378. This piece of heavy gold still stems from the fourth century; it received its final shape by and for men to whom Roman statehood was important. They must have understood Latin, although they were no longer prepared to accept those "Latin" emperors as more than kings of nations, kings of the Romans, as this fit their own political experience and tradition; that is to say, with the memory of the vast and powerful Roman kingdom still in mind. The kings of the Romans were interpreted as if they were kings of the Goths. They were, moreover, two kings fitting the patterns of age-old

was the expression of the trends of the period in which the reality of the Mediterranean empire was buried forever, although the ideas and hopes involved have never died.

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sacred kingship (see Wenskus [n. 14 above] 321). Yet these equations did not mean that one would or could conceive of any language but Latin to express terms of statehood connected with the Roman world. Cf. Wolfram, *Intitulatio* 36ff. K. Hauck, *Goldbrakteaten aus Sievern*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 1 (Munich 1970) 398.

## PROCOPIUS AND THE CHRONOLOGY OF CLOVIS'S REIGN

by Bernard S. Bachrach

The history of early medieval Europe is plagued by uncertain chronology, and the reign of Clovis (481-511) is one of the most serious examples of this problem. Some of the very important events of his reign, including his marriage, his victory over the Alamans, and his conversion, are variously dated. Other events such as the Frankish acquisition of the area between the Seine and the Loire and the elimination of the Frankish *reguli*, who ruled small warrior bands throughout northern Gaul, remain undated owing to lack of evidence.<sup>1</sup>

Despite an abundance of contested dates, scholars now seem to embrace one of two systems: the long chronology or the short chronology. The creator and champion of the former, André van de Vyver, supports the dates 503, 506, and 506 for the marriage, the victory over the Alamans and his conversion, respectively. The key to this chronology is the rejection of the dates found in the *History of Gregory of Tours* (the traditional chronology), especially 496 for the battle of Tolbiac, and the acceptance of the date 506 for the battle, on the basis of a letter written to Clovis by Cassiodorus for his ruler, the Ostrogothic king, Theodoric.<sup>2</sup> The most effective supporter of the short chronology has been Ferdinand Lot. In general, Lot argues for the acceptance of the traditional chronology (pre-496 for the marriage, 496 for the battle of Tolbiac, and 496-497 for the conversion). He does, however, contend that the Franks fought more than one battle against the Alamans

<sup>1</sup> For their help in the preparation of this paper I thank Professor Richard W. Emery of Queens College and Professor Walter Goffart of the University of Toronto. The problem of Frankish expansion is discussed by Lucien Musset, *Les invasions: les vagues germaniques* ed. 2 (Paris 1969) 125-130, 300-303.

<sup>2</sup> André van de Vyver, "La victoire contre les Alamans et la conversion de Clovis," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 15 (1936) 859-914; 16 (1937) 35-94; "Clovis et la politique méditerranéenne," *Études d'histoire dédiées à la mémoire de Henri Pirenne* (Brussels 1937) 367-388; "L'unique victoire contre les Alamans et la conversion de Clovis en 506," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 17 (1938) 793-813; "La chronologie du règne de Clovis d'après la légende et d'après l'histoire," *Moyen Age* 53 (1947) 177-196. The problem is reviewed by Georges Tessier, *Le baptême de Clovis* (Paris 1964) chaps. 4, 5.