THE SHAPING OF THE EARLY MEDIEVAL KINGDOM

by Horwig 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 breach of political continuity occurred in former Roman Britain when the Anglo-Saxons founded their highly Germanic kingdoms. Thus it is safe to conclude that Continental Europe and Roman Africa the treatment of the early medieval kingdom as the forerunner 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 medals, 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."
which had been introduced under Augustus. Any member of the imperial family could use the honorific name Flavius as could "barbarian" military officials when they obtained Roman citizenship. Imperial, which was both title and praenomen, was, of course, reserved for the emperor himself. 

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

As the barbarians used to name their leaders? What does this comment on this menu to us, since we have just stated that these "leaders" themselves used Latin titles? First of all, we would answer that vaga is the Greek equivalent of rexx, and it is evident that the Latin term was used in Greek from the second century onward. 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, however, an important source that provides a possible explanation for Priscus's statement, and for the absence of the year 560 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 Βασιλεύς ("commander," "governor," "military official"), Ulfilas used the Gothic term reiks (pronounced reiks). At the same time, however, he rendered the famous question of Pontius Pilate to Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" by "Thi is Rhtamana indoors?" This 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 Old, people, thus linking the thinamate the people's representative par excellence.


4 Ulfilas, Gotisches Alphabet (p. 1 above) 77, 111, and 196f.

5 Ulfilas, Gotisches Alphabet (p. 1 above) 77, 111, and 196f.

6 Ulfilas, Gotisches Alphabet (p. 1 above) 77, 111, and 196f.

7 Ulfilas, Gotisches Alphabet (p. 1 above) 77, 111, and 196f.
Reiks, however, is not a Germanic word, although it is obviously akin to Latin rex, Celtic reig, and Sanskrit rاج. 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 reig and its derivation *rijha ("realm, "Reiks") was to become a loanword with the Germanic peoples when the Celtic nations prevailed in Europe. These peoples then banned the first bodies politic larger than small tribal units whose religions 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 composed with *rijha, a form of reiks, was the Gothic Hildiswinth, which literally meant King of the Hild. The Bilt was the famous Celtic tribe living in Bohemia who gave the country its name in the Germanic tongues. The Bilt actually supported the first Germanic victory of peoples to hit the ancient world, or, in other words, the first Germanic *rijhaz. Yet the Gotthith Ulfils still used thinkans for king and understand the term reiks only as a term inferior to king, although the homonym reiks had originally meant not only "king," but "greater king."

This seeming contradiction can be resolved by a relatively well-founded explanation from Cassius and Tacitus through Ammianus Marcellinus and Jordanus in Waldkind of Gevers and even more recent authors, to the evidence for two different kinds of Germanic king: one popular, one military.

The king of the people, when a great many of the sources call thinkans, thinkchiz, thinkans, or the like, was chosen from the royal family: he was the archetype of a tribal king, elected because of his noble origin, 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 noble or of equal stock; the latter would have actually denied his start. The criterion for his election, which was carried out by his relatives, was not his origin but a decisive victory, or an outstanding success in settling newly won territories, in short, a glorious heroic effort that proved his noble qualities. He was chosen ex virtute. He was the king of a socially mobile society. In other words, the king of the warrior reiks 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 Geoges Dumarcq who, in systematizing the Indo-European position, discovered this polarity of royal authority in a pair of complimentary gods.

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term *bindus* was also found or even died out in the center of the Continental West-Germanic areas where tribal kingship long since had been abandoned. The old term *Theoder* exists in Anglo-Saxon poetry and occurs as *thiodes* 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 Saxons and Franks. In official sources, diplomatic, 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 epigone or epigone of the Merovingian king in the lands of the Uniosians and Saxons (including the non-Germanic Frisians) and the Franks. The Merovingian kings ruled the largest and most enduring realm; he desired petty kingdoms in his tribal zone of influence and conquered large foreign kingdoms such as the Waifian kingdom and parts of the Christian kingdom. Therefore, the Merovingian kings ruled the kingdom and the former incommensurable degree. The Carolingian successors completed this impressive policy by incorporating the Lombard kingdom into the "Frankish commonwealth" and thus monarchs the only Latin kings in Continental Europe. Most Saxon languages still reflect the rise of the royal king. For example, the **stomacul (towacul)**, which derives from *towacul*, means principes, monarchal lord, whereas **towald (towald)** stands for foreign king. It is a commonplace that this term *towald* derives from the personal name of Charles.

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26 Words (e. a. 12 above) 1001.
27 De Vries (e. a. 12 above) 390. The only known exception to this rule is the Wilde alte höfische poetische phrase "voll der erbst, das ist der edelthroner," which occurs once in the Angish-Saxon laws (Fulk Aleranum, Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen 2 [Halle an der Saale 1963] 366) and does not mean the king, as two Latin versions of the eleventh century indicate. See (ed. 137; cf. ed. 1 G. H. K. [G. Saal 1953] 230).
28 J. L. Teppel 2579, for example.
29 Cf. Annals Manuscript 28.1.4, where the author distinguished between the Anglo-Saxon kings where name was known, and a single 25 known even in early periods, whom they called kings. See ed. 18 above. Cf. Wulfstan, Sfithuna 46.
state of affairs, it took a central political figure, called king, and a given territory wealthy enough to provide the necessary economic base, a kingdom. In either words the king had to turn his kingdom into a kingdom, adding the territorial principle to the theoretically still prevailing personal link between himself and his retainers, who had to become a new people. 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 tribes and Latin idea (both pronounced and written in Latin) 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. The Roman emperor Flavius Claudius Justinianus, 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, elevated him on a warrior's shield after his overwhelming victories over successive waves of Germanic invaders. The Flavian house of Constantius 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 seize the current trends for reestablishing Rome's physical boundaries and political prestige. With the next generation, the situation started to change radically. The Hunsus emperors lost their credibility as successful war leaders. About 900, the East-Germanic tribes succeeded in offering himself as the desirable alternative for the Germanic warrior to follow. A hundred years later, the -kingdom came to be the king of Romans and Teuton kingdom. Persuasion was actually correct.

When he mentioned that the barbarians used to call their leader “king,” he simply failed to add that so did the Huns of Latin and Greek tongue since about 500 the syllable rik (rive) meant almost the same to all of them. But is this semantic evidence enough to conclude that the Huns supported the new nobility public, even if we can dismiss semanics by historical facts? What was the Huns' attitude toward the concept of “king,” “kingship,” and “kingdom” and how did it apply to the new rulers and political systems? This question is threefold:

First, Huns political tradition was antiroyal. Hellenistic anti-Roman propaganda explained Roman politics as almost exclusively determined by hatred of kings. Tacitus' fate supported this conviction. The Greek historian Appian, author of Alexander and born about A.D. 95, notes that the Romans were bound by an old oath not to accept kings as their rulers. How did this attitude change? Second, the Discretion 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 Huns and Huns. 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-Huns; in some kingdoms the percentage of newcomers may have been even lower. This has always caused no to wonder why the Huns did not drive out the invaders. 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 Huns might have called the name of king, but also states “they [the emperors] are very kings in fact.” Cassius Dio (A.D. 255), a Greek observer

90 Wolfhumb, Itinerario 111.
91 P. Flavius, De gestis Vindex et alii in diebus Seleucis, col. 2 (Berlin 1801) 111.
92 W. Winkels, Gesamtauflage zu Lebenden und neuen Angaben an den Königstreich (Weimar 1856).
93 Romanov 52,7,3.
94 I.e., see above 142,4.
95 K. L. H. 11, 12.
96 H. S. R. 11, 12.
97 K. L. H. 11, 12.
98 H. S. R. 11, 12.
99 Itinerario 111.
of Roman history and policy and Roman high official and consul, interpreted the
Roman policy since Augustus: "The word monarchy, to be sure, the Ro-
ninsa as deified that they called their emperors neither dictators nor kings
nor anything of the sort; yet, since the final authority for the government
devolved upon them, they must needs be kings." 47 This liberal 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." 48

We keep in mind that the Greek-Hellenistic interpretation of the Roman
monarchy was pragmatist: Augustus' construction could not exceed 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 these whom the true philosopher king could
actually fit. The final realization of monarchical rule was certainly one of
the most important features of the general process described as the Helleniza-
tion of the Roman political theory. 49

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 Hellenis-
tic kingdom in practice. Little wonder that Constantine took the first step of
which we learn from history (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-blooded emperors, and two Caesares, second-rank em-
perors, with the right of succession after the Augusti to whom they were sub-
ject. 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 Caesarean. But this man had a
younger brother, named Hannibalus. Constantine, to indemnify Ham-
ibalus, married him to his daughter and made him Augustus. Then Con-
stantine ordered that Hannibalus should be "King of the Kings and Pontic
nations." 50 This title betrays a good deal of political philosophy. Han-
ibalus assumed the title of the Persian king, and he was obviously supposed

47 G. P. Dennis, "Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy," American
48 De Res. 1.26.
49 Dreer, loc. cit, (at above) 458ff.
50 Wulfhalm, "Steirische Thatsachen."
assy 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 Simian-Vesper-like revolt occurred in Byzantium in July 406 in the course of which the Goths, as well as the most of its Germanic supporters were eliminated and destroyed. The victory of this “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 Theodosius’s army were eighteen Roman natives (most of them from Thrace), while only four were 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.23

By way of contrast, the western government could not or would not take advantage of a similar movement that destroyed the Slavonic general Stilicho and the many of his Germanic followers. The Vandals 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 militum 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 done before in the East. Instead, a careful reading of the sources reveals that it was this very Roman officer, Constantius, who deliberately 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 “superofficer” that so obviously paved the way to become Augustus.

Constantius was the first to call patria Rome and magister militum praesentalis. This position allowed interference in civil affairs, although Constantius was primarily a military officer. Until then, “patria Rome,” meaning “father of the emperor,” was only a title usually given to top civil officials. Now things had completely changed: a new “superofficer” came into being, which semisubordinate sources called “patriarch” of the West, and this was the antecedent and precursor to the Italian kingdom and the Exarchate of Ravenna directly, and of the Gallic kingdom indirectly. In fact, the head of the army was the magister equitum Galliarum: he certainly was inferior to the Italy.


Ravenna under the leadership of Theodosius, a man who was of patriarcal rank and had attained the consular office in Byzantium.”

37 Stein (no. 37 above) 123-121.
39 Stein (no. 37 above) 123-121.
40 Stein (no. 37 above) 254f. C. R. N. 55 above.
41 See in 37 above.
done was the famous Théodoric 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 sufficiently, and blames the emperor for having broken the special state of confidence and peace prevailing between the empire and its kings, its vassals, the kingdom of Italy. Théodoric's kingship implies precedence among the "kings of the nation" 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 Frankish king instead of the Frankish 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. Théodoric, a patrician king of Italy who had destroyed another patrician king of Italy, must have realized the real dangers which could come from such victorious Frankish patrician king Clovis.

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 proved Charlemagne's way toward his imperial coronation on Christmas Day 800.

To sum up the second point of the investigation of the Roman attitude toward kingship, we may say: The imperial recognition of Frankish 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. Then, 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 kings' Roman military office merged with a new Roman supraofficial, the patrician of the West, established according to Christianized 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, Thietein 125, where I have submitted my questioning the whole "honorary consul" theory. Now I would stress my doubts even more. Perhaps we should do some justice to Gregory's account if we understand Clovis as "condotier patrician" by which Romansk of the Frankish king could have reached the Ostrogoths, Théodoric, against whom the Roman-Christian-Frankish alliance was directed.

65 Ibid. 43-56, 523.
66 Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franci, 2.12. H. Wendelin, "Einheitung zum Thongum der Herren 134," Forschungen Vorg. Herdergesellschaft (1961) 217, tries successfully to explain this strange name. Angiisia 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 adhered to the Germanic-Gotho-Théodoric kingdom. Procopius, De Aet. Goth., 2.29.17-27. Cf. Wolfram, Thietein 57.
67 Cf. Procopius, De Aet. Goth., 3.1.10. "So spoke the Ostrogoths. But not one of the enemy came near to him, nor did the Gothic king come near." 3.12.8. "And this also you must know well, my master, that the majority of those serving in your army have deserted in the winter." (Belisarius to Justinian.) On Sifelle de Sifelle, see H. Massignon, "Hispantiae-Idée et Géollogenie," Geol. und Völker der Zonen 5 (1963). Jones (no. 1 above) 2.1909, controls his own statement, 2.1923.
68 Gandhi (no. 4 above) 322.
the sixth century. 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 Migration Period, conservative Roman patriots complained that their fellow Romans, especially the aristocratic youth, spoke Germanic tongues, wore Germanic clothes, and had Germanic haircuts—they had a sort of Germanic hipster look, we would say nowadays.25

The conclusion remains that the Romans coexisted 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-architization" worked faster and more radically in the West than in the East. By the term "re-architization," I mean:

1. Participation in provincial administration, alienation, and detachment from the empire as political reality grew with fatal speed in the course of the fifth century. The Gothic senatorial class, for instance, was finally frustrated by the fall of their emperor Avitus.26

2. Destruction of the city structure 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.27

3. The converse growth of large 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 regnum was also applied to the whole empire, which the contemporaries could no longer consider to be a monolithic entity.28 The classic Roman theory according to which the empire was a federation of cities came to be replaced by the interpenetration of the empire as a plurality of regna.29

26 K. P. Stöhrer, Die nordische Art der jahrtausende (Gotland 1914) provides sufficient evidence beyond the one-sided statement of Salvinio, Die palestinen in I. 288: "quando quidque et haud illi ducibus et paupere Romanus statim assumere et splendide saevo domino et donum et indolentia nostrorum..."
27 See also C. M. Chadwick's, In Barbarorum, 1:1, 5, 18. 28 See also C. M. Chadwick's, In Barbarorum, 1:1, 5, 18. 29 See also C. M. Chadwick's, In Barbarorum, 1:1, 5, 18.
30 Gerhard B. Loeber, The Idea of Populus (Cambridge, Mass. 1954) 354ff. One of the scholars who saw this phenomenon of alienation clearly is M. Rostasreff in his famous work Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, ed. 3 (Oxford 1958) 1.254ff. In my opinion, however, he overestimates the "class" conflict, which did not exist, at the expense of the pastiche-traditional tendencies prevailing in various parts of the empire, which came to be called regna.
33 J. H. R. 1916.
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 nobles politici; 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.36

The conclusion of all these considerations concerning the shaping of the Latin kingdom of the early Middle Ages could read as follow: The early medieval kingdom was founded by a root of kingly, a king of a victorious warrior retina, 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. If, however, was modified in favor of the king involved when the emperors or their representatives had the image and credibility of being successful leaders of warrior retinues by themselves. The treaty of 292, 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 officer 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 magistrature 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 hierarchy of each dominion. The kings in Spain and Roman Africa did not leave 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 Vandals and Spanish-Gothic kings with the empire, the local hierarchy was required to obey the kings. The lack of the patriarchate in Africa and Spain, however, decreased the loyalty of the kings involved to the empire. The kings of Human Africa and Spain were the first to "shake off the yoke of the treaty," to become completely independent, almost sovereign, 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 Theoderic, who observed the closest relations

86 See "Prosopographies" in Stobacker (p. 79 above).

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to the empire, enjoyed the highest esteem among his contemporaries and fellow kings.37

At 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 Hertha 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.38

The kingdoms were Latin, since the official language for expressing political, legal, and socioeconomic matters was usually Latin.39 This fact reflected 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-organized though it was, could be the only possible form of government and administration.40 This image of "romaria" as a plurality of kings, ruled by powerful kings to whom one might belong one day, must have been established with the raffling 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.41 Such a kingdom, finally,
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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solved question (see Wessels p. 14 above 221). 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. Wolffram, Antiquata 269. H. Hauck, Interpretaion der Assyrischen, Meisterwerke Mittelalterlichen Schriftes 3 (Munich 1875) 296.

PHOCOPUS 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 Alamanis, 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 kings, who ruled small warrior bands throughout northern Gaul, remain undated owing to lack of evidence.

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, Andre van de Vyver, supports the dates 500, 506, and 516 for the marriage, the victory over the Alamanis and his conversion, respectively. The key is the 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 500 for the battle, on the basis of a letter written to Clovis by Cassiodorus for his ruler, the Ostrogothic king, Theodoric.3 The most effective supporter of the short chronology has been Ferdinand Rat. In general, Lot argues for the acceptance of the traditional chronology (pre-496 for the marriage, 496 for the battle of Tolbiac, and 506-107 for the conversion). He does, however, contend that the Franks fought more than one battle against the Alamanis.

3 For their help in the preparation of this paper, I thank Professor Richard W. Ettinger of Queen's College and Professor Walter Offutt of the University of Toronto. The problem of Frankish expansion is discussed by Lucien Manetti, Les invasions des royaumes germaniques et. 2 (Paris 1953) 129-130, 240-245.