

EDITED BY
**BONNIE
EFFROS**
ISABEL
MOREIRA



≡ The Oxford Handbook of
**THE MEROVINGIAN
WORLD**

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF
THE
MEROVINGIAN
WORLD

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

THE
MEROVINGIAN
WORLD

Edited by

BONNIE EFFROS

and

ISABEL MOREIRA

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

© Oxford University Press 2020

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Effros, Bonnie, 1965– editor, author. | Moreira, Isabel, editor, author.

Title: The Oxford handbook of the Merovingian world / Bonnie Effros and Isabel Moreira, editors.

Description: New York : Oxford University Press, [2020] | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "The Merovingian era is one of the best studied yet least known periods of European history.

From the fifth to the eighth centuries, the inhabitants of Gaul (what now comprises France, southern Belgium, Luxembourg, Rhineland Germany and part of modern Switzerland), a mix of Gallo-Romans and Germanic arrivals under the political control of the Merovingian dynasty, sought to preserve, use, and reimagine the political, cultural, and religious power of ancient Rome while simultaneously forging the beginnings of what would become medieval European culture and identity"— Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020021241 (print) | LCCN 2020021242 (ebook) |

ISBN 9780190234188 (hardback) | ISBN 9780197510803 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Merovingians—History—Handbooks, manuals, etc. |

Merovingians—Antiquities—Handbooks, manuals, etc. |

Gaul—History—Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Gaul—Antiquities—Handbooks,

manuals, etc. | France—History—To 987—Handbooks, manuals, etc.

Classification: LCC DC65 .O97 2020 (print) | LCC DC65 (ebook) | DDC 944/.013—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020021241>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020021242>

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed by Sheridan Books, Inc., United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiii
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xv
<i>List of Maps</i>	xvii
<i>Map of Merovingian Gaul</i>	xx
<i>Merovingian Family Tree</i>	xxii

INTRODUCTION

1. Pushing the Boundaries of the Merovingian World 3
BONNIE EFFROS AND ISABEL MOREIRA

PART I MEROVINGIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

2. From Gaul to Francia: The Impact of the Merovingians 35
PAUL FOURACRE
3. Writing the History of Merovingian Gaul: An Historiographical Survey 52
AGNÈS GRACEFFA
4. Two Centuries of Excavating Merovingian-Era Cemeteries in France 77
BONNIE EFFROS

PART II EXPRESSING IDENTITY

5. Transformations of Identities: Barbarians and Romans in the Merovingian Realm 99
MAGALI COUMERT
6. Migrants and Minorities in Merovingian Gaul 117
WOLFRAM DREWS

7. Human Remains and What They Can Tell Us about Status and Identity in the Merovingian Period 139
ANDREA CZERMAK
8. Gender in Merovingian Gaul 164
GUY HALSALL
9. Children's Lives and Deaths in Merovingian Gaul 186
ÉMILIE PEREZ

PART III STRUCTURES OF POWER

10. The Merovingian Polity: A Network of Courts and Courtiers 217
YITZHAK HEN
11. Elite Women in the Merovingian Period 238
EDWARD JAMES
12. The Military and Its Role in Merovingian Society 255
LAURY SARTI
13. Corporate Solidarity and Its Limits within the Gallo-Frankish Episcopate 278
GREGORY HALFOND
14. Public Health, Hospitals, and Charity 299
PEREGRINE HORDEN
15. Merovingian Monasticism: Voices of Dissent 320
ALBRECHT DIEM

PART IV MEROVINGIAN GAUL IN A WIDER CONTEXT

16. The Merovingians and Byzantium: Diplomatic, Military, and Religious Issues, 500–700 347
STEFAN ESDERS
17. The Movement of People and Things between Britain and France: In the Late- and Post-Roman Periods 370
ROBIN FLEMING

-
18. *De gente Scottorum monachi*: The Irish in Merovingian
Settlement Strategy 389
JEAN-MICHEL PICARD
19. “*Alors commença la France*”: Merovingian Expansion South
of the Loire, 495–510 407
RALPH W. MATHISEN
20. The Merovingians, the Avars, and the Slavs 424
MATTHIAS HARDT
21. The Merovingians and Italy: Ostrogoths and Early Lombards 442
JONATHAN J. ARNOLD

PART V MEROVINGIAN WRITTEN CULTURE

22. The History of Historiography in the Merovingian Period 463
HELMUT REIMITZ
23. Merovingian Legal Cultures 489
ALICE RIO
24. Merovingian Hagiography 508
JAMIE KREINER
25. Letters and Communication Networks in Merovingian Gaul 531
ANDREW GILLET
26. Merovingian Epigraphy, Frankish Epigraphy, and the
Epigraphy of the Merovingian World 556
MARK A. HANDLEY

PART VI MEROVINGIAN LANDSCAPES

27. The Role of the City in Merovingian Francia 583
S. T. LOSEBY
28. The Fate of Small Towns, Hilltop Settlements, and Elite
Residences in Merovingian-Period Gaul 611
LUC BOURGEOIS

29. The Fate of Late-Roman Villas in Southern Gaul between
the Sixth and Seventh Centuries 641
ALEXANDRA CHAVARRÍA ARNAU
30. Merovingian Religious Architecture: Some New Reflections 657
PASCALE CHEVALIER
31. Rural Life and Work in Northern Gaul during the Early
Middle Ages 693
EDITH PEYTREMANN
32. Good and Bad Plants in Merovingian Francia 718
PAOLO SQUATRITI
33. Livestock and the Early Medieval Diet in Northern Gaul 738
JEAN-HERVÉ YVINEC AND MAUDE BARME

PART VII ECONOMIES, EXCHANGE, AND PRODUCTION

34. Maritime and River Traders, Landing Places, and Emporia Ports
in the Merovingian Period in and around the Low Countries 765
DRIES TYS
35. The Evidence of Numismatics: “Merovingian” Coinage and
the Place of Frankish Gaul and Its Cities in an “Invisible”
Roman Empire 797
JÜRGEN STROTHMANN
36. Bead and Garnet Trade between the Merovingian,
Mediterranean, and Indian Worlds 819
CONSTANTIN PION, BERNARD GRATUZE, PATRICK PÉRIN,
AND THOMAS CALLIGARO
37. Merovingian Gaul and the Mediterranean: Ceramics and Trade 860
MICHEL BONIFAY AND DOMINIQUE PIERI
38. Long-Distance Trade and the Rural Population of Northern Gaul 883
FRANS THEUWS
39. Belt Buckles and Burials in Southwestern Gaul 916
RALPH J. PATRELLO

**PART VIII THE SUPERNATURAL
AND THE AFTERLIFE**

40. Amulets and Identity in the Merovingian World	941
GENEVRA KORNBLUTH	
41. Magic and Divination in the Merovingian World	968
WILLIAM E. KLINGSHIRN	
42. Visions and the Afterlife	988
ISABEL MOREIRA	
43. Inscribed in the Book of Life: Liturgical Commemoration in Merovingian Gaul	1012
ELS ROSE	
44. Liturgy and the Laity	1031
LISA KAAREN BAILEY	
45. The Life of Penance	1050
KEVIN UHALDE	
46. Merovingian Meditations on Jesus	1071
LYNDA COON	
<i>Index</i>	1107

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This collection of essays first came into being in spring 2014, when Stefan Vranka suggested that we undertake a handbook on all things Merovingian and we began recruitment for the current volume. We wish to thank Stefan and the staff of OUP in New York and around the globe for their support over the past six years and for giving the two of us (Isabel and Bonnie) the opportunity to work together and renew a friendship that first began at a conference in Toronto in 1995. We would also like to offer great thanks to our wonderful contributors who, despite often being not just in different countries but on different continents, have not complained (at least to us) about our regular requests and emails over the past years and have been so supportive when we have needed additional assistance to complete the volume in question. In particular, we would like to thank Jamie Kreiner and Simon Loseby for their help fine-tuning some of our translations and Guy Halsall, who generously offered to provide us with an extra essay (which in the end we did not require). Given the challenges of finishing volume production in the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic, we are especially grateful to Mike Humphreys who did the heavy lifting to start our index, and to Max Laber who took his first steps into the publishing world and added detail to some of the largest entries. We also thank Justin Sorensen (GIS Services) at the J. Willard Marriott Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, who helped us create the volume's map, and Thulasiraman Venkatesan (SPi Global) for his assistance and patience in the layout of the Merovingian family tree at the front of the volume.

We are grateful to our respective families for their patience, love, and support during the six years of editorial work for this volume. It is to them that we dedicate this book.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASS	Bollandus, J. et al. (eds.), <i>Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur...</i> , (Brussels, 1643–).
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout, 1965–).
CIFM	<i>Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévale</i> (Poitiers/Paris, 1974–).
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (Berlin, 1893–).
CIMAH	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Medii Aevi Helvetiae</i> (Freiburg, 1977–).
DHL	Gregory of Tours, <i>Decem libri historiarum</i> .
GC	Gregory of Tours, <i>Liber in gloria confessorum</i> .
ICERV	Vives, J. (ed.), <i>Inscripciones Cristianas de la España Romana y Visigoda</i> (Barcelona, 1942).
ICG	Le Blant, E. (ed.), <i>Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIII^e siècle</i> (Paris, 1856–1865).
ILCV	Diehl, E. (ed.), <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres</i> (Berlin, 1925–1931).
ILTG	Wuilleumier, P. (ed.), <i>Inscriptions latines des Trois Gaules</i> (Paris, 1963).
LHF	<i>Liber Historiae Francorum</i> .
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Hanover, 1826–).
AA	Scriptores, Auctores antiquissimi
EE	Epistulae
DD	Diplomata regum francorum e stirpe merovingica
LL nat. Germ.	Leges nationum Germanicarum
SRG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum
SRM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
NR	Le Blant, E. (ed.), <i>Nouveau Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIII^e siècle</i> (Paris, 1892).
PL	Migne, J.-P. (ed.), <i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina</i> . (Paris, 1844–1864).
PLRE	Jones, A. H. M. et al. (eds.), <i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> (Cambridge, 1971–1992).
RICG	Gauthier, N. et al. (eds.), <i>Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures à la Renaissance carolingienne</i> (1975–).
VP	Gregory of Tours, <i>Liber vitae patrum</i> .

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Editors

Bonnie Effros, University of Liverpool

Isabel Moreira, University of Utah

Contributors

Jonathan J. Arnold, University of Tulsa

Lisa Kaaren Bailey, University of Auckland

Maude Barme, Centre de recherche archéologique de la Vallée de l'Oise (CRAVO)

Michel Bonifay, Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS, CCJ, Aix-en-Provence, France

Luc Bourgeois, Université de Caen Normandie/ UMR 6273 - CRAHAM

Thomas Calligaro, Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France,
C2RMF, Palais du Louvre/ PSL Research University, Chimie ParisTech-CNRS, Institut
de Recherche Chimie Paris, UMR8247

Alexandra Chavarría Arnau, Università degli Studi di Padova

Pascale Chevalier, Université Clermont Auvergne—UMR 6298-ARTEHIS Dijon

Lynda Coon, University of Arkansas

Magali Coumert, Université de Bretagne Occidentale

Andrea Czermak, University of Oxford

Albrecht Diem, Syracuse University

Wolfram Drews, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

Bonnie Effros, University of Liverpool

Stefan Esders, Freie Universität Berlin

Robin Fleming, Boston College

Paul Fouracre, University of Manchester (emeritus)

Andrew Gillett, independent scholar

Agnès Graceffa, Université Libre de Bruxelles

Bernard Gratuze, Centre Ernest-Babelon, IRAMAT, UMR 5060, CNRS–Université
d'Orléans

Gregory Halfond, Framingham State University

Guy Halsall, University of York

Mark A. Handley, independent scholar

Matthias Hardt, Leibniz-Institut für Geschichte und Kultur des östlichen Europa
(GWZO), Leipzig

Yitzhak Hen, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Peregrine Horden, Royal Holloway University of London

Edward James, University College Dublin (emeritus)

- William E. Klingshirn**, Catholic University of America
Genevra Kornbluth, independent scholar
Jamie Kreiner, University of Georgia
S. T. Loseby, University of Sheffield
Ralph W. Mathisen, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Isabel Moreira, University of Utah
Ralph J. Patrello, independent scholar
Émilie Perez, Université de la Polynésie française
Patrick Périn, Musée d'archéologie nationale (emeritus)
Edith Peytremann, Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (Inrap)
Jean-Michel Picard, University College Dublin (emeritus)
Dominique Pieri, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Collège de France-CNRS
UMR 8167-Orient et Méditerranée
Constantin Pion, Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique (IRPA-KIK), Brussels/ Centre
de Recherches en Archéologie et Patrimoine, Université libre de Bruxelles
Helmut Reimitz, Princeton University
Alice Rio, Kings College London
Els Rose, Universiteit Utrecht
Laury Sarti, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg
Paolo Squatriti, University of Michigan
Jürgen Strothmann, Universität Siegen
Frans Theuws, Universiteit Leiden
Dries Tys, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Kevin Uhalde, Ohio University
Jean-Hervé Yvinec, Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (Inrap)/
UMR 7209 du CNRS

LIST OF MAPS

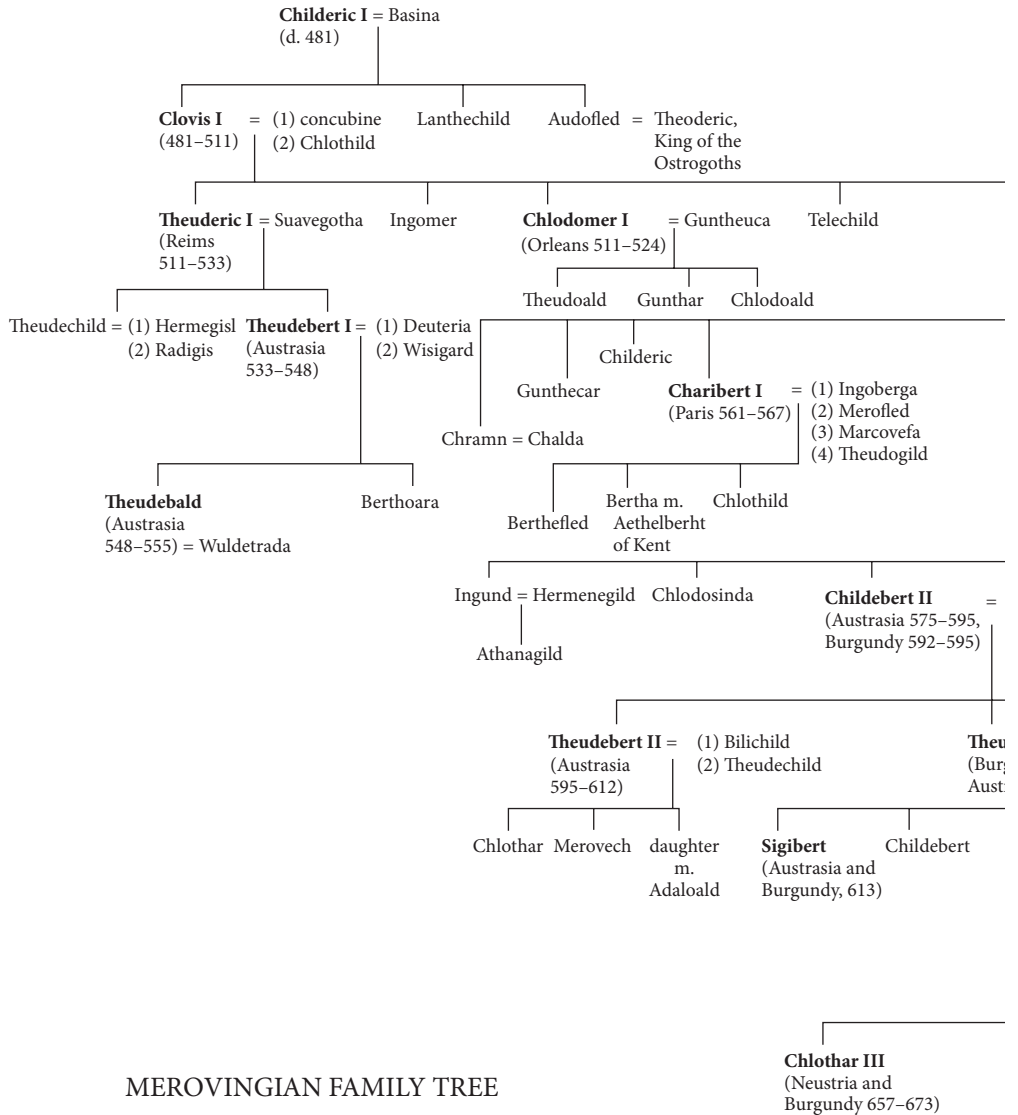
Merovingian Gaul	xx
Central European sites at which bone-bulk isotope data have been studied	144
Merovingian-period cemetery of Niedernai (Alsace)	148
Merovingian-era cemeteries of Cutry (Meurthe et Moselle), Saint-Sauveur (Oise), Goudelancourt-lès-Pierrepont (Aisne), and Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay (Calvados) in northern Gaul	192
Small towns, hill-top settlements, and elite residences in the Merovingian period	612
Jublains (Mayenne), Augst and Kaiseraugst (Switzerland), and Vermand (Aisne)	615
Diocese of Poitiers in the Merovingian period	619
Le Roc de Pampelune (Argelliers, Hérault)	625
Rocher de Piboulèdes (La Malène, Lozère)	626
Saint-Blaise (Saint-Mitre-les-Remparts, Bouches-du-Rhône), Larina (Hières-sur-Amby, Isère), Le Mont-Sainte-Odile (Ottrott, Bas-Rhin), and Le Saint-Mont (Saint-Amé, Vosges)	628
Notre-Dame de la Consolation (Jouques, Bouches-du-Rhône), Saint- Romain-de-Jalionas (Isère), Pouthumé (Châtelleraut, Vienne), Serris (Seine-et-Marne) and Larina (Hières-sur-Amby, Isère)	631
Locations of Merovingian-period religious architecture	658
Baptistère Saint-Jean, Poitiers, in the seventh century	668
Merovingian phase of St. Martin's church, Luxeuil	675
Church at Molles-La-Couronne	676
Rural sites in northern Gaul	694
Load-bearing walls of eight Merovingian structures in northern Gaul	699
Religious structure at Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois (Indre-et-Loire)	705
Eight seventh- and eighth-century buildings constructed on posts	707
North Sea region, including well-known ports of trade	766
The Netherlands with river sites and Frisian terp sites	772
Dorestad De Geer compared to the <i>emporium</i> of Dorestad	774

Belgian and French coastal plain of Flanders	776
Necropoleis with Indo-Pacific bead types	831
Pre-Cambrian rocks exposed on the surface of the globe	844
Supply of garnets during the Merovingian period	849
Ceramic finds in Frankish Gaul in the 560s	861
Mediterranean ceramic production and trading sites in the 560s	865
Roads, rivers, and major centers in Merovingian-period northern Gaul	884
Distribution of Argonne ware, gravestones, and glass bowls with Christian motifs in Merovingian-period northern Gaul	887
Communications in northern Gaul	889
Distribution of late seventh-century polyhedron earrings in northern Gaul	894
Distribution of ceramic beakers with ribbed walls in northern Gaul in the Merovingian period	895
Merovingian monasteries in northern Gaul	902
Some cemeteries in southwestern Gaul at which buckles are found	923

MEROVINGIAN GAUL

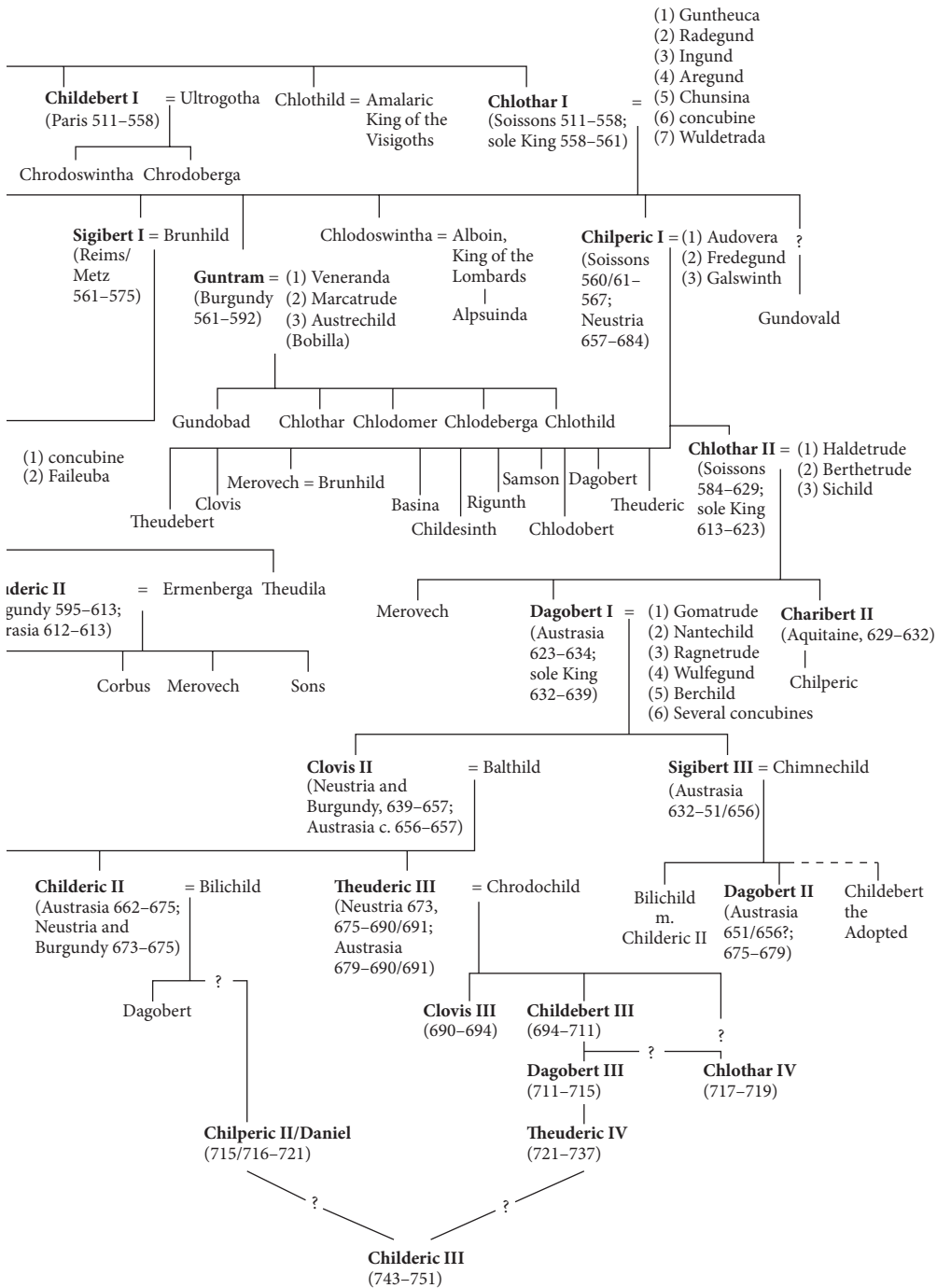






MEROVINGIAN FAMILY TREE

Modified from: Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London: Longman, 1994), pp. 344–349; Suzanne F. Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500–900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981) pp. viii–ix; Richard Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). Note: Regnal dates are provided but some are debated. The listed order of the wives and partners of Merovingian kings is speculative in places.



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE MEROVINGIAN WORLD

BONNIE EFFROS AND ISABEL MOREIRA

ALTHOUGH the Merovingians did not escape Edward Gibbon's scrutiny in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1789), the reader was not encouraged to expect much of them: “The Franks, or French, are the only people of Europe, who can deduce a perpetual succession from the conquerors of the Western Empire. But their conquest of Gaul was followed by ten centuries of anarchy, and ignorance” (*DFRE* II. 38, p. 471). The Merovingians thereby also escaped the notice and interest of many Anglophone readers of history brought up on Gibbon's version of Late Antiquity. This blind spot notwithstanding, the Merovingian world (481–751) has become more visible in Anglophone historical scholarship in the past two decades, and, for better or for worse, it has become more firmly rooted in the narrative of a long Late Antiquity. Modern interest in the social and economic networks of empires and modes of communication has begun to change older frameworks that viewed these centuries in terms of decline and characterized them as the “Dark Ages” (see Graceffa, Chapter 3, this volume). Rather than being viewed as an era of stagnation, as was the case in the nineteenth century, recent studies have highlighted the vitality and importance of Western Christendom from the fifth through the eighth centuries, not only in Europe but also in other parts of the late Roman world.

Indeed, studies of the Merovingians and their world have come to play a critical role in the generation of new insights into the transitional period between Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Once overlooked as a chaotic and obscure interlude between the fall of the Roman Empire and the beginnings of the medieval world, and named for a dynasty with a reputation for few accomplishments and even fewer memorable kings (in nineteenth-century France, they were long known as *les rois fainéants*, or the “do-nothing kings”),

the Merovingian era is now a field that is growing in its own right. In part, new interest in this period has arisen as scholars of cultural and religious history in Late Antiquity have demonstrated greater flexibility in working horizontally in a decentralized world and in seeing beyond the political developments that until recently were the bread and butter of most historians. Another source of renewed interest in the Merovingian world is the rise of new and more comprehensive archaeological approaches to the period; rather than echoing the historical sources, scholars of material culture are showing that it is possible to question the written sources and shed new light on subjects that previously were inaccessible. Above all, in digging into the local, regional, and contingent nature of the lived environment in these centuries, the Merovingian period has become something more than a simple or hasty response to an older paradigm of decline, emerging as a period in its own right and with its own peculiarities. In casting our view over recent developments in a wide array of disciplines and perspectives, we can attempt to slow the rush to the Middle Ages and assess the evidence without recourse to the discursive imperatives of stagnation, decline, transition, transformation, or rise.

In gathering essays for this handbook on the Merovingian world (rather than Gaul or Francia; see Fouracre, Chapter 2, this volume), we have built around the modern understanding of the Merovingian territories as being at once a coalescence of regional interests and the center of a far-flung network of interconnected political and economic interests. With Ian Wood's *The Merovingian North Sea* (1983) and the work that followed, the Merovingian era can no longer be confined to activities that transpired among Gallo-Romans and Franks and to the dynastic history of the Merovingians. Far from being isolated from the world around it, the Merovingian elite, through the exchange of goods and ideas, their letters, laws, culture, and religion, as well as through military actions and familial alliances, sat at the center of an intensely connected world. From the Byzantine-controlled territories to the south and east, to the politically fragmented lands to the north (including the British Isles and Ireland), the Merovingian kings and their peoples touched the peoples and cultures around them—sometimes in bonds of amity and exchange, sometimes (as in the case of the Byzantine emperors) as wary allies, and sometimes as hegemonic overlords. Their place in the post-Roman world was not always secure, as may be seen in the case of Clovis's competition with Theoderic for Byzantine titles and accolades in the early sixth century (see Arnold, Chapter 21, this volume). However, their footprint was large, and they interacted with political entities on every side. We are now learning that trade, even if indirect, extended the reach of the inhabitants of the Merovingian kingdoms even further, as far afield as Sri Lanka, the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea (see Pion et al., Chapter 36, this volume). The world of the Merovingians was intrinsically connected to contemporary developments not just among the Burgundians, the Visigoths, and the Alamanni with whom they shared and contested borders (see Mathisen, Chapter 19; Patrello, Chapter 39, this volume), but also among the Byzantines, Ostrogoths, Lombards, Thuringians, Avars, Bavarians, Anglo-Saxons, Frisians, and the Irish (see Arnold, Chapter 21; Esders, Chapter 16;

Fleming, Chapter 17; Hardt, Chapter 20; and Picard, Chapter 18, this volume), peoples who, like the Merovingians, were once viewed in isolation.

It is this highly connected world that we present in this collection of forty-six essays from both junior innovators and leading scholars of the Merovingian world. In striving to achieve a panoramic view of this networked entity of intersecting and (and sometimes conflicting) identities, political interests, religions, economies, patronage, and cultures, and how these have changed our understanding of this complex period, it has been necessary to bring together many disciplines of study. Nonetheless, space constraints and unanticipated obstacles to achieving our original vision of the volume in 2014 have made it impossible to include every possible topic, and we are all too aware of lacunae with reference to important fields like Merovingian manuscript studies, biblical studies, onomastics, and the emerging and contested ground of DNA research (for the first, see Coulson and Babcock 2020). Similarly, areas of rich possibility such as the eighth-century transition to the Carolingian period, are not addressed in full (but see Fouracre, Chapter 2; Hardt, Chapter 20; Picard, Chapter 18, this volume). Although many of these topics are touched upon in related essays, each could easily have been the subject of an independent examination.

Pushing back against myths of Frankish barbarism and cultural decline, the essays presented here on the history and archaeology of the Merovingian era explore a world that was complex, changing, but mostly stable: bureaucratic, innovative, and adaptive in some arenas, yet disrupted, conservative, and limited in others. Our knowledge of the Merovingians is growing rapidly from evidence gleaned from an assortment of texts, coins, architectural remains, inscriptions, cemeteries, skeletal matter, and refuse pits. Indeed, the resilience of Merovingian rule over two and a half centuries is particularly impressive in light of the challenges of climate and disease that prevailed across Europe in the sixth and seventh centuries and that we have only begun to fully appreciate. The arrival in Europe of the “Justinianic Plague,” one of the most well documented instances of bubonic plague caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, is described in Merovingian sources but its impact is debated (Haldon et al. 2018c; Mordechai et al. 2019; Yvinec and Barme, this volume). Furthermore, from the fifth to the late seventh centuries, Europe experienced climate changes as the result of what is now termed the “late-antique little ice age” (Harper 2017; contra, see: Haldon et al. 2018a, 2018b; see Horden, Chapter 14; Squatriti, Chapter 32, this volume). Catastrophic events on such a scale would challenge most regimes, yet the Merovingian dynasty endured. Therefore, it has been important for the organization of this volume to recognize that, whereas our view of the Merovingians was once dominated by the perspectives of the extant written sources and their focus on kingship, migration, and war, new evidence is offering original perspectives and allowing us to ask questions about climate, disease, environment, and the trading decisions of distant polities. The more we learn about the cultural and economic contributions of the Merovingians and the challenges they presented and overcame, the more nuanced our view of early medieval history becomes. These important developments are generating new audiences for the study of the Merovingian period.

PROBLEMATIC LABELS AND TEMPORAL CHALLENGES

The Merovingian era has a name recognition problem for nonacademic Anglophone readers, some of whom are more apt to associate it with Lambert Wilson's character in the popular science fiction cult film, *The Matrix* (1999), or with the alleged royal descendants of Mary Magdalene and Jesus in Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln's *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (1982) and Dan Brown's conspiracy novel, *The Da Vinci Code* (2003). For German-speakers, Heimito von Doderer's novel *Die Merowinger oder die Totale Familie* (1962) is not likely to leave the reader better informed about the dynasty. Even the name "Merovingian" seems difficult and obscure. Named for a quasi-mythical leader, Merovech, of a Frankish tribal family, the term *Merovingian* has come to describe a dynasty, a time frame, a people, a culture, and a land mass. But the challenges go deeper than that. Scholars disagree about where to place the Merovingian era in the wider arc of Western history. Does the Merovingian era mark the final phase of a Roman "Late Antiquity"? Or is it the early beginning of the "Middle Ages"? A pragmatic answer is that it depends on the historical perspective of the researcher. A Merovingian scholar looking back in time to emphasize continuities with the former western Roman Empire will likely view the sixth and seventh centuries as Late Antiquity or, in the apt phrasing of Peter Brown, as the "end of a very ancient world" (Brown 2000, p. 59). A scholar emphasizing the Merovingian Frankish kingdoms as a break with the Roman Empire in the fifth century will likely view the Merovingian period as being early medieval. Sometimes these viewpoints are not mutually exclusive. These differences in perspective can often make the field of Merovingian studies seem divided.

This chronological challenge is exacerbated by the fact that the Merovingian period was not a monolithic era but rather witnessed notable changes between the sixth and seventh centuries (in religious culture, court life, legal traditions, and Frankish identity), and again from the 680s onward (in terms of coinage, exchange, and the economy). The resulting Janus-like impression of the field is not merely an impression but a reflection of a certain reality. Yet, at the same time, there was coherence to this period that went beyond its dynastic kings in that it was regulated by a religious culture and political, legal, and administrative systems that were to change fairly dramatically under the Carolingians. It is important to see the Merovingian period as a cultural entity in its own right, and not merely as an era that was "transitioning" between Antiquity and the age of Charlemagne.

Layered over these problematic distinctions is the way that curricula, and the departments of history that produce them, sometimes engineer a break between the ancient and medieval fields. Typically, in the United Kingdom, the Merovingians are viewed as part of early medieval history and are taught in history and archaeology departments by medievalists. This makes sense from a British perspective because the Merovingians were contemporary with England's earliest post-Roman authors like Gildas and because of the national primacy traditionally accorded to the Northumbrian historian, Bede (672/673–735). The national story of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity

by Pope Gregory the Great was played out against the background of Merovingian politics and, it has been argued, Merovingian intervention. The Merovingians are thus part of England's medieval story. In France, the Middle Ages are typically thought to have begun with Charlemagne's coronation in 800. Although the Merovingians received the designation of the "première race" in the nineteenth century, they were largely characterized as non-French due to their arrival during the "grandes invasions" (see Graceffa, Chapter 3, this volume). This schema relegated the Merovingians to being only proto-medieval, as was the case in Belgium, where the Carolingian epoch was favored over the Merovingian period. German academic understanding of this period conflicts with English and French historiography in that it sees the Merovingian era as one of Germanic migration, the *Völkerwanderungszeit*, yielding a more positive interpretation of the influx of Germanic peoples and culture in the sphere of the Roman Empire (see Coumert, Chapter 5, this volume). In the United States, where the Merovingians are usually first encountered in university courses, it is only since the 1980s that the Merovingian period has been seen as anything more than the Dark Ages, given the lack of interest in this period among classicists and the longstanding preference for the twelfth century and afterward among American medievalists. This change has been deeply informed by the work of Peter Brown, a progenitor of the field of late-antique studies, whose work has addressed the religious and cultural environment of Merovingian authors such as Gregory of Tours in new and meaningful ways.

The anachronistic and inaccurate characterization of Merovingian studies as part of the Dark Ages primarily reflects historical gaps in our knowledge of the immediate post-Roman period. British historians were apt to use this terminology, which was also handily adopted in the United States, to refer to the Europe that existed after the "fall" of the Roman Empire. Although there are certainly challenges faced by those who work to reconstruct Merovingian history and society, this period of history in Gaul is no longer understood to be particularly "dark," and certainly not as "dark" as were some other parts of Europe in the same period (on the Avars, see Hardt, Chapter 20, this volume). As Chris Wickham (2005) observed, the Merovingians preserved much of the late Roman systems of administration, including the use of papyrus for official documents, so that the denigration and loss of much of the evidence for their bureaucratic industry and quotidian activity from as early as the Carolingian period are certainly tragic. However, we can postulate much of what may have existed in the way of correspondence, for instance, through comparison with other parts of the Mediterranean such as Egypt (see Gillett, Chapter 25, this volume). And many other kinds of written sources have survived. The Merovingian era saw the flowering of hagiography, which was a great literary moment, in terms not solely of the number of extant examples, but also its influence on hagiographic writing in other parts of Europe (see Kreiner, Chapter 24, this volume). Church councils produced and preserved conversations about the religious life (see Halfond, Chapter 13, this volume); monastic rules were generated and copied to organize religious houses (see Diem, Chapter 15, this volume); histories, letter collections, and poems narrated and promoted stories about the recent and more distant past (see Gillett, Chapter 25; Horden, Chapter 14; Reimitz, Chapter 22, this volume); wills, laws, and formularies sought to regulate transactions (see Rio, Chapter 23, this volume); coinage

reveals a lot about the generation of wealth and the payment of taxes (see Strothmann, Chapter 35, this volume); sermons, liturgical works, penitentials, and bibles testify to the spiritual life and condemned practices that were seen as contrary to them (see Bailey, Chapter 44; Rose, Chapter 43; Uhalde, Chapter 45, this volume); visionary texts and burial inscriptions give insight into the mapping of the Merovingian otherworld and its connection to the living (see Moreira, Chapter 42; Handley, Chapter 26, this volume); and collections of divinatory texts speak to the significance of magic and the supernatural to early medieval Christians (see Klingshirn, Chapter 41, this volume).

Surviving architectural and art historical evidence also attests to the vitality of the Merovingian epoch, whether in reference to innovations in religious architecture (see Chevalier, Chapter 30, this volume), sculptural innovation encouraging personal religious experience (see Coon, Chapter 46, this volume), or the changes wrought to fortified centers, villas, and cities (see Bourgeois, Chapter 28; Chavarría Arnau, Chapter 29; Loseby, Chapter 27, this volume). Archaeological excavations, whose methods and objectives have changed since the members of antiquarian societies began plying their hobby in earnest in the 1830s (see Effros, Chapter 4, this volume), have produced myriad kinds of data that allow modern scholars to view the Merovingian epoch from a variety of perspectives. Whether we examine the rich evidence for the period produced from graves (see Czermak, Chapter 7; Halsall, Chapter 8; Patrello, Chapter 39; Perez, Chapter 9; Pion et al., Chapter 36; Theuws, Chapter 38, this volume), trading centers (see Bonifay and Pieri, Chapter 37; Fleming, Chapter 17; Tys, Chapter 34, this volume) or rural landscapes (see Peytremann, Chapter 31; Squatriti, Chapter 32; Yvinec and Barme, Chapter 33, this volume), it is impossible to suggest that life in early medieval Gaul had come to a standstill. In short, the Merovingian period is anything but a “Dark Age” following the end of the Roman administration of Gaul.

Instead, what the essays in this volume demonstrate is that the Merovingian world was a connected world even if it was not centralized: it was linked with the Mediterranean as well as northern Europe, central Europe, and the Byzantine world through diplomacy, culture, religion, war, and trade (on connections with Byzantium, see Esders, Fox, Hen, and Sarti 2019). The Merovingian orbit was a very functional center, not just of saints’ cults, but also religious and military administration, local, regional, and international trade, learned culture and communication, Christian charity and theological innovation, and religious and secular law and custom. Through it, despite great change over the course of the more than three centuries we associate with the Merovingian dynasty, much of Rome still survived, something that the Carolingians were able subsequently to put to practical and symbolic use.

NEW RESEARCH AND ALTERNATIVE VISIONS OF THE MEROVINGIAN PAST

Overlooked by Henri Pirenne as an uneventful period of slow decline before the rise of the Carolingians and the eventual rebirth of cities (1937), the Merovingian era is now a

field growing in its own right. As noted earlier, new interest in this period has arisen in part from the cultural and religious focus of scholars of Late Antiquity, who have demonstrated significant flexibility in working horizontally in a decentralized world. They have refined discussion of the political developments that were once the core focus of many historians, and they have begun to ask questions about communication, climate, diet, settlement, and trade. This volume has sought to present the field in a way that overcomes some of the earlier disciplinary divides, setting material evidence alongside the written sources, in order to ask important questions about the disciplinary obstacles that still hamper a fully integrated view of the Merovingian period. Indeed, new and multidisciplinary approaches to the period have generated a revival of interest in this field by a new generation of scholars. Rather than echoing the historical sources, scholars of material culture are showing that it is possible to move beyond the finite number of extant written sources and explore subjects that previously were inaccessible. The shift within Merovingian archaeology from primarily grave sites to settlements, trading centers, and landscapes, which occurred especially from the 1980s, has likewise had a significant impact on the questions that can be asked and answered (see Effros, Chapter 4, this volume). These important developments have created not just new approaches to, but also new audiences for, the study of the Merovingian period.

As seen in this volume, new scientific techniques, many with obscure-sounding names, have been added to the arsenal of early medieval specialists and have allowed them to shed new light on material goods prevalent in Merovingian-era graves and settlements. For instance, fission-track dating has made it possible to date glass and identify the origin of its ingredients on the basis of minute quantities of uranium. These studies have suggested that some of the materials used to make raw glass traveled long distances, in some cases from as far away as Sri Lanka and the Red Sea, before making their way into Merovingian jewelry and tableware in the late fifth and early sixth centuries. Likewise, the noninvasive technique of microspectrometry has made it possible to measure the wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation that gemstones like garnet, which were used in gold cloisonnée brooches, purse clasps, weapon handles, and belt buckles, absorb or reflect. These markers help scientists identify the source of the materials, suggesting in some cases that, at least until the late sixth century, their point of origin lay far beyond the frontiers of the Merovingian kingdom and even the Mediterranean basin (for discussion of both, see Pion et al., Chapter 36, this volume).

Human bones and teeth, and remains of fauna and flora, too, have become important sources of data for scholars of the Merovingian period. Osteological studies of human adults and children tell us about life expectancy and some of the diseases that affected the population (see Perez, Chapter 9, this volume). Archaeozoological research in the north of France, for instance, has made it possible to assess the composition and size of Merovingian flocks and herds (see Yvinec and Barme, Chapter 33, this volume). Although the techniques are still costly, and hence are used more rarely in France than in England and Germany on early medieval human remains, DNA analysis has improved our knowledge of certain genetic traits and given anthropologists an additional tool with which to determine the biological sex of poorly preserved skeletons, even if they cannot tell us about the way in which individuals experienced their gender

identity (see Halsall, Chapter 8, this volume). Although new methods of sequencing have made it possible to work with the shorter strands of DNA typically found in ancient skeletal remains, the technology has only recently begun to deliver on geneticists' promises of the possibility of using ancient mitochondrial DNA to suggest migration patterns linked to the historical record (Amorim et al. 2018).

While still relatively new in the field of Merovingian studies, isotopic analysis has begun to produce intriguing results related to determining whether there was extensive mobility in early medieval communities. More specifically, assessment of oxygen and strontium signatures in early medieval tooth enamel has permitted bio-archaeologists to distinguish migrant and more stable individuals within the context of early medieval cemeteries. Carbon and nitrogen stable isotope analysis of bone collagen, by contrast, has shed light on the diets of these same individuals, indicating, for instance, who among them enjoyed diets heavy in seafood or game (Müldner 2009). More specific to Gaul, we learn from skeletal remains in early medieval cemeteries like Niedernai in the upper Rhine area from the mid-fifth to the early sixth century that boys appear to have received diets richer in animal protein than their sisters (see Czermak, Chapter 7, this volume). This finding nuances our understanding of the distribution of the foodstuffs identified by archaeobotanists and archaeozoologists by providing insight into the distribution of the produce of farming and husbandry in early medieval communities in Gaul (see Peytremann, Chapter 31; Squatriti, Chapter 32, this volume).

Not only has technology made us rethink the potential significance of once overlooked or modest materials, such as glass beads, ceramics, garnets, and bone, for understanding trade and diet in the Merovingian period, but also these bountiful objects have begun to change the way we address research problems that have beset Merovingian scholars for generations. An issue, for instance, that has dogged archaeology since its start is how to determine most accurately the relative and absolute chronologies of Merovingian-period sites and artifacts. Among antiquarians and early archaeologists, the approach to this question often relied heavily on the presence of coins that might offer a *terminus post quem*, in other words, the date after which a grave or a settlement was thought to have been used. Numismatic evidence, together with stratigraphic analysis, made it possible, in turn, to establish the relative chronologies of stylistic developments in categories of artifacts such as brooches, buckles, or weaponry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Périn 1980). Even in the late twentieth century, improvements to the accuracy of these dating techniques were hampered by the fact that they were affected by distinctions in the regional density of excavations, significant variations in local custom, and bias toward higher-status artifacts. Moreover, alternative means of dating, such as ^{14}C , could not be used on inorganic materials. The introduction of detailed databases for fairly ubiquitous artifacts like ceramics and beads, which are found in a large number of graves but were traditionally not given extensive attention, has now made it possible to propose modifications to existing chronologies (Bonifay 2013; Pion and Vrielyck 2014). A more fully contextual reading of architectural evidence from the Merovingian period has also made it possible to date these structures more accurately (see Chevalier, Chapter 30, this volume).

New conversations are now taking place that bring together unlikely combinations of data that would have been inconceivable even thirty years ago. In environmental studies of the Merovingian period, texts are being used in partnership with climatological and archaeological data to suggest diachronic changes in the early medieval landscape and settlement patterns due to weather and the availability of foodstuffs. Likewise, directions in animal husbandry affected not just diet, clothing, and the availability of manure to fertilize crops, but they also left their mark on contemporary legislation regarding property and religious imagery of the afterlife (Kreiner 2017; see Yvinec and Barme, Chapter 33, this volume). Trade, too, is increasingly being seen holistically, with research aimed at movement not just in the Roman interior and the Mediterranean, but increasingly on the margins like Scandinavia, the Russian steppes, and the heartlands of the Sassanid Empire. The increasing willingness of early medievalists to explore comparisons with regions further afield, whether in the Maghreb, the eastern Mediterranean, along the ancient silk route, or the Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade routes, suggests that there is still much more to learn about Merovingian connections to long-distance trade. These increasingly daring research strategies seem likely to strengthen in future research, especially as large-scale collaborations and comparative research clusters are encouraged by schemes such as the European Research Council and the European Science Foundation in the European Union, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council in the United Kingdom.

DAILY LIFE IN THE MEROVINGIAN ERA

This volume demonstrates how our expanding source base for the Merovingian period allows us to glimpse more aspects of lives lived in the Merovingian era and shows that we can do so with much greater granularity than was previously possible, even if many issues still cannot be resolved with precision. It is clear that many people living in the kingdoms were migrants, whether migration was necessitated by economic demand, religious calling, status as a slave, or the ravages of war. Some of the inhabitants of the Merovingian kingdoms identified as Gallo-Romans, Franks, Goths, Irish or eastern monks, Syrian merchants, Jews, Homoian Christians (often called Arians in older sources to associate them with the heretic Arius, who was condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325; Dunn 2013), or had other identities (see Drews, Chapter 6, this volume). Although we may not know their names, we increasingly have the opportunity to learn more about the livelihoods and life cycles of women, children, and slaves who rarely found their way into the historical or legal record (see Halsall, Chapter 8, this volume). While many of our sources are biased against the possible contributions of women, for example, or rural inhabitants or non-Christians, blaming them for magic or unholy rituals, scholars today are less willing to accept their characterizations without comment (see Klingshirn, Chapter 41, this volume). They have found other means, such as through law codes, formularies, charters, cemeterial remains, stone structures and sculpture,

and hagiography, to render the lives and environment of marginal groups more visible than the clerical constituency that mostly authored early medieval texts wanted them to be.

To understand in more depth the daily lives of the majority of inhabitants in Gaul (with the possible exception of urban-dwelling elites in the south), we must look to the countryside and the roads and rivers that connected them (see Theuws, Chapter 38, this volume). For the agrarian communities of Roman Gaul, significant changes occurred in the third century. The elites who held villas in northern Gaul had largely abandoned them in the third century, but the case was quite different in the south, where such properties continued to be used well after this period. It was only in the fifth century that these complexes underwent significant transformation and in the sixth century that they vanished altogether, never to return (see Chavarría Arnau, Chapter 29, this volume). The third century also saw the abandonment of many older rural settlements in favor of the construction of new ones (see Peytremann, Chapter 31, this volume). We now believe, however, in contrast to older theories about the impermanence of villages in the Merovingian period, that these new settlements had significant staying power. Early medieval villages or hamlets, along with the cemeteries that served them, became larger and more densely populated in the late seventh and eighth centuries (see Bourgeois, Chapter 28, this volume). During the Christianization of Gaul, many villages were the recipients of new or improved religious structures, which provide evidence of the flowering of religious architecture in this period (see Chevalier, Chapter 30, this volume). Such Merovingian implantations laid the seed for Carolingian settlements and indeed some that still exist today.

Such modest population centers were not just the site of agricultural undertakings but often the site of small-scale production of items such as iron, ceramics, glass, marquetry, leather products, and cloth, many of which appeared in the graves of the dead in local cemeteries (see Peytremann, Chapter 31, this volume). Although we do not know a lot about the artisans whose handiwork survives, such as what percentage of them were itinerant, the older Roman infrastructure was critical to their ability to travel and trade. As the population of post-Roman Gaul began to expand from the mid-fifth century, it is clear that inhabitants, many of them of modest means, were able to accumulate wealth, even if we do not know whether these resources passed from generation to generation. Judging from the investment they regularly made in placing valuable items in the burial displays of kin and leaders, Merovingian rural dwellers in northern Gaul left their imprint on the landscape in more lasting ways than once was thought possible (see Theuws, Chapter 38, this volume).

Architectural and archaeological remains also suggest that, under Merovingian rule, some former Roman administrative centers faced demotion and others were created anew. Nonetheless, there appears to have been significant continuity in towns even if their populations temporarily declined and their appearance evolved. Regardless of the change in administration, these population centers, many of which were founded by the Romans, remained important anchoring points for lay and ecclesiastical institutions (see Bourgeois, Chapter 28, this volume). They were often the locations in which health initiatives were organized (see Horden, Chapter 14, this volume). As the centers in

which coins were minted, cities and towns experienced some of their most important changes not between the late Roman and early Merovingian period but rather centuries into Frankish rule, from 675, when silver became the standard currency. This change in coinage reduced the number of places in which coins might be minted (see Strothmann, Chapter 35, this volume). The concentration of this important fiscal activity led to new hierarchies of power in the Merovingian landscape.

We have also learned from the work of Michael McCormick how necessary it is to move beyond Pirenne's sweeping but flawed arguments about continuity in the post-Roman economy (2001). Some of the most important studies have come from archaeological ceramics. Namely, although research on the amphorae that were used to transport olive oil, wine, and fish sauce across the Mediterranean has demonstrated their decline from the fifth century associated with the end of the *annona* (tax-in-kind) shipments of grain to Rome, their recovery occurred in the sixth century followed by steady decline until the 730s. Moreover, we now know of the increasing diversity of imports into southern Gaul (and, to a much lesser extent, northern Gaul), which now came not just from the Maghreb but also from Spain and the eastern Mediterranean. These changes suggest significant alteration, but not elimination, of vital Mediterranean trade in foodstuffs following the cessation of grain shipments to Rome. By contrast, the importation of fine ceramics, especially African Red Slipware (ARS), disappeared from ships' cargoes more quickly and dramatically, to be replaced typically by locally made coarser, or in some cases high-end, productions. This trade with Gaul would come to a definitive end only in the third decade of the eighth century (see Bonifay and Pieri, Chapter 37, this volume). Northern Gaul also saw ceramics from England, even though most of the traffic in pots moved in the opposite direction (see Fleming, Chapter 17, this volume).

It is also important to recognize that trade was affected by the fact that the Merovingians broke from the Roman tradition of maintaining standing armies as they existed under imperial rule. Although a large number of men served as soldiers (*milites*) in the early medieval period, their duties were short term, and they were not provisioned as consistently as they had been under Roman rule. Consequently, there was no longer a need for a complex supply system like the *annona*, a change that had a significant impact on the organization of regional and long-distance trade. This alteration also affected the organization of fighting forces under Merovingian leadership, since it made the amassing of armies significantly more fluid and unpredictable than it had been under Roman imperial leadership (see Sarti, Chapter 12, this volume). The organization of trade through markets and fairs likewise became a vector of the spread of disease, something with which Merovingian bishops like Caesarius of Arles and Desiderius of Cahors had to contend in the sixth and seventh centuries (see Horden, Chapter 14, this volume).

With respect to local and regional food production, pollen and environmental studies now give us greater insight into early medieval cereal cultivation and dietary trends (see Squatriti, Chapter 32, this volume). In addition, archaeobiology allows us to see what kinds of livestock and fish early medieval agriculturalists preferred, which wild animals were hunted and butchered for food, and how these practices varied by region

(see Yvinec and Barme, Chapter 33, this volume). Whereas the results of isotope analysis hint at inequities in the diets of the population based presumably on available resources and their accessibility to those of differing means and biological sex in childhood (see Czermak, Chapter 7, this volume), bone and tooth analysis also tells us about levels of malnutrition and child mortality in early medieval populations (see Perez, Chapter 9, this volume). Historical accounts, too, offer information about human health and efforts to quell disease in a variety of ways. Gregory of Tours, for instance, complained that Christians in Gaul continued to use amulets to protect their health or that of their families, despite more effective methods such as the cult of saints. We cannot assume from his writings, however, that the symbolism and function of these rites remained a constant from the late Roman period to the early Middle Ages (see Klingshirn, Chapter 41; Kornbluth, Chapter 40, this volume).

MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND OBJECTS: IDENTITY IN THE MEROVINGIAN PERIOD

In seventh-century sources (the *Chronicle of Fredegar* II. 4–8, III. 2, and the *Liber Historiae Francorum* [LHF] 1–4), a myth was propagated in the Merovingian kingdom that the Franks were descended from the Trojans. Although in the centuries since then many ideas have been proposed with respect to Merovingian and Frankish origins, these discussions have also required scholars to rethink the functions and motivations of the historical and hagiographical sources of the Merovingian period (see Coumert, Chapter 5; Graceffa, Chapter 3, this volume). Our view of this evidence, along with that derived from early medieval graves and cemeteries, has in recent years become increasingly nuanced; it is no longer possible to see historical narratives and grave site evidence as a faithful reflection of the events they recounted (see Kreiner, Chapter 24; Reimitz, Chapter 22, this volume) or understand ethnicity as something either biological or fixed (see Coumert, Chapter 5, this volume). No historical works of the period, for instance, were written to reflect Merovingian dynastic aims (see Reimitz, Chapter 22, this volume). As constructed, genres, biographies, histories, and grave assemblages were all positioned by their authors and makers to make a case for or against particular individuals or groups, whether Franks or otherwise. They offered competing visions of practical or spiritual aspirations to the communities to which they were addressed (see Patrello, Chapter 39, this volume).

Because of the outsize influence of polemical debates about ethnicity on historical and archaeological debates about the Merovingian period, this volume has been intentionally organized to decenter the discussion in favor of topics that highlight the existence of a mosaic of early medieval identities. The Merovingian kingdoms were not characterized by the simple binary of Franks and Gallo-Romans but were at their core a multiethnic community. Migrants of every stripe played a major role in religious life,

and economic, intellectual, and military undertakings in Merovingian Gaul (see Drews, Chapter 6, this volume). While this is not to say that one's place of origin did not matter, too much dependence on historical narratives like that of Gregory of Tours may skew our understanding of the period (see Coumert, Chapter 5; Reimitz, Chapter 22, this volume). In recent studies, isotope analysis, just as artifactual studies, suggests that adaptation to dominant mores could occur quite quickly: incoming individuals adapted to local customs either soon after arrival or at most within a generation (see Czermak, Chapter 7; Patrello, Chapter 39, this volume). Over time, a steady erosion of Gallo-Roman names occurred in favor of Frankish ones, suggesting that general points of reference for identity were shifting and unity was increasing (see Fouracre, Chapter 2, this volume).

When read closely, written sources allow us to see inconsistencies in earlier interpretations. Surviving texts push us to question the speed of the expansion of Merovingian territory under Clovis (see Mathisen, Chapter 19, this volume), and the kingdom's relations with the Byzantine Empire and peoples like the Thuringians and Avars (see Esders, Chapter 16; Hardt, Chapter 20, this volume). They also underpin how much the Merovingian aristocracy depended on Roman notions of a court, which made allusions to older civic and military political ideology and provided a support network for royal ambitions both at the center and throughout the kingdoms (see Hen, Chapter 10, this volume). Moreover, it was cooperation with Irish monastics and participation in overseas military conflicts that helped the Merovingian kings expand their authority to more distant territories (see Picard, Chapter 18, this volume). They also provide crucial evidence of alliances brokered within the Merovingian kingdoms and with allies further abroad through military intervention, marriage, and gift exchange (see Arnold, Chapter 21; Hardt, Chapter 20; James, Chapter 11; Picard, Chapter 18, this volume). Closer reading of our sources allows us to draw up a more refined understanding of lay and religious elites, as well as the factions that often pitted them against one another.

On a more intimate scale, new readings of the historical and archaeological evidence also lead us to question simple binaries between what it meant to be male or female in the early Middle Ages (see Halsall, Chapter 8, this volume). Isotope analysis suggests that biological sex mattered, too, since it might be reflected in access to foods rich in animal protein (see Czermak, Chapter 7, this volume). Additionally, extant evidence allows us to reexamine the subtle vicissitudes in the divide between pagans and Christians, Homoian and Nicene Christians, and Jews and Christians, especially in regions controlled first by the Visigoths until the early sixth century and then by the Franks (see Drews, Chapter 6, this volume). Moreover, a range of legal options existed for conflict resolution, depending on the parties involved and the details of the case (see Rio, Chapter 23, this volume).

While our historical and hagiographical sources give limited attention to the integration of recent arrivals of different origins into the existing population of Merovingian Gaul, archaeological evidence from emporia, graves, and settlement sites allow us to see far more. For one, there were close ties between Britain, Gaul, and Germany in the late Roman period, based in some part on trade, especially bulk trade in low-value

commodities. Although these exchanges drew to a halt by the first quarter of the fifth century, new contacts were initiated in the sixth century through two networks: one tying together Kent, Flanders, and the Rhine delta, and the second bringing together Frankish regions like Poitou-Charentes with western Britain. They allow us to see contacts as circular migration rather than as movement in a single direction, and they also permit us to see the objectives of such movement as primarily commercial rather than military (see Fleming, Chapter 17; Tys, Chapter 34, this volume). While the scale of exchange in this later period may have been muted compared to the late Roman era, such newer studies shift emphasis away from discussions based primarily on ethnic conflict.

RELIGION IN MEROVINGIAN GAUL

The story of religion in Merovingian Gaul was once told primarily through written texts. Today, our view of the religious cultures of Merovingian Gaul's inhabitants has benefited from some of the same discoveries and new technologies that have transformed our view of other aspects of Merovingian society. Increasingly, archaeological findings are used to confirm, or challenge, written sources, allowing historians to reconsider traditional narratives that, in the past, were founded largely on sources generated by monks, nuns, and the clergy. Archaeological investigations of graves and cemeteries yield insights into regional religious practices, although, in the absence of robust documentary sources on burial objectives, it is unclear how this evidence relates to religious belief. New scientific methods enabling investigation of the fabric of religious buildings and monastic complexes are proving particularly fruitful, as they allow us to perceive the scale, organizational layout, and ornamental elements of the religious spaces that formed the environment in which Christians worshipped (see Chevalier, Chapter 30, this volume). As we learn more about the religious material environment, we can ask fresh questions about how Christians conducted and experienced their religion in Merovingian Gaul.

At the same time, and as the essays in this collection show, the peoples of Merovingian Gaul were not isolated from their neighbors. Indeed, trade, communication, and the constant movement of people ensured that they were aware of religious trends arising from outside their borders, even if they did not always actively engage with them. So, whereas there is much yet to be learned about how religion was practiced within Gaul, it is also important to consider that Merovingian religious ideas and practices were situated within the broader frames of religious expression. Christianity was a Mediterranean religion, and representatives of the Merovingian church actively sought to maintain contacts with Christian authorities and communities further afield, especially those in Byzantium and Rome. At the same time, its geopolitical position meant that contacts with northern European missionaries and reformist movements were important to the future direction of religious practices in Gaul (see Picard, Chapter 18, this volume).

The national story of King Clovis's conversion to Christianity, largely shaped by Gregory of Tours' narrative in his *Histories*, has had a formative role in situating the Merovingians within the history of European Christianity (see Graceffa, Chapter 3; Mathisen, Chapter 19, this volume). And yet almost every element in the traditional story has been challenged by modern scholars. For centuries, the Merovingian dynasty was indelibly associated with the iconic moment when Clovis stepped out of the baptismal pool, having washed away the "leprosy" of pagan belief, his locks anointed with oil, to receive the sign of the cross. According to the account of this moment, provided three quarters of a century later by Bishop Gregory of Tours, more than 3,000 Frankish warriors were then baptized, as was one of Clovis's sisters (*Decem Libri Historiarum* [DLH] 2.31). As a result of this act, Clovis, his followers, and his dynasty were no longer barbarian—they were Christian, in contrast to his father Childeric (Theuvs 2019, pp. 140–147). Thereafter, historians and annalists celebrated and excoriated individual members of the dynasty, but above all, they integrated them into the universal history of the Christian Church. If the scions of the dynasty did not always live up to the elevated destiny Gregory of Tours hopefully imagined for them, their Christianity rendered them manageable, and when they failed, their misfortunes could be attributed to divine punishment. Of the various origin myths that came to be associated with the Merovingian dynasty—that they descended from a sea monster or from Trojan warriors—the myth of the miraculous transformation of a whole people from paganism to Christianity had the longest staying power as an iconic, transformative moment long celebrated in French history. In part, this story was so successful because church leaders in Gaul wanted it to be so. If Clovis was a "new Constantine" as Gregory of Tours proposed, then the security and religious future of his corner of the world were assured (Geary 2002, pp. 116–118).

Although Gregory is not the only source to attest to the importance of Clovis's conversion and baptism (others include Avitus of Vienne [MGH AA 4.2, pp. 75–76], Remigius of Reims [Gundlach (ed.), CCSL 117, pp. 409–410], and Nicetius of Trier [Gundlach (ed.), CCSL 117, pp. 419–423]), it is Gregory's description of that day that has provided the iconic elements that inspired future literary and artistic representations. It is also Gregory's account that wove the Franks into the history of the church, lauding Clovis as the Frankish defender of the faith alongside Gregory's own hero, the ascetic bishop, Martin of Tours. Christianity "took" as a Merovingian dynastic value, in contrast to the fate of some royal converts in other regions of Europe. Clovis's successes on the battlefield and his elimination of rival leaders ensured the dynasty's adherence to a Christian future. As Avitus predicted to Clovis, he and his descendants would "reign in heaven" (Avitus of Vienne, *Epistularum ad diversos libri tres*, Ep. 46 [41]). Indeed, despite the obvious personal failings of some individual Merovingian kings, the centuries of Merovingian rule saw the church benefit from prodigious support from the Merovingian dynasty and from the Frankish aristocracy in what amounted to a dynastic declaration of religious identity.

Gregory of Tours's focus on Clovis as an iconic figure can also be seen in the account of Clovis's conquest of Aquitaine. Clovis's campaign against the Visigothic kingdom in

Aquitaine may have been a longer-term project than previously recognized (see Mathisen, Chapter 19, this volume), but it resulted in conquest in 507. Gregory of Tours cast the conquest in religious terms, with the Christian Clovis prevailing over the “Arian” Alaric II, ignoring the support Alaric received from Catholics both within and outside his kingdom. Clovis’s success was rewarded with imperial recognition and the visible symbols of his authority to rule. Some scholars identify this moment, in 507 or 508, as the date of Clovis’s conversion, departing from the traditional date of 496 (Wood 1985). As a result, the Franks were brought firmly into the orbit of Mediterranean Christianity and Christian politics (see Esders, Chapter 16, this volume). Thenceforth, church leaders were drawn into the theological, doctrinal, and political upheavals that roiled in Italy and distant Byzantium. However, as it often lacked political and religious unity at home, the Merovingian church rarely achieved a monolithic stance toward such disputes, nor did it often strive to intervene directly in religious contests that were generated outside their borders.

The spectacle of Clovis’s baptism has impressed modern historians, too. Drawing on the mythic grandeur of Gregory’s narrative, Napoleon I’s construction and decoration of the Pantheon in Paris elevated the baptism of Clovis to a national story (Wood 2013, pp. 79–81). From this perspective, a murky and inchoate period of migrations gave way to a vision of Christian kingship that would eventually dominate a unified Frankish empire, placing the people of Merovingian Gaul early, and securely, on a path of religious orthodoxy. Although its significance was disputed between Catholics and Republicans in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Clovis’s baptismal ceremony was an important symbolic event for French nationhood (see Coumert, Chapter 5, this volume). In 1996, the 1,500-year anniversary of 496, the traditional date, was duly celebrated across France. However, whereas Clovis’s baptism once prompted scholars to debate the quality of his conversion to Christianity, today we are readier to question the quality of Clovis’s original ‘paganism.’ Christianity of one sort or another was probably already far advanced in some circles, at least before the Franks converted “as a whole.” Modern scholars can point to the imperatives of political expediency and the influence of family alliances to render Clovis’s baptism a “symbolic concession to Constantinople” (see Esders, Chapter 16, this volume).

Although critical analyses of the written sources that address religion, including accounts of Clovis’s baptism, continue to yield insights into the religious and political aspirations of the Franks on an international scale, historians interested in religion are no longer dependent on them. More challenging to eradicate, perhaps, is the fact that modern historical assessments of Merovingian religion have been susceptible to some of the same polarized characterizations and comparisons with what came before and what came after that haunt the period generally. Viewed from the perspective of the late-antique Mediterranean world, and especially in comparison with the intense theological activity of the fourth and early fifth centuries, Merovingian Christianity has sometimes appeared to be theologically unsophisticated, naïve, static, retrograde. The era’s theologians, Gregory the Great, Julian of Toledo, Isidore of Seville, and the Venerable Bede, to name a few, wrote from centers of learning outside Gaul’s borders, creating an impression, undoubtedly incorrect, of a theological void (see Moreira, Chapter 42; Coon,

Chapter 46, this volume). Furthermore, the energy that Merovingian Christians devoted to cataloguing and marveling at the miraculous power of the saints—sometimes seen as a lower form of religious practice—has encouraged the notion of religious decline in these centuries. The potential for distortion is also present when the Merovingian dynasty and the Merovingian church are seen from a reversed chronological perspective. In contrast to the ambition of the Carolingian church to impose unity and uniformity on religious practice, and especially the elevated aspirations of Charlemagne to yoke religion and empire, the Merovingian dynasty's approach to religious patronage can appear *ad hoc*. However, Merovingian kings did not require the church to legitimate their right to rule, and by contrast with the destructive imposition of unity by the Carolingians, the mosaic of local traditions that flourished under the Merovingians, especially with regard to the liturgy and the cult of the saints, favored the claims of regions and peoples to their own history. In an era when such claims are given greater voice in contemporary Europe, the survival of local variations under the Merovingians, even if only as a by-product of the fragmented nature of Merovingian rule, has a measure of worth. Similarly, Merovingian generosity to the church in terms of land donations and immunities might appear profligate (as it was viewed by the Carolingians) when it did not result in a stronger bond between the church and the dynasty in the long term. Scholars today have moved decisively beyond the easy storylines of Merovingian decay touted by their Carolingian successors, recognizing that such teleology masks thornier and more tantalizing questions about religion in Merovingian Gaul. The essays in this volume allow us to evaluate religion in the Merovingian centuries on its own terms: as a Christian culture that was remarkably functional, connected, engaged in wider religious affairs, and capable of religious expression that was meaningful and sometimes open to new ideas.

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Whereas the Frankish elite was seemingly learning its new religion, the Gallo-Roman population had long been exposed to Christianity, and by the time of Clovis's conversion, they were likely predominantly Christians of one sort or another. In the sixth century, the Gallo-Roman church was guided by religious leaders who were, at the higher echelons at least, highly educated, connected, and organized. Notwithstanding the challenges they faced in maintaining contact with one another, especially when dioceses were cut through by secular political boundaries—a situation that could place some bishops and their communities in territories under the control of more than one king—bishops of the fifth and sixth centuries maintained a schedule of church councils, both major and regional, that sought to regulate practices and occasionally attempted to arrive at theological consensus (on councils and solidarity, see Halfond, Chapter 13, this volume). Some of these councils were better attended than others, as was always the case, and there were more of them than have left a written record. In the fifth and sixth

centuries at least, church officials strove to discuss issues of common interest and to communicate conciliar deliberations and agreements to those who could not attend. Religious consensus was the ideal, and disagreement was often the reality, yet contact and communication fostered sufficient episcopal solidarity to allow clerics to speak for the church's interests when confronted by threats arising from the secular sphere. Even when councils were less regularly called in the seventh century and ceased to leave a record after about 680, bishops continued to communicate by letter on church matters, with each other, with kings and queens, and with popes. We know that early on, bishops and other members of the religious elite communicated often by letter, on papyrus, which could be easily transported by couriers along roads and waterways. Under the Merovingians, clerics continued the administrative practices of the late Roman state. As Andrew Gillett explains, the remarkable survival of over 500 letters from Gaul points to a level of bureaucratic activity that can be compared usefully with that of Coptic Egypt (see Gillett, Chapter 25, this volume). Populated by seasoned administrators, the Gallo-Roman church continued the documentary practices that helped shape legal practices under the Merovingians, including the Frankish "Salic" Law, property rights and property transfer, dispute resolution, inheritance and testamentary models, labor, gender, and slave status (see Rio, Chapter 23, this volume). A robust commitment to protecting a post-Roman legal culture in southern Gaul and the construction of Frankish law in the north helped define and protect the status and aspirations of religious communities, and monastic and clerical leaders.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Archaeological excavations of religious sites such as churches, cathedral complexes, and monasteries continue to shed light on religious life under the Merovingians. Since virtually nothing of the religious superstructure of Gaul remains, the investigation of structures below ground is crucial. From the descriptions of building programs and of interior spaces in hagiography and poetry, historians knew that Gaul's church interiors were highly decorated and colorful, furnished with paintings and mosaics analogous to those visible in the surviving structures of the late-antique jeweled style in Ravenna and Rome. Recent archaeological findings confirm that interior design continued to develop under the Merovingians, so that not only were mosaics used, as in Italy, but new elements were added so that "what is new and original is the interaction of architectural glass, mosaics and stained glass windows, which contributed to the luminosity of the interior church space" (see Chevalier, Chapter 30, this volume). Pascale Chevalier's essay discusses the vigorous "spatial conquest by the new faith" in which renovation, adaptation, and appropriation of ancient remains (*spolia*) were so extensive as to amount to "a definition" of Merovingian architectural style. Most churches in this era were on a smaller scale than those in former imperial cities, and timber roofs were common, but they reveal continued adherence to the Roman basilica model (central nave, aisles,

domed apse) and the continued use of traditional construction methods. Meanwhile, excavations of modest religious structures in rural areas are furnishing materials for ongoing debates about the emergence of the parish system in Gaul. Crypts built under churches to accommodate the pious dead *ad sanctos*, such as the necropolis under the abbey church at Luxeuil, are also being examined, expanding our view of the world of the dead and the role of secular and religious patronage in shaping it. A push to identify and excavate monastic complexes promises that this will be an area of expanding knowledge in the future (see Chevalier, Chapter 30, this volume). In many cases for the first time, archaeology is allowing us to see the ritual spaces in which Christians practiced their religion.

Scale matters. Knowing that the structures within which Christians worshipped were smaller than the population they ostensibly served prompts reflection on the definition of the Christian “community” to which written sources so regularly appealed. As new evidence emerges that churches were highly compartmentalized by the use of arches, transepts, elevated platforms and seating, and that they were provided with spaces such as niches for relics and processional stations, we can begin to see how discrete spaces for sacred activities allowed for different spheres of cultic action within churches (see Chevalier, Chapter 30, this volume).

How was this population served, and how were the requirements of eucharistic ritual, in particular, managed? New studies of the liturgy help us to imagine how Christians participated in the daily, weekly, and yearly round of religious practices that defined their religious lives. The degree to which Christians participated in the religious rites of their religion is contested, however. Lisa Kaaren Bailey (Chapter 44, this volume) sees evidence, even from the fragmentary liturgical texts that have survived, that Christians had opportunities to participate in church ritual, in song, prayer, and responses, in processions, and in the eucharistic mass. At the same time, fewer laypeople took communion than before, and, increasingly clerical ritual was screened from their view. Ultimately, Bailey argues, both clerics and the laity shaped the Merovingian liturgy. Liturgical texts help us see another Merovingian practice—the naming of the dead for the purpose of remembrance. As Els Rose explains (Chapter 43, this volume), this practice fostered a sense of community and civic identity between the living and the dead, and between celebrants and the people. All members of the Christian community had the potential to fulfill their baptismal promise to be citizens of heaven. The distinctive feature of the Merovingian version of the naming rite, associated with the offertory, underscored the connection between the faithful who offered intercession and the dead who received it.

The religious activities of women are by no means hidden from view. Women were important members of the Merovingian religious community. However, they were not equal participants with men in the public performance of the Christian religion. Women could not be consecrated as priests, although the rarely referenced status of “deaconess” and the honorific title of *episcopa* for the wife of a bishop were gestures to the pastoral work that some women undertook. Infamously, in some communities at least, women were prohibited from touching either liturgical cloths or the communion host with bare hands (Council of Auxerre (561–605), canons 36, 37, and 42), and by virtue of their

nonclerical status, certain spaces of sacred activity were denied them. Social and marital status determined the religious options open to women and the degree to which church authorities accepted and respected their choices. Women could become nuns if their families permitted it and if their families had the requisite resources to support them in a lifetime of prayer. Some rose to prominence within the monastic hierarchy (see James, Chapter 11, this volume). However, convents were also home to lower-status women whose service roles likely confined them permanently to a lower place in the religious hierarchy. Laywomen, especially those in a position to become benefactors and patrons, were important members of church communities in Late Antiquity. As congregants, they offered gifts, including bread for use in the eucharistic celebration. It is likely, too, that women had a role in making and laundering vestments and cloths used in churches, although the evidence for this comes mostly in the form of prohibitions (Caesarius of Arles, *Rule for Nuns*).

From the start, women connected to the Merovingian dynasty were recorded as public supporters of the church, and it was expected that queens in particular would foster religious and cultic activity within their spheres of influence (see Moreira, Chapter 42, this volume). Queens could command resources of land and precious objects that were desirable to the church; throughout the period, they feature as patrons and founders of monasteries and churches, in some cases co-signing royal donation charters for underage sons. Furthermore, the church sought to protect wills in which women left property to the church against other claimants (see James, Chapter 11, this volume). Clerics were not reticent to acknowledge the support of high-profile women for the advancement of Christianity. Clovis's wife, Chlothild, was credited by Gregory of Tours as having been instrumental in the conversion of her husband to Christianity. The ambitiously ascetic Queen Radegund, the Thuringian wife of Clovis's son Chlothar I, acquired a fragment of the True Cross for her convent in Poitiers, which allowed her to be compared to St. Helena, mother of Constantine (Moreira 1993). Radegund was an especially important figure for the Merovingians. Not only did her relic acquisition bring to Gaul a symbol of Christian empire, but it showed her power to touch the wider Christian world through her connections in Constantinople (Moreira 1993; see Esders, Chapter 16, this volume). In fact, Radegund was not the first woman in Gaul to possess a piece of this prestigious relic, but her foundation of the Sainte-Croix convent in Poitiers, together with her reputation for personal sanctity, made her a model for subsequent queens and their aristocratic daughters (see James, Chapter 11, this volume). Indeed, queens and aristocrats who honored the church had a pathway to sanctity. But pride in their elevated status was the way they were most likely to fail. Hagiographers described queens undertaking the most menial of household tasks at court and in the convent, thereby reflecting how religious humility was gendered. However, monastic founders were under no illusion that cleaning held parity with prayer as a path to respect and status. Despite her reputation for cleaning latrines, Radegund adopted a rule for her nuns from St. Caesaria's convent in Arles that expressly forbade nuns from taking in laundry.

The elite are more visible in the sources than their humbler counterparts because they often controlled resources that could be put to the direct support of the church (see James, Chapter 11, this volume). In their secular lives, queens were encouraged to exert

their domestic influence with the king and with their sons to promote the religion and to promote clerical careers. Like kings and bishops, queens had households in which they could shape religious learning and culture. Although we have evidence for this only later, the role of elite women in the religious and moral education of their sons and daughters may have been significant in this period, although their influence once their sons reached majority was variable. Widows with young sons could achieve considerable political influence, aided, as in Queen Balthild's case, by allies in the church. Hagiographies of queens and aristocrats dominate the written sources on women, but humble serving women sometimes appear on the periphery of the texts, living parallel lives of asceticism and service without literary recognition (Bailey 2012).

Those who escaped the notice of the authors of texts were by far the largest segment of the population. Because burial was for most a family responsibility, mortuary archaeology sheds important light on the practices and rituals of "ordinary" Christians, even accepting the challenges of identifying religious practice and personal agency in burial contexts. While burial with objects was a Christian practice in this area (see Kornbluth, Chapter 40, this volume), and such burials have been long documented, discussions of religious practice can be moved into new areas by asking how communities were able to access items they deposited. Frans Theuws's analysis of the rural population of northern Gaul in the sixth and first half of the seventh centuries reveals a population that was able to "satisfy their ritual demands" through trade (Chapter 38, this volume). This trade, even if not direct, brought rural inhabitants items whose component parts were sourced from both local and distant lands, including cowrie shells from the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, and garnets from India and Sri Lanka (see Pion et al., Chapter 36, this volume). This rural population that buried its dead with "immense" numbers of objects used these artifacts to express the religious ideas of their communities and community connections with the supernatural. Eventually, the exuberance of this form of religious expression changed, possibly for economic and structural reasons (see Theuws, Chapter 38, this volume), but this reflected a change in religious expression rather than religious affiliation. The presence of a wide variety of goods in the graves of populations that likely identified as Christian shows that religious identity could be expressed variously, and that amulets and other items whose function is not always known but that may have been intended to ward off evil (apotropaic), fell within acceptable parameters of Christian burial practice (on amulets, see Kornbluth, Chapter 40, this volume).

IDEAS FROM ABROAD

An aspect of Merovingian religious culture that we can appreciate today more than in the past is the role of human mobility. The connections that recent studies of trade and traded items are beginning to expose likewise supported the movement of clerical personnel, religious goods, manuscripts, and religious ideas. Early medieval written sources describe how kings and bishops, along with their extensive retinues, traveled

long distances across Europe for the purposes of education, pilgrimage, dispute of cases in Rome, and (in the case of select bishops) acceptance of the *pallium* (a liturgical scarf) from the pope. Merovingian Gaul's geographic position at the center of land and sea routes to and from Rome from northern Europe meant that outsiders crossed through its borders, used its transportation systems, visited shrines, and took up residence in its towns for months or even years.

Merovingian episcopal culture was evidently worthy of admiration in some quarters. Viewed from outside its borders, Wilfrid of York, for example, had an admiration and affinity for Merovingian episcopal culture. Besides reportedly receiving the tonsure from the bishop of Lyon, he lived for years in Gaul as well as Rome. While the journeys of Irish monks to Britain and Gaul are preserved in written sources, and we know of a few named individuals who traveled between England, Gaul, and Ireland for education to take up clerical positions, or because they were in exile, archaeology reveals that such journeys followed long-established trade routes that conveyed ceramics, glass, and other wares such as wine (used for the celebration of the mass), and coins (see Fleming, Chapter 17; Picard, Chapter 18; Tys, Chapter 34, this volume). As Jean-Michel Picard notes, better knowledge of trade activity in the Loire estuary "confirms that both Columbanus in Co. Down and Fursey in Co. Louth left Ireland from regions that had direct commercial contacts with the Merovingian world" (Chapter 18, this volume). These routes carried not only people, but also books, letters, diplomatic gifts, religious items, paintings, religious craftsmen (and perhaps their families), and musicians. Written sources reveal that Merovingian Gaul, just as much as Italy and beyond, provisioned goods and personnel for the advancement of Christian life in remote areas of northern Europe. Nor was the traffic one way. Franks traveled to England and to Ireland even if they are not as visible in the written sources as the Irish who traveled to the continent. Merovingian Gaul was a hub for religious activity.

Outsiders had long been important to the practice of religion in Gaul, and this continued under the Merovingians. The rise of monasticism in Gaul, patterned after eastern Mediterranean models from the late fourth to the sixth century, shaped by the influence of Irish monks and their monastic values in the seventh century, and the activity of Anglo-Saxon missionaries on its eastern frontiers in the eighth are indicative of the ways that the population of Merovingian Gaul could be influenced by religious movements from outside its borders. Nor were Merovingian royal courts deaf to papal appeals for support when missionary campaigns to other regions were underway. Pope Gregory's plan to Christianize Kent was supported by Queen Brunhild and her court (Wood 1994). Augustine and his monks lingered in Merovingian Gaul as they collected liturgical texts and other items that would enable them to succeed in Canterbury. Merovingian Gaul, alongside Italy, could satisfy the shopping sprees and gifted acquisitions by which Benedict Biscop provisioned the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow (Bede, *Lives of the Abbots*, 4, 6). This is not to say that there was no pushback against outsiders or their persecution. But overall, and compared with Spain under the Visigoths, the fact that Jewish communities maintained a presence in Gaul at the Merovingian court and in southern cities where they had long been resident, and that Irish monks were able to

take up residence in Merovingian Francia, points to the “cultural diversity and vitality of the Merovingian world” (Drews, Chapter 6, this volume). Systems of political and spiritual patronage played their part in the success of these foreigners and their ideas in Gaul (see Picard, Chapter 18, this volume). This was particularly the case with the settlement of Irish monks in northern Gaul alongside the more “mixed crowd” at Agaune (see Diem, Chapter 15, this volume). Merovingian Gaul was geographically situated to be a point of convergence for people and ideas from outside their borders. Merovingian church leaders were kept busy assessing, absorbing, and adapting to the religious ideas and practices of newcomers, and placed a premium on maintaining theological orthodoxy at home (see Moreira, Chapter 42, this volume).

Merovingian churches, alongside other churches of Europe, were on the sidelines of the Mediterranean religious powerhouses of Rome and Constantinople, but this did not mean that they were not invested or involved in what was going on there. High-status clerics, in particular, were as informed as they could be about disputes rumbling around the Christian world, and individually they could develop a stance, debate the issues, and disagree. Stefan Esders points to three major disputes in the sixth and seventh centuries to which Merovingian clerics demonstrably reacted: the Three Chapter controversy (548–553), the Lateran Synod (or Council) of 649, and the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680–681). As noted earlier, the Merovingian church was not a monolithic entity in its religious stance, with kingdoms reacting differently to events abroad—as they did in the case of the Lateran Council of 649 (see Esders, Chapter 16, this volume). Even if our sources reveal this only occasionally, Merovingian religious leaders cared about theology and the disputes emanating from the Mediterranean basin.

At home, Merovingian churchmen set their religious agendas according to their resources. For many bishops, attention to local concerns meant promoting the cult of local saints. This was a religious agenda that did not ignore the laity, for in providing for the needs of the populace in their localities, high-ranking clerics sometimes promoted their own. Gregory of Tours is a vital resource for this world. If, however, we rely only on Gregory for our information on the cult of the saints, we are presented with a world of competition dominated by personal squabbles and community shenanigans. The political stakes of the cult of saints dominates this view, with towns and monasteries vying with each other for the acquisition of relics, and with stories of how the supernatural “protection” offered by powerful saints could debase the ambitions of nobles and kings. Saints were patrons, protectors, and big business (Brown 1981). The theological implications of this veneration does not often surface in Merovingian texts. Yet communities made choices about the saints they revered, even the homegrown saints they supposedly inherited. Over time, some cult allegiances blossomed while others faded into the background. Churches and monasteries that adopted universal cults, such as those of St. Peter, the Virgin Mary, and the True Cross, or foreign cults such as St. Mamas and St. Vincent, broadcast their values and allegiances, and signaled their aspirations to be part of a wider Christendom. Such choices were not devoid of theological understanding or intent. By the seventh century, St. Martin had serious competition among the Franks in the figure of St. Peter. The promise of the saints to provide salvation and protection,

and to generally navigate the afterlife became increasingly acute as time went on. It was a shift in theological perception that closed off hell to the plunder of saints like Martin. Increasingly, the dying expected to see St. Peter waiting for them at the gates of heaven (see Moreira, Chapter 42, this volume).

In the salvific scope of penance and in the views of the afterlife, we see critical theological choices being made. Informed by the penitential theologies of John Cassian and Augustine of Hippo in the early fifth century, the sermons of Caesarius in the sixth century, and the afterlife visions of Pope Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* in the late sixth century, church authorities were primed to encounter new penitential ideas from Irish missionaries at the turn of the seventh century and new views of the afterlife as preached by Anglo-Saxon missionaries at its easternmost borders in the eighth (see Uhalde, Chapter 45, this volume). But whereas penitential revivalism touched a spiritual chord among many Christians, and was embraced by monastic communities in many places, Merovingian texts about the afterlife reveal a notable degree of caution about innovations, and in particular ideas about postmortem purgation that were circulating contemporaneously in Italy, England, and Ireland (see Moreira, Chapter 42, this volume). The position of Merovingian religious authorities on theological innovation needs to be understood on its own terms. What appears in hindsight as an inherent conservatism in the Merovingian theological worldview could be equally understood as a reasonable reaction to some very strange ideas. And we must recall the loss of so many works from Merovingian libraries and other manuscript deposits (papyrus and parchment) that informed them. In their approach to eastern religious disputes (see Esders, Chapter 16, this volume), their divided reaction to Irish newcomers (see Diem, Chapter 15, this volume), and their conservative views about the afterlife (see Moreira, Chapter 42, this volume), we can see how Merovingian religious authorities were more than capable of having theological opinions, debating theological interpretations, and dampening rash and possibly dangerous theological novelties.

It is important to emphasize that Christians in the Merovingian period had, at different times and places, opportunities to hear about, observe, and join those living a spiritual life. On an individual level, access to religious opportunities would be highly moderated—the institution of religion was a hierarchy above all, dominated by economics, family, gender, and ritual—but in general, the Merovingian Christian found diverse ways to express love for God and his saints. At the altar of their local church or on pilgrimage to a cultic hotspot, Christians could ask for divine protection in time of ill health or other need, and they were often provided with other forms of support at these locations in the form of alms or medical attention. Church services, monasteries, and saints' cults provided most people with a path through which to express a religious appetite. In the seventh and eighth centuries, an era of "religious revivalism," penitential remedies for sin continued to evolve. (see Uhalde, Chapter 45, this volume). By their very nature, reform movements encouraged new groups to participate in religious thinking and to challenge the status quo. In this great age of hagiographic literature, the image of Christian saint and martyr, proclaiming a life of faith, spoke to the desire for a richly imagined life of the soul, and the companionship of all of the saints who offered

healing and solace in the present life and protection in the next (see Kreiner, Chapter 24, this volume). Our sources reveal expressions of love for the word of God, a reverence for the scriptures, a devotion to the saints, and a passion for the mystical figure of Christ, whether expressed in liturgical prayers, in hagiography, in stone, or in other creative modes of artistic expression (see Coon, Chapter 46, this volume). Yet, any attempt to judge the “quality” of Christianity from the written sources, using a modern religious perspective, is irremediably flawed and inevitably teleological; to do so from physical remains is no less problematic. The presence of grave goods in burials, even those in churches, that led earlier generations to question the commitment of this population to Christianity, is roundly dismissed today as providing evidence for pagan burial (Effros 2002). And practices at the edges of religion, such as devotion to amulets or interest in divinatory magic, are today less likely to be labeled pagan, primitive, or deviant than was the case in the past (see Kornbluth, Chapter 40; Klingshirn, Chapter 41, this volume).

That said, there is much that we do not know about the daily experiences of the population of Gaul. The presence of priests, the activity of councils, and the local provisions of pastoral and substantive care for the community that was a feature of Merovingian Gaul (see Horden, Chapter 14, this volume) meant that religion mattered in this society. As for the elite, its investment in religion reaped enormous political dividends. The fate of those who felt trapped into the religious life, and the social realities that made any kind of personal choice a privilege, meant that the spiritually lukewarm had a harder journey. Nuns trying to escape from convents and monastic rules designed to imprison unhappy monks hint at individual horrors. But there is no doubt that Merovingian Gaul was a society that, while it may have offered its best face to only a few, had no doubt about its identity as a Christian region when facing those around them.

CONCLUSION

The Merovingian Franks we have encountered in this volume are not Gibbon’s Franks. The cultural vitality of the diverse inhabitants of Gaul in these centuries, their embeddedness in the Mediterranean and European worlds, and their historical importance to the history of Europe give the lie to Gibbon’s extraordinarily reductive assessment of them. But whereas the inhabitants of Merovingian Gaul are not Gibbon’s Franks, neither are they an obscure historical interlude of even a generation ago. The scope of Merovingian studies continues to expand as new lines of inquiry emerge from multiple disciplinary directions. This is true not only of our expanding knowledge base gleaned from new archaeological work and the application of new scientific methods, but also in terms of the accessibility of Merovingian-era written and material sources to scholars and even to the interested public. Editions of Merovingian texts can be found in the publications of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, especially the dedicated series on Merovingian writings, the *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, which has been available

since 2004 in digital format, free, searchable, and online, and in the *Corpus Christianorum, series Latina* published by Brepols. Most Merovingian written works are known from later copies, so projects that make medieval manuscripts available through digitization, especially those of the Carolingian era, advance our knowledge of works composed in the Merovingian period also. The digitization of early medieval manuscripts held in collections across the globe is providing access to sources that were once available only to a few privileged researchers, or else through expensive facsimiles. For example, the virtual manuscript library of Switzerland (<https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en>), an ongoing project that includes, to date, over 600 digitized manuscripts from the St. Gall Monastery library (Codices Electronici Sangallensis <http://www.cesg.unifr.ch/de/index.htm>), is both a codicological gem and a model for other repositories. Furthermore, digitization is allowing for imaginative projects of library reconstruction, such as the virtual reassembly of the now dispersed contents of the Carolingian library and the scriptorium of Lorsch (Bibliotheca Laureshamensis), which includes manuscripts from as early as the fourth century (http://bibliotheca-laureshamensis-digital.de/en/kloster/bibliothek_scriptorium.html). Another recent virtual library reconstruction, the Bibliotheca Palatina (<http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/bpd>), combines over 3,500 manuscripts in the collection of Heidelberg University and the Vatican Library, including early medieval copies of the work of Gregory of Tours and Fredegar. Most national libraries provide electronic access to digitized documents, and some also provide images and/or databases for objects in their collection. Some sleuthing is required to keep on top of ever-expanding electronic resources, but the following offer a starting point. For scholarship on the Merovingian era generally, Gallica, the digitized collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) (<https://gallica.bnf.fr>), provides access to written works as well as to images of early medieval artifacts and links to the collections of regional museums. Merovingian items in European collections are found on their websites, although these may not represent entire holdings. Places to start include the electronic resources of the British Museum (London), the Musée d'archéologie nationale (Saint-Germain-en-Laye), the Römisch-Germanisches Museum (Köln), the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum (Mainz), the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Leiden), and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York). New ways of thinking about manuscripts, libraries, and historical library collections promise to advance our knowledge of the Merovingian period.

We are grateful to the *Oxford Handbook* series for giving us this opportunity to bring together some of the exciting scholarship being done on the Merovingian world and on a scale hitherto not available in English. It is not our intention to be comprehensive—that is impossible in any case—but to bring together studies and disciplinary voices that do not often share the same publication space. We hope that this volume, with its diverse perspectives and approaches, conveys something of the dynamism of the field, providing a snapshot and an entry point into research currently underway in the field of Merovingian studies. By providing English-language essays on areas of research activity that are sometimes hidden from view in Anglophone scholarship, and in some cases presented here in English for the first time, we hope to make the Merovingian world more accessible to students and scholars of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

WORKS CITED

Ancient Sources

- Avitus of Vienne, *Epistularum ad diversos libri tres, Ep.* 46(41). R. Peiper (ed.). (1883). AA 6.2, pp. 75–76. Berlin: Weidmann.
- Bede, *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*. C. Plummer (ed.). (1946). *Baedae Opera Historica* (Vol. 1, pp. 364–387). Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.
- Bede, *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*. C. Grocock and I. N. Wood (eds. and trans.). (2013). *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 21–75. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Caesarius of Arles, *Rule for Nuns*. A. de Vogüé and J. Courreau (eds.). (1988). *Césaire d'Arles: Oeuvres monastiques*. SC 345. Paris: Editions du Cerf.
- Caesarius of Arles, *Rule for Nuns*. M. C. McCarthy (trans.). (1960). *The Rule for Nuns of St. Caesarius of Arles*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.
- Council of Auxerre (561–605). J. Gaudemet and B. Basdevant (eds.). (1989). *Les canons Mérovingiens (VIe-VIIIe siècles. (t. 2))*. SC 354. Paris: Editions du Cerf.
- Fredegar, *Chronicle*. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (ed. and trans.). (1960). *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with Its Continuations*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Gregory of Tours. *Histories*. B. Krusch (ed.). (1951). *Decem libri historiarum*. MGH SRM 1.1. Hanover: Hahn.
- Liber Historiae Francorum*. B. Krusch (ed.). (1984). MGH SRM 2. Hanover, Germany: Hahn.
- Nicetius of Trier, *Epistula* 3. W. Gundlach (ed.). (1957). *Epistulae Austrasicae*. CCL 117, pp. 419–423. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- Remigius of Reims, *Epistula* 3. W. Gundlach (ed.). (1957). *Epistulae Austrasicae*. CCL 117, pp. 409–411. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.

Modern Sources

- Amorim, C. E. G., Vai, S., Posth, C., Modi, A., et al. (2018). “Understanding 6th-Century Barbarian Social Organization and Migration through Paleogenomics.” *bioRxiv preprint*. doi:10.1101/268250
- Bailey, L. K. (2012). “Within and Without: Lay People and the Church in Gregory of Tours’ Miracle Stories.” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 5(1): 119–144.
- Bonifay, M. (2013). “Africa: Patterns of Consumption in Coastal Regions versus Inland Regions. The Ceramic Evidence (300–700 AD).” In L. Lavan (ed.), *Local Economies? Production and Exchange of Inland Regions in Late Antiquity* (pp. 529–566). Leiden: Brill.
- Brown, D. (2003). *The Da Vinci Code*. New York: Doubleday.
- Brown, P. (1981). *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Late Antiquity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brown, P. (2000). “The Decline of the Empire of God. Amnesty, Penance, and the Afterlife from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages.” In C. W. Bynum and P. Freedman (eds.), *Last Things. Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (pp. 40–59). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Coulson, F. and Babcock, R. (eds.) (2020). *The Oxford Handbook of Latin Palaeography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dunn, M. (2013). *Belief and Religion in Barbarian Europe c. 350–700* London: Bloomsbury.

- Effros, B. (2002). *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Esders, S., Fox, Y., Hen, Y., and Sarti, L. (eds.). (2019). *East and West in the Early Middle Ages: The Merovingian Kingdoms in Mediterranean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gear, P. J. (2002). *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gibbon, E. (1995). *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 2. Edited by D. Womersley. London: Penguin Classics.
- Haldon, J., Elton, H., Huebner, S. R., Izdebski, A., Mordechai, L., and Newfield, T. P. (2018a). "Plagues, climate change, and the end of an empire: A response to Kyle Harper's *The Fate of Rome* (1): Climate." *History Compass* 16: e12508. doi:10.1111/hic3.12508
- Haldon, J., Elton, H., Huebner, S. R., Izdebski, A., Mordechai, L., and Newfield, T. P. (2018b). "Plagues, climate change, and the end of an empire. A response to Kyle Harper's *The Fate of Rome* (2): Plagues and a crisis of empire." *History Compass* 16: e12506. doi:10.1111/hic3.12506
- Haldon, J., Elton, H., Huebner, S. R., Izdebski, A., Mordechai, L., Newfield, T. P. (2018c). "Plagues, climate change, and the end of an empire: A response to Kyle Harper's *The Fate of Rome* (3): Disease, agency, and collapse." *History Compass* 16: e12507. doi:10.1111/hic3.12507
- Harper, K. (2017). *The Fate of Rome: Climate, Disease, and the End of an Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kreiner, J. (2017). "Pigs in the Flesh and the Fisc: An Early Medieval Ecology." *Past and Present* 236: 4–42.
- McCormick, M. (2001). *Origins of the European economy. Communications and commerce, AD 300–900*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mordechai, L., Eisenberg, M., Newfield, T. P., Izdebski, A., Kay, J. E., and Poinard, H. (2019). "The Justinianic plague: An inconsequential pandemic?" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* December 116 (51): 25546–25554. doi:10.1073/pnas.1903797116
- Moreira, I. (1993). "Provisatrix optima: St. Radekund of Poitiers' Relic Petitions to the East." *Journal of Medieval History* 19: 285–305.
- Müldner, G. (2009). "Investigating Medieval Diet and Society by Stable Isotope Analysis of Human Bone." In R. Gilchrist and A. Reynolds (eds.), *Reflections: Fifty Years of Medieval Archaeology, 1957–2007* (327–346). Society for Medieval Archaeology Monographs 30. London: Routledge.
- Périn, P. (1980). *La datation des tombes mérovingiennes: Historique-Méthodes-Applications*. Centre de recherches d'histoire et de philologie de la IV^e section de l'École pratique des hautes études 5. Hautes études médiévales et modernes 39. Geneva: Librairie Droz.
- Pion, C., and Vrielyck, O. (2014). "Le cimetière de Bossut-Gottechain (Belgique) et son implication dans l'établissement d'une nouvelle chronologie normalisée des perles en Gaule mérovingienne." *Bulletin de Liaison de l'Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne* 38: 87–91.
- Pirenne, H. (1937). *Mahomet et Charlemagne*. Paris: F. Alcan.
- von Doderer, Heimito. (1962). *Die Merowinger oder Die totale Familie*. Munich: Biederstein Verlag.
- Theuvs, F. (2019). "Burial Archaeology and the Transformation of the Roman World in Northern Gaul (4th to 6th Centuries)." In S. Brather-Walter (ed.), *Archaeology, History and Biosciences: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (pp. 125–150). Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Wickham, C. (2005). *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Wood, I. N. (1983). *The Merovingian North Sea*. Occasional Papers on Medieval Topics 1. Alingsås, Sweden: Viktoria Bokförlag.
- Wood, I. N. (1985). "Gregory of Tours and Clovis." *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 63: 249–272.
- Wood, I. N. (1994). "The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English." *Speculum* 69: 1–17.
- Wood, I. N. (2013). *The Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

P A R T I

MEROVINGIAN
HISTORIOGRAPHY
AND THE HISTORY
OF ARCHAEOLOGY

CHAPTER 2

FROM GAUL TO FRANCIA

The Impact of the Merovingians

PAUL FOURACRE

THE Merovingian dynasty ruled for 270 years (481–751), and during this period it can be said that “Gaul” became “Francia.” This transition has had enormous impact on thinking about how European society developed in the early Middle Ages. In the early modern period, historians looked to the way in which the Franks created a long-lasting kingdom in order to understand the nature of the political institutions and social structures of their own day. Political thinkers with very different agendas saw in the establishment of the Frankish kingdom the origins of both “good” and “bad” elements in their world. Of primary concern were the transfer of power from the Romans to the barbarians and the role Christianity played in the formation of European culture, for better or worse, according to their personal stance over religion (Wood 2013). This discussion began with the Carolingians, was developed in the later Middle Ages, and continued through to the Enlightenment, the Age of Revolution, and beyond. Each European nation that grew up on soil once ruled by the Romans had its own set of questions about how it had come into being and how the seeds of the present (good or bad) had been sown. It was in France, however, that the history of post-Roman development was most strongly contested and that the debate had the strongest political resonance. It was indeed the experience of working through the long-term ramifications of the transfer of power from the Romans to the barbarians that gave French scholarship the leading edge in early medieval history. This in turn meant that interpretations of development in France became models for Europe as a whole (Fouracre 2014). Such a long-established Francocentric view of early medieval history has had the effect of throwing the spotlight onto the Merovingians and making the fact that Gaul turned into Francia a salient point in European development.

French thinkers were uniquely well placed to speak to the present through the medium of “their” early medieval history because they had clear access to it via an unbroken chain of narrative sources. That narrative began with Gregory of Tours’s *Ten Books of Histories*, a work that was usually read in a shortened six-book version that

came to be known as the “History of the Franks” (Krusch 1951; Thorpe 1971). Gregory took the history of the Merovingians from the beginning up to the end of the sixth century. His history was embellished in the *Chronicles of Fredegar* and continued into the 640s (Wallace-Hadrill 1960). The story up to the 720s was then taken up in the *Book of the History of the Franks* (*Liber Historiae Francorum*, henceforth *LHF*; Fouracre and Gerberding 1996) and, finally, the *Continuations of the Fourth Book of Fredegar* (Wallace-Hadrill 1960) completed Merovingian history with an account of the decline and replacement of the dynasty and the rise to power of their successors, the Carolingians (on historiography, see Reimitz, Chapter 22, this volume). The narrative then continued first with the annals of the Carolingian period and then with the recording of history in a host of local annals and chronicles that copied the earlier works. What could now be regarded as a national past was, finally, standardized in the widely circulated *Chroniques de France* of the fourteenth century (Viard 1920–1953). Alongside the narrative there were charters from the Merovingian period available as originals or, later, as cartulary copies (Kölzer 2001; Pardessus 1843–1849), as well as the law code *Lex Salica* (Fischer Drew 1991) and further legislation, as well as the largest corpus of hagiography in Europe. Great continuities could be traced through these sources, not the least of which was that the Franks had given their name to France (Francia) which imbued the French with a sense of direct descent from the inhabitants of the Merovingian world, albeit from the Gallo-Roman inhabitants of that world (see Graceffa, Chapter 3, this volume). It was important, too, that many of the religious institutions first appearing in the Merovingian period survived up to 1789, and the proximity to Paris of two of them, the monasteries of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Denis, reinforced the capital city’s sense of continuity with the distant past (Fouracre 2014).

On the one hand, unbroken narrative, the survival and recording of institutions over more than a millennium, and an unparalleled effort to edit and publish the sources produced by those same institutions offer the historian an unrivaled opportunity to study one society in one region as it developed over an extraordinarily long term: hence the way in which west European developments have tended to be modeled on Frankish history. On the other hand, we must be aware of the distortions produced by this particular national focus. First, it should be noted that emphasis on continuities in a specifically French past has had the effect of dragging Merovingian history westward. Southern and central Germany, which could equally lay claim to the Merovingian past, did not do so, if for no other reason than that there was no state of Germany to do so before the later nineteenth century (see Hardt, Chapter 20, this volume). We must therefore be careful not to overprivilege the history of the Franks in the west, as opposed to the east. Second, canonizing these particular narratives has had the effect of producing history that focuses on kings, queens, and a very few named members of a social elite (see Hen, Chapter 10, this volume). In this history, the personality of rulers looms very large. Much aided by the Carolingian denigration of their predecessors, Merovingian history has often been written in terms of the progressive decline of the dynasty as manifested in the personal failings of its members, to the point that one wonders how the dynasty possibly could have survived longer than any other in Europe (Fouracre 2005). Third, we

know so much more about the Merovingians than about other regimes in the same period that comparison is difficult and perspective hard to establish.

From the works of Gregory of Tours, much can be learned about events in sixth-century Gaul. His narrative is indeed consistently thick enough for historians to analyze Merovingian family politics in some detail, even when they recognize that Gregory's account is socially one dimensional and constructed according to a religious agenda. At the heart of this picture are the Merovingian family itself and the affairs of the Catholic Church. Kings are judged very much in terms of their relations with the church, others in terms of how power and wealth affected their behavior. A range of peoples is mentioned: Franks, Gallo-Romans, Burgundians, Saxons, Thuringians, Goths, and the inhabitants of various regions and towns, but these names do little more than tell of where people were and of what happened to them as a group. So flat is this picture that historians can say very little about ethnicity or social structure in Gregory's world. One of the main debates about the Franks among historians of the later twentieth century was over whether or not they had had an aristocracy of birth from the beginning. If not, where did the aristocracy, so visible in the seventh century, come from? Was it, in other words, an aristocracy of blood (*Geburtsadel*), or was it one of service (*Dienstadel*) (Irsigler 1969; Grahn-Hoek 1971)? The works of Gregory of Tours offer little help in answering these questions. The same is true of the earliest Frankish law code, the *Pactus Legis Salicae*, or *Lex Salica*, composed before the death of King Clovis in 511, which made a strong distinction between free and unfree people in society but did not differentiate among groups within the free. Documentary sources, which can be traced back into the sixth century through formularies (models for drawing up various kinds of document) (Rio 2008; see Rio, Chapter 23, this volume), likewise distinguish between free and unfree people but say virtually nothing about other forms of social distinction. What these sources do show, however, is a surprising degree of social and legal pragmatism. Women's inheritance, for instance, was postponed behind that of male relatives, but according to the evidence of the formularies, parents could decide to make daughters equal co-heirs if they wished (Fouracre 2000a; see James, Chapter 11, this volume). Free and unfree people could not marry according to *Lex Salica*, but if they did do so, arrangements could be made for them to live together without hindrance (Rio 2006). *Lex Salica* itself largely consists of a tariff of compensations for various injuries. These set out in public the amount that an injured party might receive in lieu of taking direct action to avenge loss or injury. An agreed tariff was a way of making the acceptance of compensation honorable, but the unspoken alternative of violent self-help was always on the cards. Each "people" in the territories dominated by the Franks had their own laws; Roman law continued to be cited, and churchmen lived according to their own rules. Court cases, records for which survive from the later seventh century onward, could take all of these factors into account (Fouracre 1986).

As already noted, the Merovingian family itself dominates the sixth-century narrative, but their followers and underlings came from a variety of backgrounds and had different ethnic origins. Gallo-Romans are especially prominent in Gregory's *Histories*, though their background is often indicated only by their names. From the end of the

sixth century, people with Frankish names begin to predominate. Inter-marriage, and a growing preference for Frankish naming practices and for Frankish ways, would seem to be the explanation for this. It is also the key to how Gaul became Francia as a degree of cultural solidarity coalesced around a landholding elite drawn from a variety of backgrounds but who shared in the legitimation of power and privilege that came from support for the Catholic Church and from association with one or other Merovingian regime (Fouracre 2004). The result was the development of a polity based on a highly integrated elite. Frankish identity, which rested ultimately on success in warfare against other peoples, was sufficiently flexible to accommodate local custom, and there was a common interest in being part of a successful polity that could reward adherents (Reimitz 2015). Over the course of the Merovingian period, that polity grew to a massive size despite having what can only be characterized as weak governing institutions. This was “Francia” as the Carolingians inherited it in the mid-eighth century, by which time it was a polity set for further expansion. Let us now look more closely at its making.

In *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (1937), Henri Pirenne famously argued that the Roman world came to an end not with the so-called Germanic invasions but with the rise of Arab power that severed trading connections across the Mediterranean. His thesis was based on a reading of narrative sources, prominent among them being the works of Gregory of Tours. In these sources, Pirenne found references to Mediterranean merchants visiting Gaul and the continuing importation of “typical” Mediterranean products: wine, olive oil, papyrus, and spices from further east. Fed by Mediterranean trade as it had been at the height of the Roman Empire, Gaul, according to Pirenne, remained a basically Roman society until the later seventh century, when the Mediterranean lifeline was cut (for recent research on ceramics and trade, see Bonifay and Pieri, Chapter 37, this volume). Thereafter the nature of society changed as land became the most significant source of wealth and power, and power migrated northward to the agrarian heartlands of west continental Europe. It was in this area that a new dynasty, the Carolingians, arose, and their power was based on landholding. In one unforgettable phrase, Pirenne summed up his entire thesis: “Without Mahomet [i.e., the rise of Islam and Arab power] there could have been no Charlemagne.”

Despite being published over eighty years ago and being challenged on almost every point, Pirenne’s ideas remain an excellent entry point into the question of how Gaul became Francia. After decades of archaeological research, unavailable to Pirenne of course, it is now generally accepted that exchange networks in the Mediterranean had declined long before the rise of Arab power. References in Gregory to long-distance trade proved to be the exception rather than the rule, and one can question the very assumption that cross-Mediterranean trade had ever determined the state of economic relations in Gaul, even at the height of Roman power. Today’s historians place much greater emphasis on the disintegration of the late-Roman taxation system as a factor in the transformation of Gaul, for this meant that rulers had progressively weaker resources to draw upon and that the monetary economy lost a key driver (Wickham 2005). Decline in taxation was thus combined with a long-term recession in trading activity.

To this may be added the disruption brought by frequent bouts of warfare. From the fifth century onward, there was also demographic change as populations shrank as a result of the wetter and cooler conditions brought about by a shift in the Atlantic jet stream (Cheyette 2008). Then, in the sixth century, the population declined further in the face of recurrent outbreaks of plague (see Horden, Chapter 14, and Yvinec and Barme, Chapter 33, this volume). Not surprisingly, towns continued to shrink as they had been doing since the fourth century, and with the disappearance of civic life, society came to be structured around a landholding elite and a mass of peasants (on cities, see Loseby, Chapter 27, this volume). Power came to have a largely military basis, resting in the hands of those who had the most land and the largest number of armed followers (see Sarti, Chapter 12, this volume). This end result, “Carolingian Francia,” is very much as Pirenne envisaged it, but rather than his monocausal explanation (the severing of links across the Mediterranean), we can now identify a complex combination of factors that are impossible to disentangle in terms of cause and effect.

What Pirenne and present-day historians would have agreed on, however, are the notions that the transition from Gaul to Francia was not simply brought about by the conquest of Roman Gaul by the Merovingian Franks (the “Germanic barbarians”) and that the traditional questions about the “good” or “bad” effects of any such conquest are, to say the least, not helpful. Nevertheless, Pirenne and some later historians (notably his pupil François-Louis Ganshof) still built on the late-nineteenth-century view of post-Roman development in thinking that when the structures of Roman government (whether based on trade or tax) disappeared, they must have been replaced by something else. Otherwise, the existence of a large Frankish state would not have been possible. That “something else” was “feudalism,” a way of organizing society in order to channel power through land (Ganshof 1960). In this view, under the Merovingians, there was a rather unstructured relationship between land and power. Lack of structure and accountability allegedly meant that the Merovingians squandered their wealth in land (as they had their resources in taxation) for little return, hence their “weakness.” The Carolingians, by contrast, gave out land to followers only on strict terms of service, and out of that service they built up a nearly invincible army and, as a consequence, a “superstate.” In this scenario, Gaul effectively fell apart under the Merovingians. In the process of picking up the pieces and fashioning them into a dynamic polity, the Carolingians created Francia. It is a scenario that follows a cursory reading of the narrative sources rather nicely, but it is also one formed with hindsight and informed by writings of the supporters of the Carolingians themselves. It is more constructive to think about why Gaul/Francia did not disintegrate at various points in the Merovingian period. Rather than simply concentrating on the supposed weakness of its kings, it is more useful to note that here, and only here, there was a regime that could survive when there were no adult heirs available to take the throne. Where else in early medieval Europe might one see rule by children and queen regents? The answers to these questions lie in the underlying stability of the seventh-century Merovingian kingdom. But we also have to reckon with the fact that this stability could be disturbed by periodic conflict within a ruling elite.

The Franks appeared in Gaul in the mid-fifth century as troops allied themselves to the Roman military (Halsall 2007). As Roman political organization fell apart after the death of Emperor Majorian in 461, the Franks began to occupy the political and military space that opened up as a result. Thanks to the chance find of his lavishly furnished grave, we know that the Frankish leader Childeric was styled “king” at his death in 481 (Halsall 2001). His son Clovis was also a king and recognized as such by the Gallo-Roman church, which championed him in the cause of Catholicism since Clovis was not an Arian Christian as were the Goths in the south of Gaul. Clovis duly converted to Catholic Christianity (from what is not entirely clear) (Wood 1994, pp. 42–46). With his patronage of the cult of Gaul’s premiere saint, St. Martin, his dynasty, the Merovingians, was firmly established as the Catholic rulers of Gaul and completed their takeover with the expulsion of the Arian Visigoths from Aquitaine in 507 (see Mathisen, Chapter 19, this volume). The Merovingians were also rulers of lands east of the Rhine, and their heartlands straddled the old Roman frontier. By the year 540, the Franks had driven out rivals in the east and were at least partly in control of Burgundy, Thuringia, Alemannia, and Bavaria, each of which received Frankish rulers (Wood, 1994: 33–70).

There is some disagreement about what Gaul, especially northern Gaul, was actually like in the early sixth century (Halsall 2014, pp. 221–238). We can cut through the debate by noting that even if there had been social collapse and transformation in the early sixth century, northern Gaul had recovered within a century. Thereafter, we can see political institutions and social and religious organization that are common both to the north and to the more obviously Romanized south. It is also an oversimplification to imagine that *Romanitas* thinned out from south to north because the old Roman capital of Trier was in the north and powerful people with Roman-sounding names appear in this area well into the seventh century.

We can see the pull of common factors against different regional and local backgrounds by looking at two towns with which Gregory was associated: Clermont (now Clermont-Ferrand) in the Auvergne and Tours on the Loire. Clermont and the Auvergne had been a center of Roman power and culture, even producing an emperor, Avitus, in the mid-fifth century. One of the last great letter collections of Antiquity comes from the Auvergne and was the work of Avitus’s son-in-law, Sidonius Apollinaris, which shows the vibrancy of Roman culture in the later fifth century. The Franks took control of Clermont after the defeat of the Visigoths. Gregory of Tours, whose family connections with the region were strong, reported how it was attacked and plundered by the Franks in the year 532. However, we can track families of Roman origins who continued to exercise influence there right up to the beginning of the eighth century (Wood 1983a). According to hagiographical evidence (*Passio Praejecti* ca. 31, Fouracre and Gerberding, p. 294), the leaders of the region continued to be termed “senators” into the later seventh century, and one of them, again called Avitus, became bishop in 676. Nevertheless, Clermont was tightly bound into the Merovingian Frankish kingdom: Avitus himself became bishop with Frankish help. His predecessor, Praejectus, had fallen victim to factional struggles in the Frankish court, and in the struggles over this bishopric in the later seventh century, we can see a town riven by disputes between its leading families.

Gregory had written about disputes in the town that took place over a century earlier (Gregory, *Decem libri* II, cc. 13, 22; Krusch and Thorpe, 1971, pp. 129, 134–137) and again, names suggest that the same families were involved. In one sense, there is remarkable continuity here, but by the later seventh century, those same leaders were members of an elite that was of mixed origin and fully involved in kingdom-wide politics. When Gallo-Roman names largely disappear from the region in the eighth century, we could say that these people had now become Frankish. In the later seventh-century account of the rise and fall of its bishop, Praejectus, we see an urban focus: the action mostly takes place in urban space, and the bishop can only be killed once he steps outside the town (*Passio Praejecti* c. 29, Fouracre and Gerberding, pp. 292–293). But thereafter Clermont itself fades in importance, or at least it is mentioned less and less in our sources. Civic life seems to have dwindled to the point that the town no longer supported important families and no longer visibly suffered from factional dispute.

Tours declined even more rapidly as a town, although one might not think so from the works of Gregory of Tours that read as if the town had streets thronged with citizens. Archaeological evidence, however, shows that over the course of the sixth century the town contracted to an area around the cathedral, with a new focus on the suburban monastery of Saint-Martin (Galinié 2007). Gregory was in effect an outsider imposed on the town as bishop, and he faced opposition from the town's count. The struggle between the two can be seen as part of the rivalry between different Merovingian kings and their supporters, and control of Tours was important because each king and royal faction identified with the cult of St. Martin. The cult was already strongly established in the later fifth century, by which time it was attracting substantial wealth in land. Gregory wrote up at great length the miracles performed at Martin's shrine, and, by the mid-seventh century, the monastery of St. Martin's was a wealthy and powerful institution (Van Dam 1993). In relative terms, it was far more important than the town of Tours itself had ever been. The first accounting documents to survive in the post-Roman West come from Saint-Martin at Tours. They are from the later seventh century (probably from the 660s), and they show in some detail how the monastery took dues in kind from the peasants living on its lands (Sato 2000). If we follow the "fiscalist" line on how and why tax-based Roman systems of government broke down as taxation metamorphosed into rent, then these documents become key evidence that this process had occurred in the region of Tours by the mid-seventh century. The emergence of powerful monasteries, which collected rents from substantial landholdings and were supported by, and in their turn supported, kings, is another way of characterizing the transition from Gaul to Francia.

By the end of the Merovingian period, Clermont and Tours belonged to a common culture that comprehended and complemented regional differences. The same is true of Cologne, Mainz, or, at a later date, Regensburg or Salzburg in the south of the German-speaking part of the Merovingian kingdom. Patrick Geary notably demonstrated how, by the end of the seventh century, leading families in the Rhône basin were bound into and related to families in Neustria, in the northwest of Francia (Geary 1985). Families like the Agilolfings, who ruled in Bavaria, also had kindred in the Rhineland

(Zöllner 1951). The massive territory of the Frankish polity was thus to some extent held together by intermarriage at the aristocratic level, a knitting together that preceded (and actually facilitated) the Carolingian policy of creating an “imperial aristocracy” over a century later.

For the sixth century, the family of Gregory of Tours itself shows ties across Gaul, from Lyons in the south, through Clermont in the Auvergne, up through Dijon in the east, and over to Tours in the west (Wood 1994, p. 28). This Gallo-Roman family exercised influence through the church, at a time when the church was largely in the hands of Gallo-Romans. Things look rather different in the seventh century when we see people with Frankish names, though not exclusively so, linked through the Frankish court and exercising power and influence as counts and dukes as well as bishops. There is a problem here that lies at the heart of any account of the transition from Gaul to Francia: namely, the extent to which the appearance of change over the sixth and seventh centuries should be put down to the fact that Gregory’s narrative is our main source for the earlier period, whereas for the seventh century we have a much bigger palette of works from a considerably wider range of places. In other words, does a change from a single witness to multiple authors mask a more continuous line of development? One can never be sure that this is not the case, but there are good reasons to think that the change in the nature of the sources across the sixth and seventh centuries also reflects change in the cultural, religious, and political configuration of what was becoming a distinctly Frankish polity.

In the seventh century, we have a much thinner political narrative from our two chronicle sources (*Fredegar* and the *LHF*), but this is complemented by a growing corpus of hagiography, the records of church councils that come from a greater variety of regions than the sixth-century councils (see Halfond, Chapter 13, this volume). In addition, from midcentury onward, there is the evidence of charters, which are rich in names and relationships, and, importantly, also reveal patterns of landholding and land use. All of this evidence takes us out of the cathedral towns and into the countryside, and it is here that we meet the Frankish aristocracy.

This is the case with new monasteries in rural spaces that were founded and backed by members of the Frankish elite (see Diem, Chapter 15, this volume). The new monasteries were part of the so-called Columbanian movement, which was inspired by the Irish missionary, Columbanus, his most famous foundation being that of Luxeuil on the western edge of the Vosges Mountains (Clarke and Brennan, 1981). How much this wave of monastic foundations was a coherent “movement,” and how “Irish” it ever was, is a matter of debate, but the foundations did spread (see Picard, Chapter 18, this volume). The *Life of Columbanus*, composed by the monk Jonas around the year 640, tells of how Columbanus was driven out of Luxeuil in the year 609 (*Vita Columbani*, I, c. 20). He then traveled across Francia on his way to exile in Italy. On his travels, he met leading Frankish families (a veritable “Who’s who of the Frankish aristocracy” as Edward James (1982) described his contacts). Excited by Columbanus’s holiness, they founded monasteries after the fashion of Luxeuil, endowing them from their landed wealth. These new kinds of monasteries were in principle to be independent from the local bishop, and,

although Columbanus actually intended them to be free of interference from the founders' families too, they quickly became centers of family influence and prestige (Tatum 2007). One can therefore see why these magnate families took so rapidly to the "new" monasticism and why it spread across the network of aristocratic landholdings. Monasteries that were linked to particular families would continue to be founded long after the death of Columbanus. Founders were inspired by other Irish holy men, and foundation became something of a religious fashion. Sometimes referred to as "Iro-Frankish," this monastic culture was instrumental in the formation of an aristocratic identity in which power and privilege were in part legitimated through spiritual prestige. It has even been suggested that it led to a process of "aristocratic self-sanctification" (*Adelsselbstheiligung*): members of the founders' families were interred in the new monasteries and might be hailed as saints, for each foundation required a patron saint, and in regions that were not known to have suffered from the persecutions of the early Christian period, new saints were needed (Prinz 1965). This process was neither deliberate nor planned, but it did spread a shared monastic culture northward and eastward. It was another strand that knitted the aristocracy together. It is from the hagiography produced in the process of sanctification that we learn more about the leading families (see Kreiner, Chapter 24, this volume).

All of the main characters who figure in the often dramatic narratives of later seventh-century politics (*LHF*, *Fredegar IV*, *Continuations of Fredegar*, *Passio Leudegarii*, *Passio Praejecti*, *Vita Balthildis*) have strong connections with the monastic movement we have just been describing. They, or their parents, had founded monasteries or had been great donors to established monasteries, and many families had members who were bishops too. For example, the family that would eventually replace the Merovingians as kings, the so-called Pippinids, expanded their power through a great arc of monasteries that stretched from the Rhineland across the Moselle and down into the Seine Valley. They counted (or claimed) a saint-bishop and a saint-abbess among their ancestors, they used their landed wealth to build up a large military following, and they served as the highest officials to the Merovingian kings. The office of "mayor of the palace" was not just a source of wealth, but also another means of legitimating power (see Hen, Chapter 10, this volume). In this family, spiritual and worldly prestige and power were united with abundant riches. One could say this for the heads of perhaps a dozen families—for instance, the saintly Audoin of Rouen (d. 684) or, earlier, Erchinoald who was "mayor of the palace" in Neustria up to 657.

Remarkably, in this later Merovingian period (i.e., from the mid-seventh century onward), the same people often appear in hagiography, in the chronicle sources, and in charters. This small circle includes the Merovingian family itself alongside their magnates. It is testimony to the closeness and dominance of the ruling elite that they should appear in different genres of writing. That these different genres of writing were so thoroughly interconnected is witness to the strength and cohesiveness of elite culture. A figure such as Leudegar, bishop of Autun, who was put to death in about 678, was a martyr and a hero saint in one source (in the *Passio Leudegarii*, Fouracre and Gerberding), a scandalous interfering bishop in another (the *Passio Praejecti* c. 23, Fouracre and

Gerberding, p. 288), and a key political leader, with a brother who held the important position of count of Paris and with whom he led a palace coup in the year 673 (*LHF* c. 45, Fouracre and Gerberding, pp. 89–91). His family was connected with that of Ansoald of Poitiers whom we see in an early charter donating great amounts of land to one of the “new” monasteries—that of Noirmoutier. Leudegar’s nemesis, the “mayor of the palace,” Ebroin (killed ca. 680), was cast as a villain in the *Passio Leudgarii*, treated quite favorably as an effective leader in a few other hagiographic sources, and described as a clever but ruthless operator in league with the saintly Audoin of Rouen in the *LHF*. Charters show him as supportive of the new monasticism and as the founder and generous patron of a convent in Soissons. The elite was made up of warriors, their wives, churchmen, and (increasingly) church women. What united the laypeople and church people was the family. The members of a single family could be active in all spheres of elite culture.

So great is the crossover between the sacred and the secular in Merovingian-period sources that historians have often characterized the later Merovingian church as having been effectively secularized: its saints were not convincing as holy men or women, its bishops were likely to be warriors with blood on their hands, and greedy magnates treated churches like their own property. Reform could only come from the outside, first from Irish and then from Anglo-Saxon missionaries (Wallace-Hadrill 1983). By contrast, one could argue that the sacred had actually advanced into the secular world to the extent that it had become a normal attribute of power, a situation that Gregory of Tours might well have longed for. Reform, at least as we see it under the Carolingians, was an act of political will as much as it was a drive for spiritual renewal. One aim of reform was to cut the claws of the great families of the later Merovingian period who controlled the most important churches and who were in danger of populating the ranks of the saints with people who opposed the new dynasty (Fouracre 1999).

Apart from chronicles, hagiography, and charters, we also have evidence of letters that show how members of the leading families were schooled together at the royal palaces (see Gillett, Chapter 25, this volume). These alumni remained in contact even when they went on to reside in different kingdoms (Desiderius of Cahors, *Epistulae*). The letters confirm the impression from our other sources that many of the leading families knew each other well. They would have met at annual assemblies held at the palaces, and as we have seen, there was significant intermarriage between groups. However, although the elite in the later Merovingian period were strongly integrated as a group, they were also highly fractious, and a significant number of them, including bishops, met violent ends at the hands of their peers (Fouracre 2003). The violence that transpired between magnates is hard to understand, and one must be wary of forcing an explanation. As it appears in *Fredegar*, the *LHF*, and in hagiography, the unrest was linked to competition for power. We could read it as a struggle for the resources that power brought, against a background of diminishing wealth and opportunity for enrichment. Perhaps one could contrast their behavior with that of the magnates a century later under Charlemagne when foreign wars brought in plunder, tribute, and opportunity. At that time, there seems to have been very little violent conflict between magnate groups; it is hard even to identify different groups in the time of Charlemagne.

For the later Merovingian period, one can see something of a pattern in the narrative sources as one group of magnates (*factio* is the term used) became dominant at the royal court and began to exclude others from power. Those excluded then eventually attacked the ruling faction in the hope of replacing it. This happened at a local or regional level too, for counts and bishops often seem to have had local rivals, and ruling groups at the center stoked that rivalry as a means of building up their influence in the provinces (Fouracre 2004). In hagiography, one can see this in the way in which bishops were said to have been brought down by rivals driven by diabolical envy, this being one way that authors could address violent conflict between Christians (Fouracre 1999). What seems to have sparked this pattern of behavior was the formation of larger kingdoms after the rise of King Clothar II in 613. The larger kingdom, mostly at peace but riven by periodic faction fighting, was what replaced the warring kingdoms of the earlier period. Gregory of Tours had written of the many civil wars, *bella civilia*, between the rulers of these kingdoms. That situation may have been even more violent than the one we see in the seventh and early eighth centuries. We have no way of telling how many people were killed below the level of magnates in either period, and we cannot estimate overall, or relative, levels of violence.

Factional violence on a large scale erupted on four occasions in the later Merovingian period. First, in the aftermath of the death of King Dagobert I (638), there was fighting among the magnates of Austrasia who were competing to dominate the court of Dagobert's young son, Sigebert. The Pippinid family emerged dominant from that struggle but at the expense of conceding what amounted to an independent lordship to one Duke Radulf on the border with the Wendish Slavs, and they still faced rivals in their heartlands around the Ardennes. When King Sigebert died in 656, the Pippinid mayor, Grimoald, exiled Sigebert's young son, Dagobert, to Ireland and had his own son, Childebert, made king in his place, since Childebert apparently had been adopted by Sigebert (Fouracre 2008). After a few years, and presumably on the death of this Childebert "the adopted" (probably in 662), there was a rising against Grimoald. He was brought to Paris, where he was put in chains, tortured, and executed, as, according to the *LHF*, "one worthy of death because he had acted against his lord" (*LHF* c. 43, Fouracre and Gerberding, pp. 87–88). A rival faction then took power in Austrasia. In the west, one Flaochad was dominant in the palace of Clovis II, Dagobert's second son. His faction was challenged by a group of southern magnates, and the *Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* closes with a powerful description of a pitched battle between the two factions (*Fredegar IV*, c. 90; Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 76–79). This struggle took place ca. 642 after the death of Queen Nantechild, who had apparently been keeping the peace between the rivals.

The second major eruption came in 673 with the death of King Clothar III in the west, and it lasted into 676. The discord that followed is recorded in contemporary hagiography, in the *LHF*, and finds an echo in charters and possibly even in coinage: it was at this time that the coinage switched from gold to silver (Blackburn, 2005; see Strothmann, Chapter 35, this volume). The switch could be connected with the need to pay troops in the fighting, or it might also have been the result of ending direct taxation in the previous

decade, which might in turn explain why conflict broke out at this time as the elite fought over diminishing resources. Our main source for the crisis is the *Passio Leudegarii*, for Bishop Leudegar lost his life as a result of the conflict, as did Bishop Praeictus. It was said that the “mayor of the palace,” Ebroin, had been excluding magnates from Burgundy (Leudegar’s power base) from the palace. When Clothar III died, Ebroin could not prevent all the magnates assembling to raise the new king, Theuderic. According to the *Passio Leudegarii*, the leaders were frightened that if Ebroin were able to keep the new king “in the background and just use his name . . . he would be able to do harm to whomsoever he wished with impunity” (*Passio Leudegarii* cc. 4–6; Fouracre and Gerberding, pp. 220–223). This passage is a telling indication of the power that came from the palace, and of how the palace could be manipulated if a king were too young or too inexperienced to handle his officers. During the event, Ebroin was deposed along with Theuderic, and Leudegar took his place alongside Theuderic’s brother Childeric, king of Austrasia (the king who had been sent to rule in Austrasia in 662 when Grimoald had been ousted). At this point, a single king ruled over all of Francia. But the Neustrian magnates then began to feel excluded by Childeric’s Austrasian supporters and, above all, by the “mayor of the palace.” Wulfoald, who drove Leudegar out. Childeric was killed by the Neustrians and Wulfoald and the Austrasians fled. Yet, Ebroin, Leudegar, and Theuderic then came back, and their factions fought to the death, with Ebroin emerging in complete control. In this dramatic sequence, factions in areas south of the River Loire seem to have turned their backs on the Neustrian establishment, as may have those in areas east of the Rhine.

The third outburst came when the leaders of Austrasia were excluded from the Neustrian palace, much as the Burgundians had been in 673. Famously, the fight for inclusion came to a head in 687, when the Austrasians and Neustrians met in battle at Tertry. The outcome was that the Austrasians became ascendant, with the family of Pippin, which had recovered power in Austrasia after Childeric’s assassination, becoming “mayors of the palace” again in a single Frankish kingdom. Carolingian sources would mark this as the moment at which the Pippinids took the kingdom from the powerless and “useless” Merovingian kings, but analysis of charter material would suggest that the kings still enjoyed support that limited the power of any one magnate group (Fouracre 1984). As the author of the *LHF* saw it, this was how things should always have been: a kingdom in which *consilium* was a brake on factionalism. Peace should have been the norm, conflict an aberration. We might judge this system to have been one that “worked,” with a periodic redistribution of power through conflict. It had a palace administration that was issuing an increasing number of charters. It settled disputes between the powerful, and oversaw a countryside that seemed, despite the occasional conflict between magnate factions, to have been relatively peaceful. Lords do not seem to have lived in fortified residences, and the labor force on the great estates was so much under control that in land transactions, it would be treated as a mere appurtenance of the land in question (Fouracre 2000a, pp. 19–22). This condition explains how estates could be divided at will and land could be held on a temporary basis, for what was at stake here was the income from the land that could be assigned with immediate effect as long as the workforce stayed in place.

The fourth, and last, bout of Merovingian conflict may not have disturbed the way in which the elite drew resources from the peasantry, but it did sweep away the political configuration that had been in place since the time of Clothar II. It began in 714 with the murder of Grimoald, the Pippinid “mayor of the palace,” an event that was followed not long after by the death of his father, Pippin. An alliance of Neustrians, Frisians, and Aquitanians, took advantage of the family’s disarray to drive it out of Neustria and attempted to destroy it in Austrasia too. The result was conflict that lasted an entire generation, at the end of which the old families that had ruled alongside and in conjunction with the Merovingian kings had either been destroyed or subjugated. As a result, the kings themselves became just what the author of the *Passio Leudegarii* had feared, that is, mere mouthpieces of the “mayor of the palace.” The “mayor” in question here was Charles Martel, who rose to power in 716 and was so powerful by the time of his death in 741 that he had ruled for the previous four years without a king (Fouracre 2000b). It is not the place here to speculate why Charles Martel was so successful: suffice it to say that he went to war in almost every year between 716 and 740, and he never lost a battle. Besides hunting down adherents of the old regime throughout Francia, he also fought Frisians, Saxons, Alemans, and, to his great glory in the west, Muslim forces that had driven up from Spain as far as Tours itself.

Charles Martel and his allies defeated the Muslims at the Battle of Poitiers in 732 or 733. The so-called *Chronicle of 754*, a Spanish source, described the Austrasian Franks at this battle as “immobile as a wall, holding together as glacier in the cold region” (*Chronicle of 754*, c. 80; Wolf 1990, p. 145). Later, the text terms them “the Europeans.” We can take this event to mark the final phase in the transition from Gaul to Francia: by the time of Charles Martel’s triumph, Gaul and the areas east of the Rhine had taken on a Frankish identity that was associated with success in war and defense of the Christian Church. Their “immobile wall” protected it throughout “Europe.” A generation later, the Prologue to a revised version of the *Lex Salica* would put it thus: “In battle [the Franks] shook off the powerful and very harsh yoke of the Romans. And, after the knowledge of baptism, the Franks adorned with gold and precious stones the bodies of the blessed martyrs whom the Romans had mutilated with fire and sword” (Fischer Drew, p. 171). This iteration of Frankish identity is the first time we see the drive to judge the consequences of the fall of Rome with which we began: here it was the Franks who saved the church, and thus saved civilization, from the oppression of the Romans.

This claim owes much to the fact that Carolingians expressed themselves as holding a new religious mandate to rule that justified their taking the throne from the Merovingians. However, the form of justification—that power was to be used to protect the weak and to defend the faith (something which, in the Carolingian view, the Merovingians were no longer able to do)—reveals just how much the Carolingians built on the convergence of the secular and the sacred that marked the transition from Gaul to Francia. What was different after Charles Martel was, as we have seen, that there were no longer different factions vying for control of the palace, and no longer any need for a “mayor of the palace” to mediate between king and aristocracy. The demise of the factions may be put down to the overwhelming superiority of the Carolingian kings.

It may also be because the Carolingian line could supply adult males to rule in every generation up to the year 888, thus avoiding the periods of minority rule that were breeding grounds for factional politics. What is remarkable about the Merovingian regime, as suggested earlier, is that despite the growth of factionalism, it could survive repeated royal minorities. Even when there were child kings and infighting among the magnates, the polity did not break up. Radulf, who defeated the Austrasians under Sigibert III, “rated himself ‘King of Thuringia,’” said *Fredegar*, but “he did not in so many words deny Sigibert’s overlordship” (Wallace-Hadrill, p. 74). That is to say, Radulf may have become effectively independent, but he did not actually found a new kingdom, preferring to remain within the Frankish polity (see Hardt, Chapter 20, this volume). The survival of Francia is the strongest testimony to the stability of its political and religious culture, and it was this stability that was the bedrock of Carolingian power. Let us close by reviewing the emergence of that culture.

Gaul became Francia as the area of Europe north of the Alps and Pyrenees, and west of the rivers Danube and Saale, adjusted to the decline and disappearance of Roman power. In this area, the Merovingian kings were never challenged from the outside. Although members of the Merovingian family fought each other, there was no challenge from within to the family’s right to rule until the mid-eighth century. Fighting between Merovingians in the sixth century did not seem to weaken the hold of the Franks over Gaul. Indeed, Frankish power expanded over the course of the sixth century, and it has been suggested that at this time the Merovingians even had influence in southern England (Wood 1983b). Expansion and civil war went hand in hand with the militarization of aristocratic life, and the growth of an identity based on war (see Sarti, Chapter 12, this volume).

At the same time, there were evident continuities in the way in which the richest in society drew their wealth from a tied labor force on the land, and this was against a background of vanishing taxation, declining trade, and falling population. It can be said that despite the shrinkage in economic activity, there was relative social stability. Violence between kingdoms can be seen as a means of distributing and redistributing power and resources, fueled by the likelihood that the total amount of resources available to the powerful was declining. Service to the kings was becoming the gateway to what power and wealth remained. Across the course of the seventh century, this arrangement was run on a larger scale as after the year 613, there were only two kingdoms (and often only one) in Francia. The seventh century saw less warfare between kingdoms, but the ruling elite was periodically riven by factional violence. The aristocracy remained militarized, but there were long periods of peace in the seventh century.

The aristocracy’s growing involvement in religion, increasing religious discourse in government, intermarriage among the ruling elite, the shuffling of landed estates between families and between families and monasteries (all with the proviso that there was a stable labor force) were elements that combined in a common culture in which the kings continued to play a role as facilitators, mediators, and arbiters. Periods of rule by children were possible because the king’s functions could be carried out through palace government (on children, see Perez, Chapter 9, this volume).

Against the background of what can only be described as a very “light touch” government, there were strong regional differences with different “peoples,” each with their own laws and customs. Francia was a polity shared by two different language groups with a host of dialect subgroups between them. Nevertheless, a common Frankish identity was beginning to overlay regional differences. This was Francia as it would be developed by its Carolingian rulers, who strengthened a common culture by articulating it around religious norms. Through their victories, they demonstrated the divinely ordered succession of the Franks.

WORKS CITED

Ancient Sources

- Crónica mózarabe de 754*. E. López Pereira (ed. and trans.). (1980). *Crónica mózarabe de 754: edición crítica y traduccióni*. Zaragoza: Anurur Ed.
- The Chronicle of 754*. K. Wolf (ed.). (1999). *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain* (2nd ed., pp. 111–160). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Desiderius of Cahors, *Letters*. D. Norberg (ed.). (1961). *Epistulae Sancti Desiderii*. Studia Latina Stockholmiensis 6. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis.
- Diplomata, Chartae, Epistolae, Leges ad res Gallo-Francicas spectantia*, 2 vols. J. M. Pardessus (ed.). (1843–1849). Paris: Lutetiae Parisiorum.
- Fischer Drew, K. (trans.). (1991). *The Laws of the Salian Franks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Fredegarii Chronicorum Liber Quartus cum Continuationibus (The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with Its Continuations)*. J.-M. Wallace-Hadrill (ed. and trans.). (1960). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*. B. Krusch (ed.). (1951). MGH SRM 1.1. Hanover: Hahn.
- Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*. L. Thorpe (trans.). (1971). *Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Liber Historiae Francorum*. B. Krusch (ed.) (1888). MGH SRM 2. Hanover: Hahn.
- Liber Historiae Francorum*. P. Fouracre and R. Gerberding (eds. and trans.). (1996). *Late Merovingian France. History and Hagiography 640–720* (pp. 79–96). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Marculfi Formularum Libri Duo*. A. Uddholm (ed.) (1962). *Marculfi Formularum Libri Duo*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis.
- Pactus Legis Salicae and Lex Salica*. K. Eckhardt (ed.) (1961/1969). MGH Legum sectio 1.4, parts 1 and 2. Hanover: Hahn.
- Passio Leudegarii*. B. Krusch (ed.). (1910). MGH SRM 5. Hanover: Hahn.
- Passio Leudegarii*. P. Fouracre and R. Gerberding (ed. and trans.). (1996). *Late Merovingian France. History and Hagiography 640–720* (pp. 191–253). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Passio Praejecti*. B. Krusch (ed.). (1910). MGH SRM 5 (pp. 223–248). Hanover: Hahn.
- Passio Praejecti*. P. Fouracre and R. Gerberding (ed. and trans.). (1996). *Late Merovingian France. History and Hagiography 640–720* (pp. 254–300). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- Rio, A. (trans.). (2008). *The Formularies of Angers and Marculf: Two Merovingian Legal Handbooks*. Translated texts for historians 45. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Die Urkunden der Merowinger*. T. Kölzer (ed.). (2001). *Die Urkunden der Merowinger* (2 vols.). MGH DD Die Urkunden der Merowinger I. Hanover: Hahn.
- Viard, J. (ed.). (1920–1953). *Les grands chroniques de France*. Société de l'histoire de France, 10 vols. Paris: Société de l'histoire de France.

Modern Sources

- Blackburn, M. (2005). "Money and Coinage." In P. Fouracre (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History I* (pp. 660–674). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cheyette, F. (2008). "The Disappearance of the Ancient Landscape and the Climatic Anomaly of the Early Middle Ages: A Question to Be Pursued." *Early Medieval Europe* 16(2): 127–165.
- Clarke, H., and Brennan, M. (eds.). (1981). *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*. BAR International Series 113. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Fouracre, P. (1984). "Observations on the Outgrowth of Pippinid Influence in the 'Regnum Francorum' after the Battle of Tertry (687–725)." *Medieval Prosopography* 5: 1–31.
- Fouracre, P. (1986). "Placita and the Settlement of Disputes in Later Merovingian Francia." In W. Davies and P. Fouracre (eds.), *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe* (pp. 23–43). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fouracre, P. (1999). "The Origins of the Carolingian Attempt to Regulate the Cult of Saints." In J. Howard Johnston and P. Hayward (eds.), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (pp. 143–165). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fouracre, P. (2000a). "The Origins of the Nobility in Francia." In A. Duggan (ed.), *Nobles and Nobility* (pp. 17–24). Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
- Fouracre, P. (2000b). *The Age of Charles Martel*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Fouracre, P. (2003). "Why Were So Many Bishops Killed in Merovingian Francia?" In N. Fryde and D. Reitz (eds.), *Bischofsmord im Mittelalter* (pp. 13–35). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Fouracre, P. (2004). "Conflict, Power and Legitimation in Francia in the Late Seventh and Eighth Centuries." In I. Alfonso, H. Kennedy, and J. Escalona (eds.), *Building Legitimacy. Political Discourses and Forms of Legitimation in Medieval Societies* (pp. 3–26). Leiden: Brill.
- Fouracre, P. (2005). "The Long Shadow of the Merovingians." In J. Story (ed.), *Charlemagne. Empire and Society* (pp. 5–21). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Fouracre, P. (2008). "Forgetting and Remembering Dagobert II: The English Connection." In P. Fouracre and D. Ganz (eds.), *Frankland: The Franks and the World of the Early Middle Ages* (pp. 70–89). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Fouracre, P. (2014). "Francia and the History of Medieval Europe." *Haskins Society Journal* 23: 1–22.
- Galinié, H. (ed.). (2007). "Tours antique et medieval: lieux de vie, temps de la ville." *Revue de Centre de la France* (Suppl. 30). Tours: Revue de Centre de la France.
- Ganshof, F. (1960). *Feudalism*. P. Grierson (trans). London: Longmans.
- Geary, P. (1985). *Aristocracy in Provence. The Rhône Basin at the Dawn of the Carolingian Age*. Stuttgart: Beiheft der Francia.
- Grahn-Hoek, H. (1971). "Die fränkische Oberschicht im 6. Jahrhundert. Studien zu ihrer rechtlichen und politischen Stellung." *Vorträge und Forschungen* 21. Sigmaringen: Thorbecke.

- Halsall, G. (2001). "Childeric's Grave, Clovis' Succession and the Origins of the Merovingian Kingdom." In R. Mathisen and D. Shanzer (eds.), *Society and Culture in Late Roman Gaul: Revisiting the Sources* (pp. 116–133). Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Halsall, G. (2007). *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376–568*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Halsall, G. (2014). *Worlds of Arthur*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Irsigler, F. (1969). *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des frühfränkischen Adels*. Rheinisches Archiv 69. Bonn: Oldenbourg.
- James, E. (1982). *The Origins of France: From Clovis to the Capetians, 500–1000*. London: Macmillan.
- Pirenne, H. (1937). *Mahomet et Charlemagne*. Paris: F. Alcan.
- Prinz, F. (1965). *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung (4. bis 8. Jahrhundert)*. Munich: Oldenbourg.
- Reimitz, H. (2015). *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity, 550–850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rio, A. (2006). "Freedom and Unfreedom In Early Medieval Francia: The Evidence of the Legal Formularies." *Past and Present* 193: 7–40.
- Sato, S. (2000). "The Merovingian Accounting Documents of Tours." *Early Medieval Europe* 9(2): 143–161.
- Tatum, S. (2007). "Hagiography, Family and Columbanan Monasticism in Seventh-Century Francia." Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester.
- Van Dam, R. (1993). *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wallace-Hadrill, J.-M. (1983). *The Frankish Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wickham, C. (2005). *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wood, I. (1983a). "The Ecclesiastical Politics of Merovingian Clermont." In P. Wormald, D. Bullough, and R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.-M. Wallace-Hadrill* (pp. 34–57). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wood, I. (1983b). *The Merovingian North Sea*. Occasional Papers on Medieval Topics 1. Alingsås: Viktoria Bokförlag.
- Wood, I. (1994). *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751*. Harlow: Longman.
- Wood, I. (2013). *The Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zöllner, E. (1951). "Die Herkunft der Agilolfinger." *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 59: 245–264.

CHAPTER 3

WRITING THE HISTORY OF MEROVINGIAN GAUL

An Historiographical Survey

AGNÈS GRACEFFA

THE history of Merovingian Gaul is closely bound up with the history of the breakup of the Roman Empire. As with the Visigothic kingdom in Spain and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in England, the Merovingian period is often referred to as the Dark Ages: a troubled and opaque period of transition between the end of classical Antiquity and the start of the Middle Ages. The epoch is often characterized as a time of barbarian destruction of high Roman civilization (Wood 2013, pp. 8–10). The challenge of Merovingian history is thus twofold: the period suffers from a paucity of written sources, and this fact makes it particularly difficult for scholars to assess the enormous political changes that transpired during this time.

Indeed, surviving historical information about the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries is limited for Gaul and even scarcer for the Germanic past of its ruling dynasty. Extant texts are few in number, a consequence of the loss of written Roman culture and the resurgence of oral culture. Most written documents that do survive were composed by Roman authors or ecclesiastics, who provided an account of events specific to their particular worldview (Kaiser-Scholz 2014, pp. 19–35). Moreover, besides the scarcity of documentary sources, for many centuries, historians had few artifacts or architectural remnants at their disposal, in part due to the small number of early medieval stone structures in comparison to those constructed from wood (but see Chevalier, Chapter 30; Chavarría Arnau, Chapter 29, this volume). All of the extant sources give the impression of a great modification of the civilization inherited from Antiquity, especially in the areas of administration, architecture, material culture, and literacy, a process that has usually been understood as regressive. These lacunae have left a lot to interpretation.

From an ideological perspective, the paradox of a Roman Empire supplanted by the politically weaker system of Frankish government has been exacerbated further by the fact that Merovingian Gaul is recognized as the source of the future nations of France,

Switzerland, Belgium, and Germany. These nations all emerged from the Frankish kingdoms, and this legacy helps explain the enormous political and ideological investment that has been made in writing Merovingian history in each country (Graceffa 2009, pp. 7–28). Finally, the Merovingian period has been seen as unique in that it saw the political triumph of Christianity in western Europe. The memory of this fact survives thanks to the baptism of Clovis, which was an iconic moment in Merovingian history and made it possible for monarchists in the 1830s to call France “the first eldest daughter of the Church” (Venayre 2013).

From the period of the *Ancien Regime* until the French Revolution, the importance of Merovingian Gaul as the birthplace of the French monarchy and French Catholicism was particularly entrenched. The geographical and political connections between the Merovingian kingdoms and modern France further explain their importance to French historiography. Nevertheless, the meaning of Merovingian history has been much debated in modern French discourse, and approaches to this period have reflected contemporary political trends. Post-Revolutionary republican and secular France, for instance, renounced the concept of monarchy as a divinely ordered institution. At the same time, the spread of nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe gave Merovingian history—as a place of the nation’s origins—a prominent role in French historiography and the construction of modern national identity. However, in time, another myth of origins, that of the ancient Gauls, soon overshadowed the ideological and commemorative importance of the Merovingian period for republican historians and politicians of the Third Republic (1870–1940). The popularization of this narrative took root especially in the schools of the Third Republic—given that the politics of teaching were contentious during this period. Consequently, the Merovingian past partly lost its place of prominence inside of the “national fiction” promoted by the historical curriculum (Nicolet 2006, pp. 227–343). Three successive conflicts between France and Germany (1870, 1914–1918, and 1939–1945) led to increased mistrust of contemporary Germans, a reaction magnified by the conflation of the ancient Franks with modern Germans in French popular thought (Rouche 1997, vol. 2, pp. 709–727).

The historiography of the Merovingian period has been important in multiple national traditions. In addition to the French approach to the Merovingian past, German historians, then Swiss and Belgian historians, and most recently North American scholars, have contributed substantial and decisive works to this literature. For German scholars, interest in Merovingian history has existed since as far back as the late Middle Ages with the birth of German national consciousness. Based on their reading of ancient ethnographic and historical texts, these historians proposed German descent from Frankish tribes (Garber 1989). Moreover, at the end of the eighteenth century, philological scholars tried to define scientifically the relationship between European languages. They gave an influential place to the family of Germanic languages.

With the triumph of nationalism in Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, interest in Merovingian history increased especially in Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland. For most German scholars, the period of the barbarian migrations

(*Volkerwanderungszeit*) was fulfilled by the rise of the Frankish nation, the creation of the Merovingian kingdoms, and the reign of Charlemagne; each of these developments symbolized the power and the triumph of the Germanic people. The strong connection between language, nation, and culture advocated by some scholars allowed ethnophilological theories to proliferate. Moreover, the rise of biological theories of evolution at the end of the nineteenth century bred a racial conception of Germanic peoples that portrayed the Merovingians as racially pure. This approach reached a terrible apogee during World War II under National Socialism (Dietz, Gabel, and Tiedau 2003, pp. 225–237). Consequently, after the war, the political investment of German scholars in Merovingian history progressively declined.

By contrast, the localization of the geographic reality of the Merovingian kingdoms largely explained Swiss and Belgian interest in this history. Territories in what is now Switzerland were located in the center of the future Carolingian Empire and were identified as the historical land of the Alamanni, a so-called Germanic nation that was beaten by Clovis at the Battle of Tolbiac/Zülpih circa 496, and subsequently integrated into the Merovingian kingdoms (Geuenich 1998). The confusion between modern languages and ancient territories led nationalist politicians to claim that the Swiss had a “Sonderweg” (a special path of historical development) and, during the National Socialist period, even a claim to German membership (Geuenich 1997, pp. 10–12). Swiss historians could thus claim linear descent from the Merovingian period to the present, as was also the case with Belgium, which was founded in 1830. In the case of Belgium, the Merovingian past was overshadowed by nationalist movements that claimed affinity to the pre-Roman and Celtic origins of the Belgae (the name given by the Romans to the peoples who inhabited the regions that are now part of modern Belgium). In the nineteenth century, for this reason, historians did not mobilize the Merovingian period in a positive manner: they viewed the Franks as invaders. Although King Childeric, father of Clovis and founder of the Merovingian dynasty, was buried in Tournai circa 481 and had the potential to be seen as an ancestor of the Belgians, scholars focused instead on the Pippinids, the eighth-century predecessors of the Carolingians (Tollebeeck 2011). The debate about Germanic-Frankish origins in Belgium was reinvigorated at the end of the nineteenth century with racial and linguistic controversies over the linguistic frontier between French and Flemish. This division occurred again under German occupation during World War I and II (Federinov, Docquier, and Cauchies 2015; Simmer 2015).

The trauma of World War II made historians question the nationalist dimension of their discourse. With the development of a new European consciousness in the 1990s, there was a progressive move away from nationalist scholarly discourse. However, the danger of turning back to nationalism in historical analysis has always remained (Geary 2002). The study of historiography is thus imperative if we are to understand how scholarly knowledge was established and developed over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

MEROVINGIAN HISTORY UNTIL THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The myths of Frankish origins and of Clovis as a descendant of Trojans were born in the seventh century (Coumert 2007, pp. 267–379; see also Coumert, Chapter 5, this volume). In the eighth century and beyond, the Pippinids and Carolingians developed a paradoxical approach to the stories that constituted Merovingian “memory.” On the one hand, this new dynasty encouraged the development of the myth of the Franks, as described in the writings of Pseudo-Fredeggar and encouraged the legend that the Franks were descended from the Trojans (Fredeggar III, 2–9). On the other hand, they consciously condemned the Merovingian kings to *damnatio memoriae*, so that their own empowerment as the monarchs of France could be seen as legitimate. This paradoxical policy combined belief in the Merovingian tradition (and thus the authority of the past) with significant innovations in that tradition (which was necessary to justify the change of dynasties). On this basis, the Frankish-Trojan myth thrived and grew throughout the Middle Ages until the Renaissance (Beaune 1985; Führer 2016, pp. 37–43).

During the European Renaissance, two main changes modified existing historical approaches: the rediscovery of Antiquity and the discovery of the New World. Both changes had a significant impact on contemporary approaches to national origins. On the one hand, an admiration of the Greek and Roman past transformed the traditional view of barbarians: Huns, Goths, and other tribes were now held responsible for the destruction of classical civilization (Joye 2016, pp. 89–93). On the other hand, the rediscovery of ancient texts like those of Jordanes, Tacitus, and others, emphasized in part the positive qualities of the Germanic past and supported national feeling. The first modern edition of Tacitus’s *Germania* appeared in 1425 and that of Jordanes’s *History of the Goths* appeared in 1431–1449 (Wood 2013, pp. 10–11). Tacitus described the ancient Germanic peoples in favorable terms and held up their society as a model for ancient Roman readers. He characterized them as being endowed with numerous admirable qualities: courage, military talent, virtue, honesty, loyalty, and love of freedom. Jordanes’s history revealed that the Goths, whom he claimed had originated in Sweden, were the oldest nation in Europe, and thereby opened up a very political debate about the origins of each nation (Ridé 1976, p. 1206; Wolfram 2001, p. 12). At the same time, the discovery of the New World compelled historians to revisit biblical cosmogony and question the scheme of the unity of human race. Thanks to these changing paradigms, new definitions of barbarians, or savages, were proposed that led to the development by Jean-Baptiste Dubos of the notion of human stages of development, and to theories of the connection of barbarism to climate proposed by Montesquieu: just as the savage became the opposite of civilized people, the positive qualities of northern countries were contrasted favorably with those located further south (Bourdieu 1980, pp. 21–25).

To reinforce the legitimacy and nobility of the ancient Franks as the founders of the French monarchy, scholars introduced two new hypotheses regarding the Franks' origins and the foundation of the Merovingian dynasty. They claimed first that the Franks and Gauls belonged to the same ancient nation, and second, that the Frankish conquest of Roman Gaul was not a usurpation of Roman power but a liberation of the ancient Gauls (Hotman 1573). These approaches largely agreed with the contemporary German-Scandinavian thesis of the Nordic origin of the Franks, whether or not they were pure Germanic (Leibniz 1715). The popularity of the Merovingian kings was signaled by the attempt to canonize Clovis during the reign of Louis XIII (Savaron 1622); its failure demonstrated the limits of efforts to highlight a positive memory of the first Christian monarch of the Frankish kingdoms. In addition, another key development relating to Merovingian royal history was the discovery in 1653 of the grave of the Frankish king Childeric at Tournai (Belgium): the archduke Leopold William gave Louis XIV the treasure found in the tumulus, including the golden bee ornaments with which the monarch was buried, which thereafter became a royal symbol (Chifflet 1655). Contemporary representations of Clovis with the Sun King's facial features suggested his significance to that monarch, especially since the Franks' activities justified Louis XIV's claims beyond the Rhine (Grell 1996, pp. 173–218). A quite positive view of Clovis's accession to the throne and the start of the Merovingian dynasty still characterized the two main strands of French historiography at this time: Catholic historians underscored the meaning of Clovis's baptism for the future nation of France and for Christianity's success. By contrast, the Gallican historical tradition (which upheld the monarch's authority over the Catholic Church) presented Clovis as conqueror and precursor of France's political power. For both parties, the first mythic ancestor of Clovis, Pharamond, remained an important part of French history due to his role as the founder of the French monarchy, "the oldest and noblest of all people in the world" (Bossuet 1681, p. 131). His historical existence was not questioned.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, French historiography consisted mostly of a brief catalog of Merovingian kings that mentioned their religious foundations and territorial conquests. New editions of Gregory of Tours's *Histories* and Fredegar's *Chronicle* (Ruinart 1699) brought scholars the opportunity to engage in more complex approaches to the Merovingian period. The work of the historian Gabriel Daniel (1696) focused positively on the Frankish army and military talent, for example. If Clovis himself remained safe from criticism, the dark portrait of his heirs given by the two early medieval authors made an impression on classical scholars.

The discussion took a new turn at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Partly based on former argumentation, Henri de Boulainvilliers proposed a new interpretation of early Frankish history, and his arguments laid the foundation for the Germanist or "aristocratic" tradition of historical thought (Boulainvilliers 1727, 1732). According to his hypothesis, the Franks did not originate from Troy, but rather came from Germania. They were not wild people but warriors, and they conquered the Gallo-Romans, who became subjects (slaves) of the Frankish state. This conquest explained the origin of feudalism and justified aristocratic privileges: the French nobility comprised the descendants of the Franks, whereas the

descendants of the enslaved Gallo-Romans formed the Third Estate. The word “Frank” in this sense meant free, and Boulainvilliers portrayed their society as an aristocratic republic. This approach emphasized the role of the early Germanic peoples and Scandinavia, with whom liberty and democracy were to be associated.

By contrast, Jean Baptiste Dubos gave a critical response to Boulainvilliers’s view and proposed an alternative thesis. The object of his *Histoire critique de l’établissement de la monarchie française dans les Gaules* (1734) was to prove that the Franks had entered Gaul not as conquerors, but at the request of the nation, which had called upon them to govern. In Dubos’s view, theirs was a lawful settlement. Clovis gained his power legally from the Roman Empire and instituted an absolute monarchy in which there was no difference in status between Franks, Romans, Gauls, and other barbarians. Moreover, aristocracy did not exist in the ancient Frankish society; for Dubos, the name “Frank” meant ferocity. According to him, the Germanic people had given up their tribal affiliation in favor of Roman wealth.

These debates laid the groundwork for two long-term trends in historiography: the first one, called “Germanist,” considered the deposition of Romulus Augustus and the reign of Clovis as the true end of Antiquity and the start of the Middle Ages in the West. The barbarians brought a new civilization and, with it, the birth of Europe. By contrast, the second trend, the so-called Romanist perspective, asserted that the Merovingian period belonged to the Roman Christian epoch. Medieval culture was shaped more by its Roman inheritance and Christianity than by barbaric Germanic culture about which little was known. Twentieth-century advocates of Late Antiquity reused these arguments in defense of a modified periodization of the transition between Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

In the eighteenth century, the debate over Frankish origins attracted many responses. One of them was the magisterial work of Montesquieu in *De l’Esprit des lois* (1748, book 31) and his more focused *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (1734). In these works, the Franks were invaders, but they did not reduce Gallo-Romans to slavery. On the contrary, they tried to maintain Roman institutions and laws in Merovingian society. However, they also brought many innovations to early French society: these included the concepts of liberty and democracy that were specifically developed among the ancient Germanic peoples (an argument that applied neatly to Montesquieu’s climatic theory). Another was the specific tradition of fiefs and the function of offices that resulted in the feudal system. The rise of the office of the *maior domus* (mayor of the palace), starting with the Edict of Chlothar II (613), explained the weakening of Merovingian kings’ power, the ascent of the Pippinids, and the further development of the vassals in the feudal system. Montesquieu thus markedly increased the Germanic contribution to Merovingian society. More moderate was the work of Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, author of *Observations sur l’histoire de France* (1765), who underlined the complexity of Gallo-Roman and Frankish interactions and the process of creation of a new society. He documented the slow evolution of the status of different categories of people and proposed the adaptation of the Frankish aristocracy and monarchy to alternate traditions.

Breaking with these pluralistic approaches, Voltaire provided a very dark vision of the era without making any concession to the positive contribution of the Merovingian kings. He denied them recognition for any talent or political concept, and he described them as pure barbarians (Voltaire 1756, 1764). In his view, the Franks' name came from the Latin *ferocitas*, which he believed was the nature of this nation. He reduced the whole Merovingian period to one of significant regression in terms of culture and civilization: "they have no city, no law, no literature, and no police" (Voltaire 1764, 1878, p. 174). His harsh criticism of Catholicism and absolutism made his approach converge with that of Edward Gibbon in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776). Voltaire's reading of this period nonetheless remained marginal during the Ancien Regime.

LIBERALISM, NATIONALISM, AND THE EMERGENCE OF PROGRESSIVE SCHOLARLY HISTORIOGRAPHY (1789–1870)

Because of their questioning of absolute monarchy, revolutionary discourses largely broke with classical approaches. Both Romanist and Germanist approaches to the Merovingian past were profoundly impacted by this historiographical turn, and aristocratic theory was the biggest victim of the new paradigm of equality. Nobles' privileges were abolished, and the historical legitimacy of their status was denied. Moreover, revolutionaries asserted that the heirs of the Gallo-Romans, because of their ancient subjection, gained special rights over the aristocracy. The well-known discourses pronounced by Joseph Emmanuel Sieyès to the Third Estate in 1789 to justify the abolition of aristocratic privileges summarized this new point of view: Sieyès asked the nobles, whose prerogatives were supposed to have derived from the conquest of Gaul by their ancestors, the Franks, to go back to the Germanic forests from whence they came (Sieyès 1820). He interpreted Clovis's ascent to power as usurpation, and thus condemned the Merovingian dynasty, as well as its successors, as illegitimate and illegal. Instead, Gallo-Romans formed the true substrate of the French nation. In Sieyès's view, French history needed to be the story of the progressive recovery of the rights of the Third Estate. This polemical discourse dominated contemporary historiography, especially the writings of the young liberal historian Augustin Thierry, who employed it quite literally during the Restoration (1827). For Thierry, Merovingian history symbolized the illegal origin story of the monarchy and its alliance with the Catholic Church. Now that the Revolution had brought this situation to an end, it was necessary to engineer a completely different approach to the early Middle Ages. From this perspective, Gallic times were the true beginning of the French nation (Martin 1833; Amédée Thierry 1828).

Historiography in the first half of the nineteenth century was characterized by historians' ideological investment in nationalism. The political context of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Treaty of Versailles encouraged the

development of national consciousness in Europe, and history was a foundational pillar of romantic nationalism. Historical discourse was also strongly impacted by the rise of history as an academic discipline, its incorporation into university curricula, and its continuing professionalization. The *École des Chartes* was established in Paris in 1821, and the first historical seminar in medieval history in German territory opened at Königsberg University in 1832 (Poulle 1987, pp. 26–39; Weber 1984, p. 110).

In France, especially before 1840, historians were mostly polemicists. In this specific context, following the trauma of the Revolution, historiographical trends followed one another in short succession. First, aristocratic historians took advantage of the opportunities provided by the Restoration and Charles X's coronation to take Boulainvilliers's stance on the status of the Frankish monarchy (Montlosier 1814). Part of this current, albeit more moderate, was the historical work of Mademoiselle de Lézardière, who presented a strong analysis of the political and legal system of Merovingian kingship and underlined the role and power of the Frankish aristocracy (1844). One of the merits of her approach was her use of legal texts (both Roman and barbarian codes) to add to scholarly knowledge. The issues raised by this approach also encouraged the exploration of ancient municipalities and "clientèle" (the personal relationship between a powerful figure and his entourage), or, in other words the function of ancient communities and their connection to the development of feudality (Mignet 1822). Breaking with a negative vision of the impact of Christianity (Gibbon 1776), historians of a more Catholic bent pointed out the importance of Clovis's conversion in the formation of Merovingian society. They proposed new periodization between Antiquity and the Middle Ages from the third century (Chateaubriand 1831). Clovis's baptism brought a symbolic message insofar as it renewed the model of Constantine. Historians also underlined the tribute of Gregory of Tours's *Histories* to Greco-Roman culture. This approach suggested the importance of Christianity in binding together the Gallo-Romans and barbarians in Gaul. Chateaubriand's approach was taken up by and underlined by Frédéric Ozanam in his relatively positive description of the ancient Germanic peoples (1847–1849).

The major French historiographical trend in the mid-nineteenth century was the liberal one. Progressively liberated from Revolutionary radicalism, liberal historians, including Jules Michelet, François Guizot, and Augustin Thierry, mostly joined the moderate party of the July Monarchy. In accordance with the ideological project of this party, the aim of their historical approach was to reduce political and social tension and restore national unity. They tried to offer the French population a form of French history that was no longer exclusively the history of the king but the nation as a whole from its origins to the French Revolution (Guizot 1828; Michelet 1833). Another characteristic of this liberal current was its romantic leanings: historians combined colorful style with a careful reading of sources. With regard to the Middle Ages, this work was achieved thanks to an exceptional synthetic effort by Constant Leber that made the scientific findings of the historiography of the Ancien Régime accessible to the next generation: a collection of twenty volumes of historical writings organized by themes and periods (1826–1838). Liberal historians became progressively aware of the importance of editing historical texts, especially literary but also legal and administrative works. In order to

make it possible for people to consult all the extant texts from the Middle Ages, they (re)started ambitious publishing enterprises like the *Receuil des historiens de la Gaule et de la France* or the *Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France*. Some of these editions also influenced the next scholarly generation (Guerard 1844; Pardessus 1853), even if the whole project revealed itself to be unrealistic with regard to the number of texts and the means available to publish them (Graceffa 2009, pp. 35–37).

The writings of these liberal scholars presented different approaches to the monarchy at the same time as they sought to reintegrate the Merovingian past into a global national narrative. The works of Augustin Thierry, in particular, suggested the barbarization of the Merovingian period down to its very vocabulary. The *Récits des temps mérovingiens*, for example, reinvented the names of the Frankish kings so that they seemed more “Germanic”: Clotaire (as Chlothar is known in French) became *Chlother*, Chilpéric (Chilperic) became *Hilpéric* (Thierry 1840, pp. 363, 379). Thierry’s description of French historiography and his knowledge of literary and legal sources distanced Merovingian history from its classical themes (1828). Nevertheless, his vision of race and class war as a driving force in history made his narrative the prisoner of two opposing forces: a race of conquerors (the Franks) and a race of the conquered (the Gallo-Romans). He described Merovingian kingship as pure tyranny. The historians François Guizot and Jules Michelet supported this perspective, but they chose not to portray the French people as pitted against one another. It was more important for them to write a national history in which everyone mattered and had a place. Even if they kept describing Franks as real barbarians—in other words, savages—they tried to integrate Merovingian history into a larger history of France starting with prehistoric times (Michelet 1833). Gaul was described as a predestined territory, a melting pot in which Gauls, Romans, Franks, and other barbarians mixed together to create the future French people. Thanks to Michelet’s anthropomorphic metaphor of France as a person, the Frankish period became the childhood of the nation and its barbarity was compared to the innocent barbarity of a small child (Petitier 1997; Graceffa 2009, pp. 49–52).

For liberal historians, the main objective was to understand how Merovingian society functioned and whether the Merovingian kingdoms managed to become a real nation. On this subject, Guizot agreed with Thierry’s perspective and underlined the lack of unity by any criterion (ethnicity, language, law, culture, and religion) and the Merovingian king’s inability to create it (Guizot 1828; Thierry 1840). The impact of Gregory of Tours’s writings was evident here, especially his description of the beginning of civil war in the late sixth century that directly inspired the *Récits* (Thierry 1840). The book provided a really dark vision of Merovingian society and the Merovingian kingdoms. At the same time, however, it offered a window into the Merovingian period, and his lively style allowed his readership to discover the complexity of Merovingian society (including Christian and pagan practices, religious and civil architecture, customs, dress, arms, and material culture). Moreover, other contemporary studies tried to improve understanding of fifth-century political events (Fauriel 1836) and social structures, especially kinship ties (Lehuërou 1841–1842), involved in the long conquest of

southern Gaul. Such works described the importance of Germanic kinship bonds for medieval society in detail.

Only a few studies of this era, and authored mostly by minor scholars (e.g., Martin 1833, vol. 1), continued with the former theory of Gallo-Frankish unity. Although the Germanic identity of the Franks and their northern origins (generally thought to have been in Schleswig-Holstein) were no longer denied even in France, German scholars increasingly emphasized the importance of a distinct Germanic character to the promotion of the Germanic past and culture. Driven by their desire for German national unity, German-speaking historians underlined the physical and moral qualities of the ancient Germanic peoples. Germans were favorably portrayed in this manner: “Tall, strong and beautiful, so were the Germans in ancient times. Their skin was white and pure in color, their golden curly hair fell onto their shoulders like a lion’s mane, men and women both, and from their big blue eyes shone courage and noble pride in their freedom” (Duller 1840, p. 6). The German language was seen as the most perfect heir of Sanskrit (Schlegel 1808), and the development of Indo-Germanic philology resulted in an improved understanding of the relationships among European languages, especially the Germanic branch.

One particularity of German approaches was the popularity of the genealogical model (von See 1970; Fehr 2010, pp. 70–76). This philological approach was progressively expanded to include ethnicity (Schleicher 1860). The ancient Germanic peoples were described as a *Volk* (nation), endowed with an original territory (between the Elbe and Oder rivers), unity of origins, and historically divided into several *Stammen* (branches or tribes) (Gaupp 1844). Their historical fate was to reunite one day. Frankish tribes were seen as one group of numerous Germanic tribes, and the Merovingian kingdoms were interpreted as a successful Germanic nation that prefigured the empire of Charlemagne (Bethmann Hollweg 1850). Clovis’s capacity to federate the different nations (Salic and Rhenish Franks, Alamanni, Burgundians, Visigoths, and so on) prefigured the Carolingian Empire. One of the decisive features of the ancient Germanic peoples was their military talent (Bethmann-Hollweg 1850): this interpretive trope soon became a commonplace among scholars. To improve this approach, the aim of German historians consisted of four main, intimately connected projects: first, to collect systematically all traces of the Germanic past (languages, literature, law, material culture, and popular culture as songs or tales) to prove the reality of a common Germanic culture. An emblematic example of this scheme was the work of Jakob Grimm on fairy tales (1828). The second project involved drawing a genealogical connection between German tribes and their relations with other European nations (Zeuss 1837; Gaupp 1844). In the third project, scholars sought to edit all of the historical texts regarding the history of the Germanic nation, especially the oldest (Graceffa 2009, pp. 35–38). Early publication projects were supported by German scholars like Grimm, Karl-Friedrich von Savigny, and Georg Heinrich Pertz in the case of *Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit in deutscher Bearbeitung*, or by French scholars like François Lelong and François Guizot in the *Histoire littéraire de la France*. In accordance with the Lutheran tradition of providing popular access to seminal texts, the nationalist dynamic

was expressed clearly in the motto of the MGH: *Sanctus amor patriae dat animum/Holy love for the fatherland gives the spirit* (Fuhrmann 1994, p. 175).

The fourth project consisted of analyzing the ancient Germanic law codes; this legal material attested to the strong specificity of German societies and demonstrated the existence of Germanic culture that was just as important as Roman civilization. Moreover, the existence of barbarian law attested to the existence of a Germanic political and moral sense, in addition to evidence of an organized society. Such evidence argued against French assumptions about the savage nature of barbarians and suggested that ancient German society was ruled by laws, not anarchy. Even the vengeance system of feud (*faide*) could be explained rationally, and its existence demonstrated a specific system of regulation (Rogge 1820). The role and place of monarchy became a real historiographical challenge. Georg Waitz's studies proved the existence of Germanic kingship as a legal system, and the successive versions of his *Verfassungsgeschichte Deutschland* showed the evolution of his ideas (1844; 1865). In parallel, attention to the age of invasions allowed Ernst Gaupp to demonstrate that a period of military billeting preceded the settlement of the barbarians in the Roman Empire (1844). At the same time, decisive works allowed historical knowledge to develop regarding early medieval political events and the chronology of Merovingian kings (Pertz 1828), using more culturally based approaches to Merovingian society (Loebell 1839).

Modern conceptions of ethnicity promoted by nationalism, including those linked to biology that might more accurately be identified as race, also had an impact on historical writing in the nineteenth century. In examining questions related to language, culture, biology, and history, historians sought to prove the existence of the nation as far as possible into the past and define its original territory. Based on linguistic evidence of the Indo-Germanic tradition, historians sought to obtain a better understanding of the connections between different cultural groups and their origins. These studies were especially prominent in the German states where, before 1870, the lack of a unified nation stimulated inquiries into Germanic origins. Quite different from the French tradition, intellectual concern about the disappearance or contamination of German culture led to scholarly attachment to the idea of ethnic purity. The former opposition between "active" and "passive" race, pronounced by Montesquieu, was thus reinterpreted and connected to the idea of Germanic nobility: "the Ancient Germans are proud and free and never submitted or mixed, they sway their own destiny" (Wietersheim 1862, vol. 4, p. 486). Closely connected were the promotion and valorization of the warlike character, military talent, and dominating power of the ancient Germanic peoples (Arndt 1854).

The notion of purity also reflected the way in which German scholars staked intellectual positions opposed to those of French scholars. They defied French conceptions of identity based on ethnic diversity; the success of these ideas may be seen in the popularity of a new definition of race promoted by Arthur de Gobineau (1853). Race was no longer a synonym of people or tribe understood genealogically, as had been the case earlier, but was now supposed to be a classification of humans into groups based on physical, biological, and psychological traits. Racial theory had a substantial impact on

historical discourse related to the early Middle Ages. Indeed, Gobineau and his followers denied the reality of a single humanity and established a hierarchical classification of the races.

XENOPHOBIA, CONTROVERSIES, AND NEW SOCIOECONOMIC APPROACHES (1870–1950)

In 1871, after the Prussian War, the German historian Theodor Mommsen argued that the German annexation of the French departments of Alsace and Moselle was legitimate (Letierrier 1997, pp. 60–61; Hartog 2001, pp. 397–419). Mommsen’s major argument was based on the historical identity of these regions. By contrast, the French historian Fustel de Coulanges denied these allegations: from his perspective, membership in a state should not be defined by history or biology but by the desire to live together (Fustel de Coulanges in Hartog 2001, pp. 398–404). The fact that certain territories had affinity with broader German culture did not justify their inclusion into the German Empire. This debate reveals how French and German traditions were divided by conceptions of ethnicity and how medieval history was used as evidence in historians’ arguments. The use and abuse of the past by politicians was exaggerated by the circumstances brought on by three successive wars between France and Germany. Thus, the rise of xenophobia and racism deeply affected historical discourse.

In Germany, unification was an important source of renewed German nationalism from 1871 onward. It was further heightened during World War I and its aftermath. Felix Dahn’s best-selling novel, *Die Könige der Germanen*, illustrated the success of the pan-Germanic approach based on a variety of primary sources, including the *Nibelungenlied*, *Beowulf*, and the Germanic law codes (Dahn 1861–1909). The model of the Nibelungen inspired faith in an “eternal return” of German glory. Gobineau’s conception of a racial hierarchy was popular among German historians, who saw the Germanic race at the top. Its superiority was based on both physical and moral characteristics. The question of the history of settlement (*Siedlungsgeschichte*) was also thought to substantiate scientifically the existence of an original German territory, attested to by language, customs, culture, and place names. The structure of settlements in the landscape and the shape of traditional dwellings were thought to demonstrate the reality of a common Germanic culture, especially in the region of Alsace (Arnold 1875; Schiber 1894).

French and Belgian scholars likewise became invested in the quest for ethnically identifiable settlements. Toponymical research on the origins of place names in France were aimed at mapping each of the ancient Germanic tribes and evaluating their former demographic importance (Longnon 1878). In a scholarly conflict that divided Belgium, the French-speaking historian Godefroid Kurth proposed that a linguistic frontier delimited two historically attested territories, one occupied by Franks and the other by

Gallo-Romans. He believed that the Charbonnière Forest may have played the role of a natural frontier and explained the historical stopping point of Germanic settlement in the territory of modern Belgium (Kurth 1898). This presumption was revisited after World War I (Vanderlinden 1923).

In the meantime, historians mobilized not only linguistic and cultural data, but also archaeological and anthropological information furnished by a growing number of excavations (Effros 2012; see Effros, Chapter 4, this volume). These archaeological undertakings provided archaeological artifacts and racial historical types that strengthened the mapping of Germanic settlements in ancient Gaul. They also bolstered the idea of Germanic unity and Germanic soil dating back to Antiquity: Schleswig-Holstein was understood to have been the birthplace of the ancient Germanic peoples. Most prominently, the philologist and archaeologist Gustav Kossinna argued in favor of the indigenous character and racial unity of the population of northern Germany (Kossinna 1926). Most of these studies focused on two main territories, Belgium and Alsace-Moselle, because of the sensitive political issues they raised. Similarly, after World War I, German historians assessed the French-occupied Rhineland in order to identify the parameters of its inherent German character. A group of young German historians from Bonn University thus defined the notion of *Kulturströmungen* (cultural currents) to underline the maintenance of Germanic patterns in the subsequent Frankish kingdoms (Aubin, Frings, and Hansen 1922).

If some scholars were affected by racial prejudice, others argued in favor of a cultural and historical definition of the German nation (Levison 1948). The long-term study of the Rhineland shows the particularity of its development: this region appeared in studies as a place of contact, first inhabited by Germanic tribes, before it was profoundly Romanized during the Roman Empire, and then later re-Germanized by the Frankish conquest. While some scholars sought to offer a global view of the barbarian invasions (Schmidt 1910–1918; Lot 1927), a specific group of German historians focused on the highly fraught question of a German living space (*Lebensraum*) and its historical justification, both to the west (Steinbach 1926; Petri 1937) and to the east (Aubin, Brunner 1942). Their argumentation and maps were used by the National Socialists to justify the colonization of a great part of Europe, especially Belgium and the Loire Valley in France (Schöttler 1997, 1999, pp. 89–113).

At the same time in France, republican nationalism placed great emphasis on historical knowledge, especially in the schools, due to the trauma of the 1871 defeat and the loss of Alsace-Moselle to Germany (Digeon 1959). Medievalists like Gabriel Monod and Ernest Lavisse, who had been partly educated in Germany and were influential in shaping educational policy in France, were especially impressed by German historical science and nationalist pride. They decided to follow the same model in France and used the new republican primary and secondary school curriculum, particularly education in history, to stimulate a renewal of national consciousness. They drew heavily from the works of Michelet and Thierry, and thus famous episodes in Merovingian history were chosen for study among French students. These included the accounts from the works of Gregory of Tours, including reference to the incident of the “vase of Soissons” (Clovis’s

murder in cold blood of an insubordinate soldier who had stolen a vase as booty from the church of Soissons and smashed it rather than returning it as demanded by the king), Clovis's baptism, Dagobert's achievements, and the Merovingian civil wars, which now became well known to all French pupils (Effros 2012).

Textbooks of the Third Republic depicted Clovis as either an ancient Gaul or a barbarian, in other words, a savage (Graceffa 2010, pp. 21–42). In the first case, textbooks reduced the Frankish character of the Merovingian king significantly: he only carried the *umbo* (the shield of the Franks) and the *francisque* (a double-bladed axe). His long hair and winged helmet made him look like the contemporary figure of the Gallic leader Vercingetorix, and he was often portrayed being carried on the *pavois* (large shield), as were Gallic leaders. In the second case, school textbooks insisted on the supposed anarchy of these dark times: beleaguered towns and destroyed monuments were shown to give pupils the impression of despair and decadence. These images were intended to remind French students of the fate of contemporary besieged towns, the destruction of Strasbourg and Reims cathedrals, and the devastation of Ypres. The similarities between these Merovingian representations and the crimes committed by the German armies during the Franco-Prussian War and World War I were, without any doubt, intended to leave an impression of the connectedness of the two eras on contemporary students. Medievalists and historians such as Lavissee, Monod, Joseph Bédier, Louis Bréhier, Camille Enlart, Auguste Geffroy, Louis Halphen, Ferdinand Lot, and Charles Petit-Dutaillis condemned German barbarity in wartime (Graceffa 2014, pp. 159–180).

For the French, the historical term *barbarian* took on new meaning with respect to ancient and contemporary Germans. This approach was seen as legitimate given the barbaric acts performed by German armies in wars on French and Belgian soil. German war crimes were seen as a sign of the constitutive behavior of this nation. Whether ancient or modern, Germans were portrayed as barbarians and the destroyers of civilization. The lexical proximity of the French words “Allemand” (German) and “Alamans” (the Germanic tribe of the Alamanni) strengthened this view. The prominence of Germanophobia in this era reinforced a dark vision of Merovingian society, and even more so because of its historical place as the first Catholic monarchy, which displeased secularists and antiroyalists in France. In their eyes, Clovis was a cruel and cynical plotter who accepted Christianity only to win over episcopal authorities to his cause and secure his future conquest of Gaul. However, the fourteen hundredth commemoration of Clovis's baptism in 1896 provided Catholic historians an opportunity to restore a more positive interpretation of Christianity and underline the role of bishops and saints as pacifists (Kurth 1896). No longer was the community of Catholic historians disrupted by controversies that questioned the historical use of sacred texts (Duchesne 1925; Mores 2015). Moreover, a positive approach to Christianization became compulsory during World War I. In the context of the belated canonization of Joan of Arc, the conflict was seen as a divine consequence of the recent laicization of French society, and re-Christianization was urged. A clear sign of this change was revealed by the popular success of holy figures in literature, painting, and the iconography of late nineteenth-century churches, including Martin, bishop of Tours, Vaast, bishop of Arras (who

helped convert Clovis), Genovefa, the Gallo-Roman savior of Paris during the Hunnic invasions, and the goldsmith Eligius, bishop of Noyon (Blin 2002).

Besides these political tensions, the turn of the twentieth century was characterized by the professionalization of history, and even medieval studies, as well as the influence of the social sciences on the scholarly community of historians. First, these changes meant more effective control of the methods and ethics of the profession, and greater self-consciousness concerning historians' activities. The European community of scholars' critical review of Karl August Pertz's publication of *Diplomata Regnum Francorum e stirpe Merovingica* (1872), for instance, led to the author's suicide (Brühl 1990). Despite the perils of military conflicts, scholars continued to engage in critical reviews. There were also joint international scholarly ventures among medievalists, such as the emblematic French and Belgian periodical *Le Moyen Âge* created in 1888. Similarly, international meetings and research travel stimulated scholarly discussions, including the International Historical Congress held in London 1913, which created an international working board to update Charles du Fresne, sieur du Cange's seventeenth-century *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis* (1678). The project, undertaken jointly by European historians and philologists, resulted in the analysis of Merovingian and Carolingian written sources and the cataloguing of each term to identify the meaning and evolution of Latin vocabulary.

The process was not without historical controversy, however, especially regarding the sources and their interpretation: these discussions mostly concerned administrative and hagiographic sources. For one, there was great division among those conducting research on administrative sources that offered alternative interpretations of Merovingian kingship and its function. Scholars like Julien Havet contributed to the debates regarding preservation of a Roman-type administration in Gaul (1896). The traditional constitutional approach, once reinterpreted (Sohm 1871; Brunner 1887), progressively abandoned the study of kingship in favor of the place and role of aristocracies (Tellenbach 1939; Schlesinger 1941). By contrast, special attention was given to hagiographical texts, an original and rich source for the early Middle Ages. Following efforts to edit many of these texts and include them in the publications of the MGH, the community of medievalists had greater access to these important resources (Krusch and Levison 1888–1920). This edition was nevertheless marred by its hypercritical approach based on Karl Lachman's method of publishing sources, which led to the exclusion of texts or manuscripts from consideration as unauthentic or delayed. Differences in opinion led to controversies over Merovingian chronology, over matters such as the date of Clovis's baptism and his subsequent conquest of the Visigoths (Rouche 1997; Levillain 1935, pp. 161–192). Likewise, some German historians considered the *vita* of Genovefa apocryphal, whereas others accepted its historical authenticity (Kurth 1919; Heinzelmann and Poulin 1986). The revised publication of Gregory of Tours's works in the MGH challenged his objectivity as a historian (Krusch and Levison 1937–1951).

The birth of the social sciences had an impact on medieval studies; German law historians, for instance, began to study the ancient Germanic family, where the influence of Marxist approaches was felt (Engels 1884). They also addressed the egalitarian

functioning of *Marke* (the common tenure and cultivation of land) in ancient Germanic communities (von Maurer 1856; Gierke 1868–1913) and discussed whether these were preserved or transformed into feudalism (Lamprecht 1885–1886). After World War I, historians developed new approaches to understanding the roots of feudalism by focusing on the socioeconomic transformation of the countryside (Bloch 1939–1940; Ganshof 1947) and towns (Dopsch 1918–1920; Pirenne 1937). This brought new perspectives for understanding the chronology of the transition between Antiquity and the Middle Ages and its interpretation: this evolution was connected with a more global cultural evolution (Riegl 1901). In this interpretation, the mutations seen in the social structures of the Merovingian period were less a regression than a transformation (Lot 1946–1950) and signaled the origin of the Carolingian renaissance (Halphen 1926; Ennen 1953).

THE “EUROPEAN TURN” AND THE DENATIONALIZATION OF HISTORICAL DISCOURSE (1950–2015)

The trauma of World War II and the Holocaust forced early medieval historians to rethink scholarly discourse and encouraged a progressive denationalization of the history of the early Middle Ages (Pfeil 2008). The previously restrictive definitions of nation and tribe were abandoned in favor of a more comprehensive approach that underlined exchanges between different cultures. The invention of the notion of Late Antiquity and the establishment of a community of specialists made possible significant advances in knowledge of this transitional period, especially the socio economic problems that confronted it. In discussions about the modalities of Germanic or barbarian settlement (Musset 1965; Demougeot 1969), the traditional vision of a clash of civilizations was progressively replaced by a model that underlined the cohabitation of Romans and barbarians (Brown 1971; Marrou 1975). The Merovingian world now appeared to be the consequence of the mixture of three cultures during the fourth and fifth centuries: Roman, barbarian, and Christian.

Eugen Ewig’s studies, for instance, proposed a new rational approach to the division of Frankish kingdoms and demonstrated the unreliability of the presumed existence of the Ripuarian Franks (Ewig 1979). The first point had significant influence on new research regarding the unity of the *res publica* during the Merovingian period, which was maintained among the royal family despite existing divisions. The successive distributions of territories no longer appeared to be an individualistic conception of the power and the state, but rather as the adaptation of a Frankish tradition that promoted equal heritage over primogeniture to preserve the unity of the kingdom (Werner 1984). Indeed, research on royal names and Germanic anthroponomy supported this view. People’s names were no longer considered an ethnic marker that determined beyond

doubt the nationality of a person. Instead, name-giving appears to have been a cultural practice of integration, whether Roman, German, or Christian (Ewig 1991; Lebecq 1996). This practice also had a political dimension, especially for the royal family and elites. Germanic names were composed of a combination of several ethnic or family markers, and could be used to stress the power of relatives and dynastic power (Le Jan 1995). The second point, the lack of an actual Ripuarian tribe, had a substantial impact on studies on Germanic tribes and the formalization of these communities: historians wondered whether these tribes shared a common origin (*gens*) or whether they were just aggregate groups. In this last case, Frankish tribes, made up of members of a variety of origins, decided to join and accept the leader's name. This model helped explain the relative historical disappearance of the Alamanni after their defeat by Clovis at Tolbiac/Zülpich: rather than being eliminated, they were integrated into the Frankish nation and took up its name (Geuenich 1998).

These evolutions benefited from a new approach to ethnic identity, especially in Germany (see Coumert, Chapter 5, this volume). Related to this challenge was the work of Reinhard Wenskus on the concept of ethnogenesis, which attracted considerable attention. He proposed a cultural conception of early medieval tribes that were formed around a small nucleus, the *Traditionskern*, which was not ethnic but cultural; this nucleus was preserved and transmitted by the elite over the course of centuries. The principal source of cohesion in early medieval peoples was thus not biological but cultural, and a central element of Wenskus's hypothesis was belief in a common, heroic past (Wenskus 1961). The constitution of a nation through crystallization around a nucleus and the promotion of legendary history, or myth, allowed for a restoration of Germanic continuity reconfigured as imagined national identity rather than racial identity (Anderson 1991). Historians further explored the idea of a fiction of common origin and how ancient texts helped relay and spread it. Forged in the 1980s and 1990s, the notion of ethnogenesis gave rise to the concept of Germanic identity (Wolfram 1979, 1999). From the same perspective, the systematical collection of Germanic names and their study provided insight into the process of constituting and preserving memory (Geuenich, Haubrichs, and Jarnut 1997). For other historians, however, the myth of origins relied on nothing. They denied the possibility of ever reconstructing the Germanic past and evaluating its contribution to Merovingian society (Coumert 2007; Bauduin, Gazeau, and Modéran 2008).

In the 1970s, interest in Merovingian history declined because the small number of sources made it impossible to apply new quantitative methods. Most French medievalists instead specialized in the central Middle Ages: Georges Duby turned to feudal structure, Robert Fossier examined the evolution of the countryside, and Jacques Le Goff addressed the history of the mentalities. This lack of interest explains the persistence of stereotypes regarding the Merovingian period as a time of decadence.

The development of a relationship between historians and other late antique and early medieval specialists across Europe offered the impulse for creation of a truly European community of scholars, favored by the postwar reconciliation between Germans and French led by German medievalists such as Karl Ferdinand Werner and

Carl-Richard Brühl (Werner 1984; Brühl 1992). The small group of French historians who carry on work on the early Middle Ages have mostly developed a fiscal approach that dates back to the traditional Romanist trend and especially the observations of Fustel de Coulanges (1891). They have focused on preservation of the late Roman Empire's direct system of taxation during the early Middle Ages. According to this approach, the transition between the Roman Empire and the barbarian kingdoms was relatively smooth, amounting to no more than a change of regimes. Contrary to the idea of barbaric decline and the disappearance of the state, Merovingian kings were now seen as having protected the Roman tax system and its administrative organization. This approach proposed some major changes to existing understanding of the Merovingian economy and supported prosopographical research of the royal administration. Several Latin terms received new fiscal definitions: *possessor/dominus*, "eminent/fiscal owners" of public lands or holders of a dominion and *description*, which became similar to a cadastral statement, described tax bases (*fundi*), and was divided into *villae* and *mansi* (Magnou-Nortier 1993–1997). From this perspective, the barbarian invasions amounted to an appropriation of taxes (i.e., eminent or fiscal property) without direct appropriation. Far from destroying the Roman system, Clovis and other barbarian leaders tried to protect it (Goffart 1980). The Merovingian aristocracy, whether civil or religious, took charge of public duties, especially the collection of the fisc (public taxes) (Werner 1998).

This fiscal approach appears to have been too systematic for most historians (Wickham 1993; Devroey 2003), and so many historians progressively promoted another position influenced by the anthropology and theory of Germanic ethnogenesis. Focusing on the elite, they sought to understand the complex relationship inside Merovingian society between aristocratic families and territorial and sacral power, just between identity and memory (Le Jan 2006). These new perspectives were well represented in the European Science Foundation project "Transformation of the Roman World" in the 1990s, which brought together specialists from around the world to revise scholarly understanding of this period. This interdisciplinary project gathered not only European historians and archaeologists but also specialists from America and Russia. All managed to speak and think together beyond traditional national historical boundaries. In addition to fostering historical knowledge, this approach raised awareness about the use and misuse of the past by contemporary Europe (Geary 2002; Wood 2013, pp. 327–329; Evans and Marchal 2015). The thoroughly interdisciplinary approach to each aspect of the momentous changes during this period contributed to the project's important and often unexpected findings. An important result of the program was the discussion of identities and communities, and how they were constructed through integration and accommodation. The proceedings of the "Transformation of the Roman World" demonstrated how much of a cliché modern approaches to ethnicity were and how this approach was completely anachronistic with regard to early medieval realities. Contrary to the certitude with which former views were held, it could now be said that a single Germanic people probably never existed (Pohl 2003). This revised vision of Germanic and Merovingian history has encouraged historians to go back to primary

texts and reconnect with history removed from nationalist impulses. In opposing the revival of the paradigm of clash of civilizations, the study of late-antique and Merovingian history now has to meet the challenge of genetic history (Lee, Nelson, and Wailoo 2012; Pohl 2015, pp. 201–208).

The recent return to the texts—especially literature and hagiographical works—has been bolstered since the 1970s by the extensive development of medieval archaeology. Concerning written sources, Martin Heinzelmann has demonstrated how the eschatological dimension of Gregory of Tours's thinking affected his writing (Heinzelmann 1994). In the same way, the reevaluation of hagiographical material has led to a better understanding of social reality (see Kreiner, Chapter 24, this volume). Archaeological research has similarly brought new data to bear on urban and rural settlements and has improved our knowledge of material culture (see Bourgeois, Chapter 28; Chevalier, Chapter 30; Peytremann, Chapter 31, this volume). The role and location of Christian bishops, in particular, have shown continuity with the ancient Roman administration of cities (Durliat 1990; Werner 1998; see Loseby, Chapter 27, this volume). The rise of monasteries during the Merovingian period has similarly been understood to have promoted economic development and social organization (see Diem, Chapter 15, this volume). Rural archaeology has likewise offered key insights into these developments (Peytremann 2003; Guillaume-Peytremann 2005; Verslype 2007; Gaillard 2014), and scholars have initiated a new rural history, including animals, nature, and the environment (Guizard-Duchamp 2009). New fields of study, including poverty and power, the place of children, gender history, and the history of the emotions have shaped the field (Pancer 2001; Rosenwein 1999, 2006). Cultural history allows better understanding of the function and structure of Merovingian society, especially its political elites and their competition (Bougard, Bühner-Thierry, and Le Jan 2013; Patzold and Ubl 2014). Historians have now proved that Christianization was not a linear development and that rivalry existed among a plurality of religious forms, including the resurgence of paganism (Rouche 1979; Pietri 1983; Dumézil 2005; Mériaux 2006). New connections between anthropological and economic history thus allow Merovingian history to be reconsidered through many more prisms than ethnicity.

WORKS CITED

Ancient Sources

- Krusch, B., and Levison, W. (eds.). (1888–1920). *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici*. MGH SRM. 4 vols. Hanover: Hahn.
- Krusch, B., and Levison, W. (eds.). (1937–1951). *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis Libri Historiarum X*. MGH SRM 1, 1. Hanover: Hahn.
- Ruinart, T. (1699). *Sancti Georgi Florenti Gregori episcopi Turonensis opera omnia*. Paris: Muguet.
- Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. (ed. and trans.). (1960). *The Four Books of the Chronicle of Fredegar with Its Continuations = Fredegarii Chronicorum liber quartus (Fredegarii Chronica) cum continuationibus*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons.

Modern Sources

- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Arndt, M. (1854). *Pro populo Germanico*. Berlin: Reimer.
- Aubin, H., Frings, T., and Hansen, J. (eds.). (1922). *Geschichte des Rheinlandes von der ältesten Zeit bis zur Gegenwart*. Essen: Baedeker.
- Aubin, H., and Brunner, O. (eds.). (1942). *Deutsche Ostforschung: Ergebnisse und Aufgaben seit dem ersten Weltkrieg*. Leipzig: Hirzel.
- Arnold, W. (1875). *Ansiedlungen und Wanderungen Deutscher Stämme*. Stuttgart: Elwert.
- Bauduin, P., Gazeau, V., and Modéran, Y. (2008). *Identité et ethnicité. Concepts, débats historiographiques, exemples (III^e-XII^e siècles)*. Caen: Editions du CRAHM.
- Beaune, C. (1985). *Naissance de la Nation France*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Bethmann-Hollweg, M. A. (1850). *Über die Germanen von der Völkerwanderung*. Bonn: A. Marcus.
- Blin, J.-P. (2002). “Les églises de la reconstruction entre éclectisme et modernité.” In E. Bussière, P. Marcilloux, and D. Varaschin (eds.), *La Grande reconstruction. Reconstruire le Pas-de-Calais après la Grande Guerre* (pp. 323–337). Arras: Archives départementales du Pas-de-Calais.
- Bloch, M. (1939–1940). *La société féodale*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Bougard, F., Bühner-Thierry, G., and Le Jan, R. (2013). “Les élites du Haut Moyen Age. Identités, stratégies, mobilité.” *Annales. Histoire, sciences sociales* 4: 1079–1112.
- Bossuet, J.-B. (1681). *Discours sur l’Histoire universelle depuis le commencement du monde jusqu’à l’Empire de Charlemagne*. Paris: Sebastien Marbre-Cramoisy, Imprimeur du Roi.
- Boulainvilliers, H. de. (1727). *Histoire de l’ancien gouvernement de la France*. La Haye-Amsterdam: Aux dépens de la Compagnie.
- Boulainvilliers, H. de. (1732). *Essai sur la noblesse de France*. Amsterdam: Tabary.
- Bourdieu, P. (1980). “Le Nord et le Midi: Contribution à une analyse de l’effet Montesquieu.” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 35: 21–25.
- Brown, P. (1971). *The World of Late Antiquity*. London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Brühl, C. (1990). *Deutschland-Frankreich. Die Geburt zweier Völker*. Cologne: Böhlau.
- Brühl, C. (1992). “Splendeur et misère de la diplomatie: le cas de l’édition des Diplômes royaux mérovingiens de Bréquigny à Pertz.” *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 136(1): 251–259.
- Brunner, H. (1887–1889). *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot.
- Chateaubriand, F. R. de. (1831). *Études ou discours historique sur la chute de l’Empire romain, la naissance et les progrès du christianisme et l’invasion des Barbares, suivie d’une étude raisonnée de l’histoire de France*. Paris: Lefevre.
- Chifflet, J.-J. (1655). *Anastasis Childerici I Francorum regis, siue thesaurus sepulchralis tornaci neruiorum effossus, & commentario illustratus*. Antwerp: Officina Plantiniana Balthazaris Moreti.
- Coumert, M. (2007). *Origines des peuples (550–850)*. Paris: Institut d’études augustiniennes.
- Daniel, G. (1696). *Deux dissertations pour une nouvelle histoire de France depuis l’établissement de la monarchie dans les Gaules*. Paris: S. Bernard.
- Dahn, F. (1861–1909). *Die Könige der Germanen*. 11 vols. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Hartel.
- Demougeot, E. (1969). *La formation de l’Europe et les invasions barbares*. Paris: Aubier.
- Devroey, J. P. (2003). *Économie rurale et société dans l’Europe franque (VI^e–IX^e siècles)*. Paris: Belin.

- Dietz, B., Gabel, H., and Tiedau, U. (2003). *Griff nach dem Westen. Die Westforschung der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919–1960)*. New York: Waxmann Verlag.
- Digeon, C. (1959). *La crise allemande de la pensée française (1870–1914)*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
- Dopsch, A. (1918–1920). *Wirtschaftliche und soziale Grundlagen der europäischen Kulturentwicklung*. Vienna: Seiden and Sohn.
- Dubos, J. B. (1734). *Histoire critique de l'établissement de la monarchie française dans les Gaules*. Paris: Osmont.
- Du Cange, C. D. F. (1678). *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae Latinitatis*. 3 vols. Paris: G. Martini.
- Duchesne, L. (1925). *L'Église au VI^e siècle*. Paris: E. de Boccard.
- Duller, E. (1840). *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*. Leipzig: Wigang.
- Dumézil, B. (2005). *Les racines chrétiennes de l'Europe. Conversion et liberté dans les royaumes barbares, V^e-VII^e siècle*. Paris: Fayard.
- Durliat, J. (1990). *Les Finances publiques. De Dioclétien aux Carolingiens (284–888)*. Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke.
- Effros, B. (2012). *Uncovering the Germanic Past. Merovingian Archaeology in France, 1830–1914*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Engels, F. (1975 [1884]). *L'origine de la famille, de la propriété privée et de l'État*. Paris: Éditions sociales.
- Ennen, E. (1953). *Frühgeschichte der europäischen Stadt*. Bonn: Röhrscheid.
- Evans, R., and Marchal, G. P. (eds.). (2015). *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States. History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ewig, E. (1979). *Spätantike und fränkische Gallien. Gesammelte Schriften (1952–1973)*. Zürich-Munich: Artemis Verlag.
- Ewig, E. (1991). "Die Namengebung bei den ältesten Frankenkönigen und im merowingischen Königshaus." *Francia* 18(1): 21–69.
- Fauriel, C. (1836). *Histoire de la Gaule méridionale sous la domination des conquérants germains*. Paris: Paulin.
- Federinov, B., Docquier, G., and Cauchies, J. M. (2015). *A laune de "Nos Gloires". Edifier, narrer et embellir par l'image*. Musée de Mariemont. Brussels: Presses de l'Université Saint-Louis.
- Fehr, H. (2010). *Germanen und Romanen im Merowingerreich: frühgeschichtliche Archäologie zwischen Wissenschaft und Zeitgeschehen*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Fuhrmann, H. (1994). "Les premières décennies des MGH." *Francia* 21(1): 175–180.
- Führer, J. (2016). "Du monstre sacré à la mémoire rationnelle ? Les récits génétiques des Mérovingiens et des Capétiens." In I. Luciani and V. Piétri (eds.), *L'Incorporation des ancêtres. Généalogie, construction du présent* (pp. 37–53). Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence.
- Fustel de Coulanges, N.-D. (1891). *Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France*. Paris: Hachette.
- Gaillard, M. (ed.). (2014). *L'empreinte chrétienne en Gaule du IV^e au IX^e siècle*. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Ganshof, F. (1947). *Qu'est ce que la féodalité?* Brussels: Editions de la Baconnière.
- Garber, J. (1989). "Trojaner-Römer-Franken-Deutsche. Nationale Abstammungstheorien im Vorfeld der Nationalstaatsbildung." In K. Garber (ed.), *Nation und Literatur im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit. Akten des I. Internationalen Osnabrücker Kongresses der Kulturgeschichte der frühen Neuzeit* (pp. 108–163). Tübingen: M. Niemeyer Verlag.

- Gaupp, E. T. (1844). *Die germanischen Ansiedlungen und Landtheilungen in den Provinzen des römischen Westreiches*. Breslau: J. Max.
- Gearry, P. (2002). *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Geuenich, D. (1997). *Geschichte der Alemannen*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- Geuenich, D. (ed.). (1998). *Die Franken und die Alemannen bis zur "Schlacht bei Zülpich," 496–97*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Geuenich, D., Haubrichs, W., and Jarnut, J. (eds.). (1997). *Nomen et gens. Zur historischen Aussagekraft frühmittelalterlicher Personennamen*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Gibbon, E. (1776–1788). *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. London: Strahan & Cadell.
- Gierke, O. (1868–1913). *Das deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Gobineau, A. (1853). *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*. Paris: Firmin Didot.
- Goffart, W. (1980). *Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418–583. The Techniques of Accommodation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Graceffa, A. (2009). *Les historiens et la question franque. Le peuplement franc et les Mérovingiens dans l'historiographie française et allemande des XIX^e et XX^e siècles*. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Graceffa, A. (2010). "Simplifier et édifier. Les Mérovingiens à l'école de la République" In P. Hummel (ed.), *Mésavoids: études sur la (dé)formation par la transmission* (pp. 21–42). Paris: Philologicum.
- Graceffa, A. (2014). "Médiévistes en guerre, entre engagement et regard critique, 1870/1918." In J.-F. Condette (ed.), *Les Écoles dans la guerre* (pp. 159–180). Villeneuve d'Ascq: Septentrion.
- Grell, C. (1996). "Clovis du grand siècle aux lumières." *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 154(1): 173–218.
- Grimm, J. (1828). *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*. Göttingen: Dietrich.
- Guérard, B. (1844). *Polyptique de l'abbé Irminon*. Paris: Imprimerie royale.
- Guillaume, J., and Peytremann, E. (2005). *L'Austrasie. Sociétés, économies, territoires, christianisation*. Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy.
- Guizard-Duchamp, F. (2009). *Les terres du sauvage dans le monde franc (IV^e–IX^e siècles)*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes.
- Guizot, F. (1828). *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe*. Paris: Didier.
- Halphen, L. (1926). *Les Barbares*. Paris: Alcan.
- Hartog, F. (2001). *Le XIX^e siècle et l'histoire. Le cas Fustel de Coulanges*. Paris: Seuil.
- Havet, J. (1896). *Questions mérovingiennes*. Paris: Champion.
- Heinzelmann, M. (1994). *Gregor von Tours (538–594). Zehn Bücher Geschichte: Historiographie und Gesellschaftskonzept im 6. Jahrhundert*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Heinzelmann, M., and Poulin, J.-C. (1986). *Les anciennes vies de sainte Geneviève de Paris. Études critiques*. Paris: Champion.
- Hotman, F. (1573). *Franco-Gallia*. Geneva: J. Stoer.
- Joye, S. (2016). "Représentations modernes et contemporaines: barbares redécouverts, barbarie réinventée." In B. Dumézil (ed.), *Les Barbares* (pp. 89–116). Paris: PUF.
- Kaiser, R., and Scholz, S. (2014). *Quellen zur geschichte der Franken und der Merowinger. Vom 3. Jahrhundert bis 751*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- Kossinna, G. von. (1926). *Ursprung und Verbreitung der Germanen in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit*. Berlin-Lichterfelde: Germanen Verlag.
- Kurth, G. (1896). *Clovis*. Paris: Mame.
- Kurth, G. (1898). *La frontière linguistique en Belgique et dans le nord de la France*. Brussels: F. Hayez.

- Kurth, G. (1919). *Études franques*. Paris: Champion.
- Lamprecht, K. (1885–1886). *Deutsches Wirtschaftsleben im Mittelalter*. Leipzig: A. Dürr.
- Lebecq, S. (1996). *Les origines franques*. Paris: Seuil.
- Leber, C. (1826–1838). *Collection des meilleures dissertations, notices et traités particuliers relatifs à l'histoire de France, composée en grande partie de pièces rares, ou qui n'ont jamais été publiées séparément*. XX. Paris: A. Dentu.
- Lee, C., Nelson, A., and Wailoo, K. (eds.). (2012). *Genetics and the Unsettled Past: The Collision of DNA, Race, and History*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Leibniz, G. W. (1715). *De origine Francorum*. Hanover: Foerster.
- Le Jan, R. (1995). *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (v^e–x^e siècles)*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne.
- Le Jan, R. (2006). *Les Mérovingiens*. Paris: PUF.
- Lehuërou, J.-M. (1841–1842). *Histoire des institutions mérovingiennes et du gouvernement des Mérovingiens jusqu'à l'Édit de 615*. Paris: Joubert.
- Leterrier, S.-A. (1997). *Le XIX^e siècle historien: anthologie raisonnée*. Paris: Belin.
- Levillain, L. (1935). "La conversion et le baptême de Clovis." *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 21(91): 161–192.
- Levison, W. (1948). *Aus rheinischer und fränkischer Frühzeit. Ausgewählte Aufsätze*. Düsseldorf: L. Schwann.
- Lézardière, P. de. (1844). *Théorie des lois politiques de la monarchie française*. Revised ed. Paris: Au comptoir des imprimeurs unis.
- Loebell, J. W. (1839). *Gregor von Tours und seine Zeit*. Bonn: Brockhaus.
- Longnon, A. (1878). *Géographie de la Gaule au v^e siècle*. Paris: Hachette.
- Lot, F. (1927). *La fin du monde antique et le début du Moyen Âge*. Paris: La Renaissance du livre.
- Lot, F. (1946–1950). *Recherches sur la population et la superficie des cités remontant à la période gallo-romaine*. Paris: Champion.
- Mably, G. (1788[1765]). *Observations sur l'histoire de France*. Paris: Khell.
- Magnou-Nortier, E. (ed.). (1993–1997). *Aux sources de la gestion publique*. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires de Lille.
- Martin, H. (1833). *Histoire de France* 1. Paris: Furne.
- Marrou, H.-I. (1975). *Décadence romaine ou Antiquité tardive*. Paris: Seuil.
- Mériaux, C. (2006). *Gallia irradiata. Saints et sanctuaires dans le nord de la Gaule du haut Moyen Âge*. Stuttgart: F. Steiner.
- Michelet, J. (1833). *Histoire de France*, vol. 1. Paris: Hetzel.
- Mignet, F. (1822). *De la féodalité*. Paris: L'Huillier.
- Montesquieu, Ch. S. de. (1734). *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence*. Amsterdam: J. Desbordes.
- Montesquieu, Ch. S. de. (1748). *De l'esprit des lois*. Geneva: Barillot.
- Montlosier, F. D. de. (1814). *De la monarchie française depuis son établissement jusqu'à nos jours*. Paris: Nicolle.
- Mores, F. (2015). *Louis Duchesne: alle origini del modernismo*. Brescia: Morcelliana.
- Musset, L. (1965). *Les Invasions: les vagues germaniques*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
- Nicolet, C. (2006). *La Fabrique d'une nation: la France entre Rome et les Germains*. Paris: Perrin.
- Ozanam, F. (1847–1849). *Études germaniques*. Paris: Lecoffre.
- Pancer, N. (2001). *Sans peur et sans vergogne. De l'honneur des femmes aux premiers temps mérovingiens*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Pardessus, J. (1853). *Loi salique*. Paris: Imprimerie royale.

- Patzold, S., and Ubl, K. (2014). *Verwandtschaft, Name und soziale Ordnung (300–1000)*. Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 90. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Pertz, G. H. (1828). *Histoire des maires du Palais*. Paris: Tenon.
- Petitier, P. (1997). *La Géographie de Michelet. Territoire et modèles naturels dans les premières œuvres de Michelet*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Petri, F. (1937). *Germanisches Volkserbe in Wallonien und Nordfrankreich*. Bonn: Röhrscheid.
- Peytreman, E. (2003). *Archéologie de l'habitat rural dans le nord de la France du IV^e au XII^e siècle*. Saint-Germain-en-Laye: Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne.
- Pfeil, U. (2008). *Die Rückkehr der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft in die "Ökumene der Historiker": ein wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Ansatz*. Munich: Oldenbourg.
- Pietri, L. (1983). *La ville de Tours du IV^e au VI^e siècle. Naissance d'une cité chrétienne*. Rome: Ecole française de Rome.
- Pirenne, H. (1937). *Mahomet et Charlemagne*. Paris: Alcan.
- Pohl, W. (2003). "Die Anfänge des Mittelalters. Alte Probleme, neue Perspektiven." In H.-W. Goetz and J. Jarnut (eds.), *Mediävistik im 21. Jahrhundert* (pp. 361–378). Munich: Fink.
- Pohl, W. (2015). "Political Uses of Ethnicity in Early Medieval Europe." In University of Cologne forum (ed.), *Ethnicity as political resource. Conceptualizations across Disciplines, Regions, and Periods* (pp. 201–208). Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Pouille, E. (1987). "Historiens ou fonctionnaires de la conservation?" In *Ecole nationale des Chartes. Histoire de l'école depuis 1821* (pp. 26–39). Thionville: Gérard Klopp.
- Ridé, J. (1976). *L'image du Germain dans la pensée et la littérature allemandes de la redécouverte de Tacite à la fin du xv^e siècle*. Paris: Champion.
- Riegl, A. (1901). *Die Spätromische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn*. Vienna: Kaiserliche königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei.
- Rogge, K. A. (1820). *Über das Gerichtswesen der Germanen*. Halle: Gebauer.
- Rosenwein, B. (1999). *Negotiating Space. Power, Restraint and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Rosenwein, B. (2006). *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Rouche, M. (1979). *L'Aquitaine, des Wisigoths aux Arabes*. Paris: Thouzot.
- Rouche, M. (ed.). (1997). *Clovis. Histoire et mémoire*. Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne.
- Savaron. (1622). *De la sainteté du roy Louys, dict Clovis, avec les preuves et autorités et un abrégé de sa vie et de ses miracles*. Paris: P. Chevalier.
- Schiber, A. (1894). *Die fränkischen und alemannischen Siedlungen in Gallien, besonders in Elsass und Lothringen*. Strasbourg: Trübner.
- Schlegel, F. (1808). *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*. Heidelberg: Mohr und Zimmer.
- Schleicher, A. (1860). *Die deutsche Sprache*. Stuttgart: Cotta.
- Schlesinger, W. (1941). *Die Entstehung der Landesherrschaft*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Schmidt, L. (1910–1918). *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme bis zum Ausgang der Völkerwanderung*. Berlin: Weidmann.
- Schöttler, P. (ed.). (1997). *Geschichtsschreibung als Legitimations-Wissenschaft 1918–1945*. Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp.
- Schöttler, P. (ed.). (1999). "Von der rheinischen Landesgeschichte zur nazistischen Volksgeschichte." In W. Schulze and O. G. Oexle (eds.), *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus* (pp. 89–113). Frankfurt-am-Main: Fischer.

- Sieyès, E. (1820). *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers État ?* Paris: Correard.
- Simmer, A. (2015). *Aux sources du germanisme mosellan*. Metz: Editions des Paraiges.
- Steinbach, F. (1926). *Studien zur westdeutschen Stammes- und Volksgeschichte*. Jena: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Sohm, R. (1871). *Die Fränkische Reichs und Gerichtsverfassung*. Weimar: Böhlau.
- Tellenbach, G. (1939). *Königtum und Stämme in der Werdezeit des Deutschen Reiches*. Weimar: Böhlau.
- Thierry, A. [Amédée] (1828–1845). *Histoire des Gaulois depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à l'entière soumission de la Gaule à la domination romaine*. Paris: Hachette.
- Thierry, A. [Augustin]. (1827). *Lettres sur l'histoire de France*. Paris: Garnier.
- Thierry, A. [Augustin]. (1840–1842). *Récits des Temps mérovingiens précédés des Considérations sur l'histoire de France*. Paris: Dentu.
- Tollebeeck, J. (2011). "An Era of Grandeur. The Middle Ages in Belgian National historiography, 1830–1914." In R. J. W. Evans and G. P. Marchal (eds.), *The Uses of Middle Ages in Modern European States. History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins* (pp. 113–135). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vanderlinden, H. (1923). "La foret Charbonnière." *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 2: 203–214.
- Venayre, S. (2013). *Les origines de la France. Quand les historiens racontaient la nation*. Paris: Seuil.
- Verslype, L. (2007). *Villes et campagnes en Neustrie (IV^e–X^e s.). Sociétés, économies, territoires, christianisation*. Montagnac: Édition Mergoïl.
- Voltaire, F. M. A. (1880 [1764]). *Dictionnaire philosophique*. Paris: Hachette.
- Voltaire, F. M. A. (1880 [1756]). *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations et sur les principaux faits de l'histoire depuis Charlemagne jusqu'à Louis XIII*. Paris: Hachette.
- von Maurer, G. L. (1856). *Geschichte der Markenverfassung in Deutschland*. Erlangen: F. Enke.
- von See, K. (1970). *Deutsche Germanenideologie vom Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart*. Frankfurt-am-Main: Athenäum Verlag.
- Waitz, G. (1844–1847, 1865–1884). *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*. 2 vols. Kiel: Weidmann.
- Weber, W. (1984). *Priester der Klio. Historisch-sozialwissenschaftliche Studien zur Herkunft und Karriere deutscher Historiker und zur Geschichte der Geschichtswissenschaft 1800–1970*. Frankfurt: P. Lang.
- Wenskus, R. (1961). *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes*. Cologne: Böhlau.
- Werner, K. F. (1984). *Les Origines*. Paris: Fayard.
- Werner, K. F. (1998). *Naissance de la noblesse. L'essor des élites politiques en Occident*. Paris: Fayard.
- Wickham, C. (1993). "La chute de Rome n'aura pas lieu." *Le Moyen Âge* 99: 107–126.
- Wietersheim, E. von (1862). *Geschichte der Völkerwanderung*. 4 vols. Leipzig: Weigel.
- Wolfram, H. (1979). *Geschichte der Goten*. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Wolfram, H. (1999). *Die Germanen*. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Wolfram, H. (2001). *Die Goten und ihre Geschichte*. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Wood, I. (2013). *The Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zeuss, K. (1837). *Die Deutschen und ihre Nachbarstämme*. Munich: W. Reichel.

CHAPTER 4

TWO CENTURIES OF EXCAVATING MEROVINGIAN-ERA CEMETERIES IN FRANCE

BONNIE EFFROS

HAD it not been for the industrial revolution, the early decades of the history of Merovingian archaeology might have transpired in a very different manner. Indeed, given the paucity of monumental stone structures dating from the Merovingian period known in the nineteenth century, only a few were the object of early archaeological excavations (Barral I Altet 1991; Gran-Aymerich 1998; on Merovingian religious architecture today, see Chevalier, Chapter 30, this volume). Consequently, it was typically chance discoveries of early medieval material beneath the earth that drove exploration. Without the impetus of the laying of rail lines, urbanization, and more intensive agricultural exploitation (Weber 1976), there is no doubt that early medieval exploration would have developed significantly later than it did.

Merovingian archaeology, unlike classical studies that were focused on the excavation and, in some cases, reconstruction of impressive military, civic, and religious structures (Effros 2018b), was driven initially by the serendipitous discoveries of previously unknown cemeteries. They delivered significant quantities of metalwork in the form of weaponry and buckles, ceramics, human bone, and glass vessels (or their fragments). The furnished graves uncovered on the property or in the towns of bourgeois and noble landowners, many of whom were members of local antiquarian societies, encouraged them, in turn, to discuss the significance of these finds and look for additional artifacts with which to embellish their collections and burnish their scholarly reputations. Without these factors, it is unlikely that many Merovingian-era cemeteries would have been uncovered before the 1950s. There is no small irony in the fact that the modernization and growth of France's industrial, agricultural, and urban infrastructure led to the discovery (and, in many instances, the destruction) of evidence of its late and

post-Roman past (on the excesses of nineteenth-century archaeological practice, see Vallet 2000).

Despite its precocious start, the emergence of the discipline of what was known as national archaeology in France was stymied by a number of structural restraints on provincial initiatives. Consequently, French archaeology remained largely decentralized and inconsistently funded well into the 1980s (Talon and Bellan 2009). Up until this time, the process of formalizing the institutions and laws that regulated oversight of training in and practice of archaeology in France was gradual. Moreover, recognition of the importance of the contributions of what had been for a century and a half largely a discipline of amateur excavators affiliated with local archaeological societies was late in coming (Perrin-Saminadayar 2001). There were numerous reasons for this delay, and the consequences were significant. First, most archaeological sites were not protected by French law, nor was formal training required of archaeologists until the mid-twentieth century, when the Loi Carcopino of September 27, 1941, was validated following the liberation of France in 1945 (Choay 2001). This law required formal prefectural authorization for the initiation of archaeological excavations or exploration of ancient monuments. Second, the work of archaeologists, who were decentralized in local antiquarian and archaeological societies rather than being centrally based (Chaline 1998), was rarely valued as highly as work produced by academic scholars and architects in Paris (Gerson 2003). Third, substantial methodological challenges dogged the research of archaeological practitioners. Namely, nineteenth-century excavators had significant difficulties in developing approaches by which to standardize even approximate dating of artifactual and human remains. The development of reliable methodologies rested in large part on numismatic, typological (mainly stylistic), and stratigraphical features. Also, ^{14}C dating of organic matter was first applied on material derived from archaeological sites in the 1940s. Consequently, it took more than a century from the time in which amateurs first excavated Merovingian-era cemeteries to establish more accurate relative and absolute chronologies for these sites (Périn 1980).

Of note, too, was the fact that the discipline of archaeology (outside of the field of pre-history) was heavily dependent on historical narratives (Gran-Aymerich 2001). Particularly influential for the Merovingian period was the work of the liberal historian Augustin Thierry, such as his *Récits des temps mérovingiens*, first serialized in the late 1820s and 1830s (1880 [1840]). His emphasis was on the perpetual struggle between Gallo-Romans and Franks derived from Gregory of Tours' *Histories* (Graceffa 2009; Wood 2013; see also Graceffa, Chapter 3, this volume). This myopic or blinkered vision, in which nationalist questions prevailed over nearly all other facets of the French past, profoundly shaped the exploration and vision of early French archaeologists as they researched the early medieval past (Young 1992). Indeed, few dared to challenge the constraints imposed by the historical narrative and suggest conclusions that challenged the written record (Halsall 1997). Despite the quality of the publications of some of the most forward-thinking archaeological practitioners, the voices of archaeologists working on the Merovingian period were muted or even ignored in late nineteenth- and

early twentieth-century academic and public debates about the origins of France, which remained largely dependent on historical sources (Effros 2012c).

As a consequence of these factors, and particularly the influence of Thierry's popular narrative, the interpretation of the growing number of weapon burials discovered in Merovingian-era cemeteries in France from the 1830s was surprisingly uniform and largely uncontested. Amateur archaeological practitioners, most of whom belonged to the learned societies established in their local towns and cities, were afforded access through these organizations to the archaeological journals and monographs of other regional societies as well as to the collections of scores of small museums that were frequently founded by these same societies. Archaeological enthusiasts confidently identified graves that were replete with armament and their respective cemeteries as Frankish, first in Normandy and Lorraine, and subsequently in heavily industrialized and research-intensive regions of France like Picardy (Dugas de Beaulieu 1843; Rigolot 1849; Périn 1980, pp. 16–22). From the 1860s and 1870s, local archaeologists similarly began to refer to furnished necropoleis in the southeast and southwest of France as Burgundian and Visigothic, respectively (Baudot 1857–1860; Gosse 1859; Dusan 1867; Delamain 1892). This tradition culminated in, and was codified by, Casimir Barrière-Flavy's unparalleled and personally funded survey of 2,315 known Merovingian-era cemeteries in France (1901), which alleged the possibility of distinguishing Frankish, Burgundian, and Visigothic regions on the basis of the unique qualities of furnished burials found in those areas (Effros 2012a; see Patrello, Chapter 39, this volume), conclusions that were challenged even in his own lifetime.

Mutually reaffirming one another, the conclusions of nineteenth-century archaeologists interested in the early Middle Ages challenged the dominant and historic French claim of descent exclusively from Gallic forebears (Dietler 1994). These cultural-historical claims were bolstered by the research of French craniologists writing in the late nineteenth century, who identified the alleged physiological characteristics of ancient Germanic inhabitants, most prominently their dolichocephalic (long-skulled) attributes, which they believed could be distinguished from their brachycephalic (round-skulled) Gallo-Roman contemporaries (Lagneau 1874; 1875; Trigger 1995, pp. 268–270). Although the approaches developed by physical anthropologists were ultimately discredited due to their small sample sizes and overstated conclusions (Effros 2010), they nonetheless buoyed an abiding popular and, in some instances, academic acceptance of racial distinctions between Gallo-Romans and Franks. However, because the allegation that the French were the product of racial mixing was rarely welcomed or included in contentious national discussions of French origins and identity, the fruits of Frankish archaeology were largely ignored in France despite their acceptance elsewhere in Europe.¹ Both during the reign of Napoleon III and the Third Republic, French scholars and public intellectuals generally favored the perspective that the Franks were the progenitors exclusively of the Frankish royal house and aristocracy, whereas the Gallo-Romans were the ancestors of the French (Thiess 1999; Geary 2002). This outlook laid the groundwork for Merovingian archaeology in the twentieth century (both before and in the decades that followed World War II), during

which the binary of Gallo-Roman versus Germanic graves remained the most common trope of archaeological exploration (Halsall 1995; Fehr 2010; see Coumert, Chapter 5, this volume).

Although the annual meetings of Arcisse de Caumont's *Société française pour la conservation des monuments nationaux* (1834) and the meetings of what would ultimately be called the *Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (from 1861) helped coordinate the findings of the growing number of archaeological societies in the nineteenth century, their impact was relatively limited (Landes 2009). Far more central to the integration of Merovingian cemeteries and the grave goods they contained into a narrative that reached beyond the local provinces in which archaeology was practiced, however, was the foundation in 1862 (and inauguration in 1867) of the national antiquities museum in Napoleon III's château at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, to the west of Paris. Although the emperor originally conceived of the collection as focusing on the Gallo-Roman period, before its inauguration (timed to match the well-attended *Exposition universelle* of 1867), it expanded to include all periods of France's past prior to Charlemagne (Larrouy 1998; Effros 2012b). Prominent among the museum's vitrines dedicated to the history of France before 800 CE were displays of the products of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cemeterial excavations, including the collections of Frédéric Moreau and Baron Joseph de Baye (Effros 2012c, pp. 264–288).

For the most part, however, governmental funding tended to favor periods other than the Merovingian period, most prominently with large-scale national projects such as Napoleon III's Gallo-Roman excavations at Alésia in the early 1860s (Le Gall 1980). Significant funding also went to archaeological sites abroad, such as those overseen by the *École française d'Athènes* and the *École française de Rome* (Gran-Aymerich 1998) in locations as far-flung as Greece, Syria, Tunisia, Mesopotamia, and Algeria (Díaz-Andreu 2007; Effros, 2018a, 2018b). In contrast, no regional archaeological undertakings of the Merovingian period were accorded similar resources on this scale at any point in the nineteenth century; they lacked the monumental prominence and potential for a national narrative of their prehistoric and ancient competition. Although in the early years of the Third Republic development of a nationalist agenda for indigenous archaeology was spurred by rivalry with German archaeological investment and advances in "big scholarship" intended to replace the fragmented system of learned societies (Marchand 1996, pp. 171–178),² political sensitivity toward allegedly ancient Germanic sites did not bring about a significant change in the French national agenda for archaeology. Whereas the French established the *Service des monuments historiques* for its Algerian colony in 1880, policies regulating archaeological research (rather than solely historic monuments) in metropolitan France were not promulgated until the early 1940s (Oulebsir 2004, pp. 180–181; Gran-Aymerich 2009; Effros 2018a). New approaches to archaeological research of the early medieval period in metropolitan France bore fruit at last after World War II in Édouard Salin's landmark publication of a four-volume assessment of Merovingian civilization, which offered a synthesis of the period's known historical and archaeological evidence (Salin 1952–1959).

INTERPRETIVE APPROACHES TO MEROVINGIAN-ERA CEMETERIES IN FRANCE PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

Most archaeological discoveries in the nineteenth century were unplanned since they were brought to light in the course of agricultural work, quarrying, the laying of railway track, or construction. Consequently, few excavations of early medieval cemeteries were well planned or executed, and even fewer were recorded. Although some artifacts recovered during such activities entered into private collections, the vast majority were no doubt destroyed or dispersed by those who had little use for the detritus of ancient cemeteries (Provost et al. 1996, p. 40). However, once local amateurs learned of finds from local farmers or laborers, they often sought permission to revisit these sites so that they might dig exploratory trenches or otherwise investigate the graves in which these artifacts had been deposited (Beauchet-Filleau 1864, p. 261). Typically, local agricultural laborers were hired and paid by the hour or day to do much or all of the actual digging in the off-season from planting and harvesting (Colney 2000, p. 105).

From the period of the Second Empire, however, discoveries of serendipitously found archaeological sites began to be reported more regularly, often to local antiquarian societies. A small minority of such undertakings resulted in publication of the sites in question, typically in a local archaeological journal and more rarely, in the case of a particularly noteworthy site, in a self-financed monograph (Pillooy 1886, pp. 19–20). However, market forces impeded this process as the number of eager collectors grew. By the end of the nineteenth century, an entrepreneurial excavator could unearth thousands of graves and expect to earn a profit in exchange for the sale of the more aesthetically pleasing or unique finds (Goury 1908, p. 1). Although some private collections, like that of the retired banker Frédéric Moreau (Effros 2012c, pp. 246–248), survived relatively intact after being donated to or purchased by major museums, this kind of rapid excavation, which in some cases might be described more accurately as pillage, discouraged the appropriate documentation of many Merovingian-period sites (Reinach 1911, p. 287; Vallet 2000).

As mentioned earlier, one of the most vexing challenges related to early medieval cemeteries was how to date them accurately. Archaeologists depended on numismatic finds to establish rough absolute chronologies of finds in their cemeteries, and over time they were able to document the relative chronologies of specific artifact types (Terninck 1876, p. 227). Also important to these developments was the refinement of the study of layers or *couches*, which were first proposed in the context of early medieval cemeteries by Frédéric Troyon in his exploration of a cemetery at Bel-Air (Switzerland). He suggested that such sites did not date from a single battle or massacre but were occupied over decades or even centuries that led to the accretion of debris (Troyon 1841, p. 8). The work of prehistorians like Jacques Boucher de Perthes, which profited from

advances in geography and paleontology, incorporated more stratigraphical approaches to archaeological exploration (Olivier 1998, p. 191) and prompted historical archaeologists to make more of the physical evidence from the cemeteries at their disposal (Déchelette 1908, pp. 2–3; Laming-Emperaire 1964, pp. 159–166). Archaeologists also benefited from architectural practices such as surveying, rendering architectural-style drawings, and understanding the construction techniques used in successive developmental phases of early medieval funerary structures (Leclercq 1907, pp. 458–459). In the 1880s, these techniques were directed effectively at early medieval cemeteries by Jules Pilloy in the Aisne, who employed a combination of stratigraphic, spatial, and typological analyses to establish a more accurate chronology of these burial sites than had been achieved in the past, and which allowed him to dispute the conclusions of Barrière-Flavy and others (Pilloy 1886; Périn 1980, pp. 23, 32–33).

The most advanced publications in the second half of the nineteenth century included maps of cemeteries with numbered graves, along with a list of artifacts found in each burial. (Seillier 1974, pp. 45–46). By the century's end, this practice evolved in the best documented cases to recording the positions of artifacts in individual graves, so that readers of these reports might gain some understanding of how these items had been laid to rest with the dead at the time of burial or during subsequent reopenings of the tombs (De Loë 1890, pp. 35–36). Yet, these best-case scenarios were far from common, and even leading archaeologists did not always meet the standards they proposed. The Abbé Jean-Benoît-Désiré Cochet (d. 1875), who is often considered the “father” of Merovingian archaeology, did keep excavation diaries during his digs, but he often omitted site maps and artifact inventories from his publications since he felt that they were not essential to his central narrative (Périn 1980, pp. 28–29; Flavigny 1992, p. 245). Most typically, archaeologists of this era published lists and in some instances highly skilled drawings of the most interesting artifacts; few archaeologists, by contrast, gave attention to skeletal matter or less noteworthy material such as ceramic sherds and glass fragments.

The general state of archaeology as described here is not meant to suggest that no contemporaries attempted to encourage more systematic documentation of early medieval cemeteries. In 1893, for instance, two Belgian scholars, L.-F. de Pauw and Émile Hublard, proposed the means by which contemporary archaeologists might catalogue their excavations more consistently. They created a system of preprinted cards or *tablettes* that could be filled in by excavators with grave numbers, data on the age and gender of the deceased, and the dimensions and orientation of each burial. The cards also included a schematic diagram onto which excavators could map the type and position of artifacts laid to rest with the dead. The *tablettes* were ingenious in not only simplifying the task of recordkeeping but also signaling what kind of data contemporary archaeologists were expected to keep. The cards thus enabled even the most inexperienced excavator to meet minimum standards for recordkeeping (De Pauw and Hubbard 1893–1894). It does not appear, however, that this system was employed by many contemporary archaeologists conducting cemeterial fieldwork in France.

It was only in the course of the early decades of the twentieth century that contemporaries began to lay out concrete expectations as to the minimum amount of data to be kept and published following the excavation of an early-medieval necropolis, potentially in the form of detailed excavation journals, inventories of objects, and site mapping. Clodomir-Tancrede Boulanger, who by profession was a notary of the city of Péronne but whose passion was archaeology, offered advice for contemporary amateurs (Neumayer 2002, pp. 50, 75–78). He advised those interested in excavating early medieval graves to lay exploratory trenches in the soil; once graves were identified, he recommended digging to a depth of roughly 25 to 40 centimeters from the bottom of the sepulcher before beginning the more painstaking and delicate task of extricating grave goods:

[O]ne begins by lifting the vessel resting at the feet [of the deceased] and throwing the remaining soil out [of the sepulcher], then one continues by working towards the knees and head, always finely and carefully sifting through the soil before placing it behind oneself. One should be doubly cautious near the hands and the neck due to the rings and beads which may easily escape notice. It is always necessary to free each artifact completely before lifting it with a trowel; one risks breaking it by pulling upon it when it is still buried. It is critical to excavate the trench fully and not leave any object at the bottom, no matter how small it may be, under the pretext that it has no value; it is only when the object is cleaned and studied that one may appreciate it. (Boulanger 1902–1905, p. 199)

Boulanger also encouraged his readers to number and map the graves, as well as label artifacts (or the sacks in which they were deposited) with these numbers.

One of the few cemeteries excavated in the early twentieth century to have been documented to this standard was located at Bourogne, south of Belfort. Two local amateurs, Anatole Lablotier and Ferdinand Scheurer, the latter a chemist, who dug the site between 1907 and 1909, noted that they carefully laid parallel trenches at the start of their exploration of the burial ground. Their 1914 publication of the Merovingian-period cemetery included site maps, detailed object inventories, and drawings of the artifacts uncovered (Lablotier and Scheurer 1914; Colney 2000, p. 107). Indeed, with Scheurer's guidance, Édouard Salin, an engineer by training, began his famous excavation of the early medieval cemetery of Lezévillle (Haute-Marne) in 1922. Over the course of the 1930s, Salin expanded his research to include a number of recently excavated cemeteries in Lorraine, where he believed that improved absolute and relative chronologies made it possible to identify the blending of Gallo-Roman and Frankish populations over the course of generations (Salin and France-Lanord 1943). This research clearly contradicted contemporary German claims that the populations in the east of France were descended primarily from Germanic ancestors (Legendre 1999). Although Salin's work helped popularize in France the importance of dating methods in the analysis of cemeterial evidence, its heavy emphasis on ethnic identity as opposed to other facets of these cemeterial sites (which was not surprising for the epoch of its composition) set the tone for subsequent French debates about how to interpret early medieval necropoleis.

Many other cemeteries found in this era were excavated but left undocumented, or were published only decades later. Such is the case of the early medieval necropolis of 367 sepulchers at Lavoye (Meuse), occupied between the late fifth and late seventh centuries, which was first discovered in 1902 and subsequently excavated by Dr. Meunier between 1905 and 1914 (Joffroy 1974, pp. 5–11). However, nearly seven decades later, René Joffroy undertook the challenging task of publishing a full site report based on Meunier's notes. Although these conditions limited what could be known about the cemetery to type and quality of data collected at the start of the century, present understanding of the chronology and organization of the cemetery has continued to be refined (Halsall 1995, pp. 118–121). The cemetery of Ennery (Moselle), which saw more than 100 of its original sepulchers destroyed in the 1930s by a local landowner, Jules Barbé, likewise waited decades for full publication. In 1941, Emile Delort conducted a three-month excavation of the remaining graves during the German occupation (Reusch 1941/1942), but only published a more complete report of the site, including a study by the anthropologist Marcel Heuertz, a decade after the conclusion of World War II (Delort 1947; Heuertz 1957; Simmer 1993).

One of the most significant archaeological developments in France during the inter-war period was the creation of territorial archaeological services aimed at preserving local archaeological sites. These organizations complemented regional federations of archaeological societies such as the Association bourguignonne des sociétés savantes (1914) and the Fédération historique du Languedoc méditerranéen et du Rousillon (1926), which sought to alleviate some of the isolation felt by individual researchers (Landes 2009). Despite the important impact of improved regional coordination of archaeological undertakings, in addition to the fruitful bibliographic efforts initiated by Robert de Lasteyrie in the late nineteenth century to catalog French archaeological publications,³ the high standard of research and publication of early medieval cemeterial sites established by the likes of Lablotier, Scheurer, and Salin remained rare since they depended almost exclusively on individual initiative.

Close to the outbreak of World War II, among the improvements in the status of archaeological undertakings within metropolitan France was the creation of the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) in 1939 under the authority of the minister of National Education and, soon afterward, the inaugural issues of the archaeological journal *Gallia* (Gran-Aymerich 1998, pp. 444–445; 455–468). Of great significance during the Vichy regime was the promulgation of the first portion of the Loi Carcopino on September 27, 1941 (Aeberhardt 1993, pp. 34–35; Reboul 2009).⁴ Although not formally promulgated in occupied France, Nazi authorities did allow the law to be applied there as well (Corcy-Debary 2003, p. 331; Fehr 2018). The measures enacted in this legislation included the establishment of a mechanism for state regulation of archaeological digs. However, these laws were never intended to bring about systematic disciplinary professionalization, and amateurs remained a very important part of French metropolitan archaeology for at least another three decades. Even so, the parts of the Loi Carcopino that were reconfirmed in 1945 after the liberation of France succeeded in creating at least theoretical safeguards for exploring archaeological sites and establishing mechanisms penalizing those who flouted its conventions.

THE CHALLENGES OF POSTWAR ARCHAEOLOGY FOR MEROVINGIAN-PERIOD CEMETERIES IN FRANCE

Over the past half century, structural changes with regard to the practice of archaeology and the identification and protection of the French patrimony have been significant. To start, unlike in the period before World War II, cemeteries no longer constitute the primary focus of early medieval archaeological research in France. As is evident from the essays in this volume, archaeologists in France and elsewhere in western Europe engage in questions related to the early medieval landscape (see Bourgeois, Chapter 28; Chavarría Arnau, Chapter 29; Petyremann, Chapter 31, this volume), the early medieval economy and trade (see Bonifay and Pieri, Chapter 37; Pion et al., Chapter 36; Tys, Chapter 34, this volume), early medieval church architecture (see Chevalier, Chapter 30, this volume), and a host of other issues. Data collected from early medieval cemeteries nonetheless continue to play an important role in fulfilling these kinds of research agendas.

In the reconstruction efforts that followed World War II, the impact on archaeological sites of the construction of the modern network of French highways and high-speed rail, the intensification of urban development, and the expansion of suburban housing that occurred after decolonization cannot be underestimated. While the *Loi Carcopino* offered some continued protection to early medieval archaeological sites, its regulations proved difficult to enforce in metropolitan France in the face of the widespread development of the postwar period. Although the Ministry of Culture became responsible for archaeology and archaeological conservation upon its creation in 1959, the lack of agreement over national standards and resources for conservation in France represented a significant obstacle given the considerable latitude of prefects in dictating conditions in their departments. In the absence of appropriate administrative infrastructure, a legal framework that afforded sufficient protections, and essential funding to safeguard ancient remains, the destruction of historically significant sites remained commonplace. Local and regional organizations were some of the sole obstacles to their obliteration, and they were not always successful in safeguarding ancient monuments from demolition or badly planned modifications. Some of the most publicized casualties of this period included damage to archaeological vestiges beneath the Place Bellecour in Lyons during the construction of a subway (1974–1975), at the ancient curia of Avignon (a parking lot until 1970), at the site of the Forum des Halles in central Paris with construction of the RER station and shopping center (1971–1972), and at the Parvis Notre-Dame (1965–1972) in Paris, where a parking lot was built at what is now the site of an archaeological crypt and museum (Garmy 1999).

Destruction of early medieval cemeteries may not have received as much press as monuments of other periods, but there is no doubt that the impact of modernization on these sites was similarly consequential when local organizations were not in place or

created for this purpose (on the importance of local intervention during the extension of the Paris metro line 13 to the station Basilique de Saint-Denis in the 1970s, see Rodrigues 2009).⁵ Nonetheless, important excavations transpired in this period despite the challenges of funding, and the determination of individual archaeologists to excavate and publish important sites meant that some early medieval necropoleis discovered by chance fared better than others. Unearthed by a farmer in 1970, for instance, the row grave cemetery of Frénouville (Calvados) in Normandy, which was in use between the late third and late seventh century and occupying a space of more than 4,000 m², was excavated over the course of eighteen months. Directed by Christian Pilet, the excavation revealed a total of 650 graves with the remains of at least 801 individuals; there is some uncertainty as to the actual numbers because many of the skeletons had deteriorated significantly in the chalky soil (Pilet 1980, pp. 1–7). Published within a decade, Pilet's study was thorough: it carefully documented individual graves and associated skeletal remains and artifacts; it established the chronology of the cemetery's employment over the course of four centuries on the basis of grave depth, orientation, and contents; and it included an osteological examination of the bone matter conducted by the physical anthropologist Luc Buchet (Buchet 1978, pp. 6–27; Pilet 1980).

Importantly, however, the weaknesses of the publication of Frénouville lay not in the documentation of the cemeterial report, the standard of which was quite good for its time, but in its interpretation, which flew in the face of findings elsewhere in western Europe and reflected the unique, and somewhat insular, circumstances of conducting an excavation in northwestern France in this period. For example, on the basis of the continued use of grave goods, Pilet alleged that the interred had only undergone superficial conversion to Christianity in the fifth century (1980, pp. 153–157), despite the fact that high-status Christians in this period, and even two centuries later, continued to employ grave-goods with little hesitation (Dierkens 1981, pp. 56–59; Effros 1996). With regard to the allegedly unique identity of Normandy, one may point to the insistence by both Pilet and Buchet, based on a combination of artifactual and skeletal data, that the composition of the population buried at Frénouville consisted exclusively of indigenous inhabitants as opposed to Frankish invaders. These conclusions were reached on the basis of the supposed continuity of skull shapes and the relative paucity of weapon burials at the cemetery (Buchet 1978; Pilet 1980). But these conclusions contradicted contemporary understanding, however problematic, that weapon burials were a sign of Germanic presence (Steuer 1968). Moreover, Buchet's conclusions that ethnic identity in the early medieval period was biologically determined contradicted the growing consensus following World War II as to the constructed nature of such affiliations (Wenskus 1961; Geary 1983; Effros 2003; see Coumert, Chapter 5, this volume). In such circumstances, one may suggest that the publication of Frénouville, like other cemeteries studied in this period, reflected the framework in which archaeology was conducted in France in the 1970s. Research was often self-edited (released in series such as the international series of British Archaeological Reports), was regional in its intellectual scope and bibliographic citations, and did not engage with discussions occurring

beyond the borders of France. The potential contribution of such a publication to larger debates about the Merovingian period was thereby significantly constrained.

The isolation faced by regional archaeologists in this period was alleviated somewhat by the foundation of the privately organized Association pour les fouilles archéologiques nationales (Afan) in 1973, which helped draw attention to the need for conservation measures for threatened archaeological sites and also created a forum for the exchange of ideas. Unfortunately, however, although the Afan received state funding for the purpose of rescue excavations, its resources were far from sufficient to achieve these goals. Moreover, the contractual nature of the work undertaken by agents of Afan discouraged sustained research at individual sites. By contrast, local associations that might have contributed to these undertakings likewise did not often have the necessary funding to engage in large-scale or long-term excavation projects. And, significantly, the archaeologists employed by the CNRS and French state universities were not at this time generally involved in the field of rescue archaeology (Garmy 1999).

In response to the public outcry over the loss of important archaeological sites in the 1960s and 1970s, the French prime minister Jacques Chirac appointed Jacques Soustelle, former governor-general of Algeria and member of the Académie française, to study the existing challenges for ancient monuments and archaeology. In April 1975, with the completion of the Soustelle report, the French state acknowledged the need not just for centralized infrastructure dedicated to archaeological conservation but also a more complete inventory of the French patrimonial heritage that included both historical monuments (protected by a law of December 31, 1913) and archaeological sites (protected from 1941) (Talon and Bellan 2009). In 1979, an important development for early medieval archaeology complementary to the Afan was the founding of the Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne (AFAM), with Michel Fleury as its first president (1979–1981), followed by Gilbert Delehaye (1981–1982), Patrick Périn (1981–2014), and Edith Peytremann and Laurent Verslype (2014–present). Although it does not conduct its own excavations, the organization's objectives are to promote exploration of the Merovingian period through annual conferences, publication of both an annual bulletin and conference proceedings, and creation of a stronger network of like-minded practitioners.⁶ From the 1980s, the resources of the AFAM have also provided a venue for, and supported the publication of, reports on a number of Merovingian-period cemeteries, some of which, like Ennery (discussed above) were long unpublished, and others that were more recently excavated, like that of La Grande Oye (Doubs) in Burgundy (Urlacher, Passard, and Manfredi-Gizard 1998), which otherwise might have had difficulty finding a press for dissemination.

Efforts within France in the late twentieth century to create stricter legal protections for metropolitan antiquities and ancient archaeological sites were also reinforced by international and European discussions that occurred in this period. A landmark undertaking for the protection of ancient remains was the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, to which France was a signatory and which went into effect in 1972.⁷ Of great significance, too, was the series of European-wide patrimonial

negotiations over the course of the 1970s and 1980s that culminated in the Malta Convention of 1992 and became law in France in 1995.⁸ The nations that were party to this gathering delineated the tenets and financing of conservation archaeology, acknowledged the importance of the diffusion of rescue archaeology as a scientific undertaking, and pledged measures to prevent the illicit circulation of archaeological artifacts (Gauthier 2009). Finally, in November 1998, the Demoule, Pêcheur, and Poignant (1999) report made increasingly clear the shortcomings of archaeological conservation in France after two and a half decades of dependence on the independent agents of the poorly funded and significantly decentralized Afan. Consequently, leading French archaeologists who were committed to stronger conservation measures pressured the French state to meet its patrimonial obligations to European law. In 2001, the result was the establishment of the Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives (Inrap) (Baruch 2009).

EXCAVATING CEMETERIES IN THE AGE OF INRAP (2001 TO THE PRESENT)

Since the rapid inception and implementation of Inrap, the organization has faced many challenges. Undergoing a series of modifications and reforms between 2001 and 2004, Inrap's administrators have made adjustments that emphasize the continued importance of collaborating with the existing Service régional de l'archéologie (SRA) in each territory. Changes in the funding structure have meant that investment in archaeological undertakings now comes largely from the private sector; businesses, just as governmental entities, must apply for permits for construction or modifications to existing land use (Pot 2009). In each region, the SRA has the authority to examine building permits and determine the necessity of performing diagnostic exploration of affected archaeological sites, a duty that can also be performed by Inrap and accredited local archaeological entities. For the purpose of excavations, private companies may also be hired. Although this system is an improvement over the era of Afan, this protocol has resulted in significant restrictions on archaeologists' ability to respond quickly and effectively to conservation challenges and research questions when they are not linked directly to discrete projects. With the increased regionalization of its functions, which has made departmental prefects more powerful in this process, and the opposite pull of improved and formalized collaboration between the CNRS and university-based laboratories, known as Unités mixtes de recherche (UMR), Inrap's long-term effectiveness and viability remain unclear at this time (Demoule 2009).

Overall, the foundation of Inrap has had a positive effect by shifting the focus of state-sponsored archaeological activities from "spectacular sites" to a more global and territorial approach to documenting archaeological remains. At the same time, however, Inrap has become an organization driven largely by the locations in which construction is projected and the economy and speed with which such efforts can be undertaken. Thus,

while the reform of archaeological conservation has resulted in an overall increase in the number of sites, including cemeteries, that have been excavated due to imminent development, too many of those that have been addressed have not been studied in their entirety. Indeed, many of these reports remain unpublished, housed in the archives of the Directions régionales des affaires culturelles (DRAC) or Inrap itself (Demoule 2009), though some are now accessible on Dolia (<https://dolia.inrap.fr>).

Because there have been fewer resources available (sometimes as little as 7 percent of the total project time spent on an excavation) for the publication of scientific research, the imbalance has led to a surfeit of unpublished archaeological reports and dissertations. In addition, the utilitarian focus of Inrap has left many archaeologists with little time to undertake syntheses of regional or comparative data with respect to specific research questions (see Yvinec and Barme, Chapter 33, this volume). In addition, budgetary constraints have limited the kinds of technology and laboratory techniques available to French archaeologists (for recent exceptions, see Pion et al., Chapter 36, this volume). With greater emphasis on mechanical excavation and less investment in costly diagnostic tools like isotopic analysis (see Czermak, Chapter 7, this volume) and DNA sequencing that are more commonly used in the United Kingdom, Germany, and elsewhere on the continent (Effros 2000; Effros 2017, pp. 197–199), the kinds of data collected at French archaeological sites have often not seen the same pace of scientific innovation in the past fifteen years that have occurred outside of France (Demoule 2009).

How, specifically, have these developments affected early medieval cemeterial excavations? It is still too early to reach a final judgment on the impact of Inrap, since, as has been made clear in this chapter, full archaeological excavations of necropoleis have traditionally had a long gestational period. In recent years, exploration of Merovingian-period cemeteries continues to bear fruit. These excavations have not only produced data specific to particular sites but have supported archaeologists' and historians' ability to address larger research questions (see Patrello, Chapter 39; Perez, Chapter 9; Theuws, Chapter 38, this volume). This is true even when the sites addressed have been modest in size or comprise incomplete accumulations of graves rather than the large necropoleis that saw the light of day in earlier decades. It thus seems safe to say that individual Merovingian-era necropoleis will continue to be published in their entirety on an occasional basis, such as Florence Carré's publication on the cemetery of Louviers (Eure) (2008); that of Jean-Pierre Urlacher, Françoise Passard-Urlacher, and Sophie Gizard on the cemetery of Saint-Vite (Doubs) (2008); and René Legoux's ambitious two-volume report on the mid-fifth to late seventh-century cemetery of Bulles (Oise) (2011). However, these projects often owe more to the temerity and persistence of their authors in publishing the fruit of decades of research rather than to infrastructural investment from the state. There is no doubt that the data presented in such publications continues to improve, with larger numbers of color photographs, drawings, maps, and charts; these publications provide a wealth of information about artifactual typologies, osteological signs of disease among the deceased, and relative and absolute chronologies of individual cemeteries. In this sense, they continue to yield critical data about early

medieval life and death in Gaul. Nonetheless, given the fact that the number of burial sites yet to be excavated is necessarily finite and that there appears to be no end in sight to current archaeological organizational and financial constraints, early medieval cemeteries are unlikely any time in the foreseeable future to occupy again their once privileged place in early medieval archaeological exploration in France.

NOTES

1. In Germany from the 1870s, French craniological research (and research on the Franks more generally) received significant attention in early medieval research (Effros 2012b, pp. 351–366).
2. Ministère de l'Instruction publique et des Beaux-Arts, Commission de la Topographie des Gaules, Circulaire de Mai 1871. Archives Nationales F¹⁷13308.
3. Seventeen volumes of the *Bibliographie générale des travaux historiques et archéologiques par les sociétés savantes de la France des origines à 1940* were published between 1888 and 1961.
4. For the complete text of the 1941 Loi Carcopino, see <http://www.archeodroit.net/Textes/Terrain/loi1941.html> (consulted on December 21, 2016).
5. For the purpose of full disclosure, this author was a volunteer in May 1988 at the early medieval excavations organized by the Unité d'archéologie de la ville de Saint-Denis.
6. For the statutes of the AFAM, see <http://www.afamassociation.fr/?q=pages/statuts-et-objectifs> (consulted on December 23, 2016).
7. For more on the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, see: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/1970-convention> (consulted December 23, 2016).
8. For the full text of the Malta treaty, see <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/143> (consulted December 23, 2016).

WORKS CITED

Modern Sources

- Aeberhardt, A. (1993). "Trois figures d'archéologues du centre-ouest de la France, au XIX^e siècle." In *Les archéologues et l'archéologie. Colloque de Bourg-en-Bresse (Archives). 25, 26 et 27 septembre 1992* (pp. 30–37). Université de Tours, Caesarodunum 27. Tours: Centre de recherches A. Piganiol.
- Barral I., Altet, X. (1991). "Les étapes de la recherche au XIX^e siècle et les personnalités." In *Naissance des arts chrétiens: Atlas des monuments paléochrétiens de la France* (pp. 348–367). Paris: Imprimerie nationale.
- Barrière-Flavy, C. (1901). *Les arts industriels des peuples barbares de la Gaule du V^e au VIII^e siècle* 1. Toulouse: Édouard Privat.
- Baruch, M. O. (2009). "Fabrique de l'archéologie ou fabrique de rapports sur l'archéologie? Du rapport Soustelle au rapport Demoule-Pêcheur-Poignant." In J.-P. Demoule and C. Landes (eds.), *La fabrique de l'archéologie en France* (pp. 239–246). Paris: La Découverte.
- Baudot, H. (1857–1860). "Mémoire sur les sépultures des barbares de l'époque mérovingienne découvertes en Bourgogne et particulièrement à Charnay." *Mémoires de la Commission des antiquités du département de la Côte-d'Or* série 2.5: 127–204.

- Beauchet-Filleau, M. (1864). "Notice sur des sépultures antiques et mérovingiennes." *Mémoires de la Société des antiquaires de l'Ouest* 29: 255–274.
- Boulanger, C.-T. (1902–1905). *Le mobilier funéraire gallo-romain et franc en Picardie et en Artois*. Paris: Charles Foulard Libraire.
- Buchet, L. (1978). "La nécropole gallo-romaine et mérovingienne de Frénouville (Calvados): Étude anthropologique." *Archéologie Médiévale* 8: 5–53.
- Carré, F., Jimenez, F., et al. (2008). *Louviers (Eure) au haut Moyen Âge: Découvertes anciennes et fouilles récentes du cimetière de la rue du Mûrier*. Saint-Germain-en-Laye: Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne.
- Chaline, J.-P. (1998). *Sociabilité et érudition: les sociétés savantes en France*. Paris: Éditions du Comité des travaux historiques.
- Choay, F. (2001). *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, trans. L. M. O'Connell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Colney, M. (2000). "Une fouille exemplaire au début du XX^e siècle: la nécropole mérovingienne de Bourogne." *Bulletin de la Société belfortaine d'émulation* 91: 85–122.
- Corcy-Debray, S. (2003). "Jérôme Carcopino et le patrimoine: une protection ambiguë." In P. Poirrier and L. Vadelorge (eds.), *Pour une histoire des politiques du patrimoine* (pp. 321–334). Paris: Comité d'histoire du Ministère de la culture.
- Déchelette, J. (1908). *Manuel d'archéologie préhistorique, celtique et gallo-romaine* 1. Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard et Fils.
- Delamain, P. (1892). *Le cimetière d'Herpes*. Angoulême: Chez L. Coquemard.
- De Loë, A. (1890). *L'archéologie préhistorique gauloise, gallo-romaine et franque à l'Exposition universelle de Paris*. Brussels: Imprimerie de V^e Julien Baertsoen.
- Delort, E. (1947). "Le cimetière franc d'Ennery." *Gallia* 5: 351–403.
- Demoule, J.-P. (2009). "Perspectives pour l'archéologie en France." In J.-P. Demoule and C. Landes (eds.), *La fabrique de l'archéologie en France* (pp. 281–298). Paris: La Découverte.
- Demoule, J.-P., Pêcheur, B., and Poignant, B. (1999). *L'organisation de l'archéologie préventive en France*. Paris: Documentation française.
- De Pauw, L.-F., and Hublard, É. (1893–1894). "Tablettes du fouilleur de cimetières francs." *Bulletin de la Société d'anthropologie de Bruxelles* 12: 87–88.
- Díaz-Andreu, M. (2007). *A World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology: Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Past*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dierkens, A. (1981). "Cimetières mérovingiens et histoire du haut moyen âge. Chronologie-société-religion." In *Acta Historica Bruxellensia IV: Histoire et méthode* (pp. 15–70). Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles.
- Dietler, M. (1994). "'Our Ancestors the Gauls': Archaeology, Ethnic Nationalism, and the Manipulation of Celtic Identity in Modern Europe." *American Anthropologist* new series 96(3): 584–605.
- Dugas de Beaulieu, J.-L. (1843). "De diverses sépultures antiques trouvées en Lorraine." In *Archéologie de la Lorraine* 2 (pp. 72–94). Paris: Librairie le Normant.
- Dusan, B. (1867). "Boucles mérovingiennes (visigothiques?) trouvées à Gibel (Haute-Garonne)." *Revue archéologique du Midi de la France* 2: 46–48.
- Effros, B. (1996). "Symbolic Expressions of Sanctity: Gertrude of Nivelles in the Context of Merovingian Mortuary Custom." *Viator* 27: 1–10.
- Effros, B. (2000). "Skeletal Sex and Gender in Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology." *Antiquity* 74: 632–639.
- Effros, B. (2003). *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Effros, B. (2010). "Anthropology and Ancestry in Nineteenth-Century France: Craniometric Profiles of Merovingian-Period Populations." In W. Pohl and M. Mehofer (eds.), *Archäologie der Identität* (pp. 233–244). Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 17. Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Effros, B. (2012a). "Casimir Barrière-Flavy and the (Re)Discovery of Visigoths in Southwestern France." In S. Patzold, A. Rathmann-Lutz, and V. Scior (eds.), *Geschichtsvorstellungen. Bilder, Texte und Begriffe aus dem Mittelalter. Festschrift für Hans-Werner Goetz* (pp. 559–576). Cologne: Böhlau.
- Effros, B. (2012b). "'Elle pensait comme un homme et sentait comme une femme': Hortense Lacroix Cornu (1809–1875) and the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye." *Journal of the History of Collections* 24: 25–43.
- Effros, B. (2012c). *Uncovering the Germanic Past: Merovingian Archaeology in France, 1830–1912*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Effros, B. (2017). "The Enduring Attraction of the Pirenne Thesis," *Speculum* 92.1: 184–208.
- Effros, B. (2018a). *Incidental Archaeologists: French Officers and the Rediscovery of Roman North Africa*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Effros, B. (2018b). "Indigenous Voices at the Margins: Nuancing the History of French Colonial Archaeology in Nineteenth-Century Algeria." In Bonnie Effros and Guolong Lai (eds.), *Unmasking Ideology in Imperial and Colonial Archaeology: Vocabulary, Symbols, and Legacy* (pp. 201–225). Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press.
- Fehr, H. (2010). *Germanen und Romanen im Merowingerreich. Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie zwischen Wissenschaft und Zeitgeschehen*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Fehr, H. (2018). "German Archaeology in Occupied Eastern Europe during World War II: A Case of Colonial Archaeology?" In B. Effros and G. Lai (eds.), *Unmasking Ideology in Imperial and Colonial Archaeology: Vocabulary, Symbols, and Legacy* (pp. 29–58). Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press.
- Flavigny, L. (1992). "L'abbé Cochet, un champion de l'archéologie nationale, 1812–1875." In A.-F. Laurens and K. Pomian (eds.), *L'antiquomanie: la collection d'antiquités aux 18^e et 19^e siècles* (pp. 241–249). Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales.
- Garmy, P. (1999). "France." *Report on the Situation of Urban Archaeology in Europe* (pp. 91–102). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Gauthier, M. (2009). "L'élaboration de la convention de Malte." In J.-P. Demoule and C. Landes (eds.), *La fabrique de l'archéologie en France* (pp. 227–238). Paris: La Découverte.
- Geary, P. J. (1983). "Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages." *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 113: 15–26.
- Geary, P. J. (2002). *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gerson, S. (2003). *The Pride of Place: Local Memories and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century France*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Gosse, H.-J. (1859). "Suite à la notice sur d'anciens cimetières trouvés soit en Savoie, soit dans le canton de Genève et principalement sur celui de la Balme près la Roche, en Faucigny." *Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Genève* 11: 81–100.
- Goury, G. (1908). *Essai sur l'époque barbare dans la Marne*. Les étapes de l'humanité 1.3. Nancy: Imprimerie J. Coubé.
- Graceffa, A. (2009). *Les historiens et la question franque. Le peuplement franc et les Mérovingiens dans l'historiographie française et allemande des XIX^e et XX^e siècles*. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Gran-Aymerich, È. (1998). *Naissance de l'archéologie moderne, 1798–1945*. Paris: CNRS Editions.