SACRAL KINGSHIP IN EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE: THE GERMANIC TRADITION

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University of New Hampshire, Durham

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SACRAL KINGSHIP IN EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE:
THE GERMANIC TRADITION

BY

DANIEL G. RUSSO
B.A., Rhode Island College, 1972

A THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
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in
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Thesis Director, William R. Jones
Professor of History

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and Director of Graduate Study in History

Oct 17, 1976
Date
I wish to thank Adelaide Lockhart, Director of Library Services, Dartmouth College (Baker Library) and Madeline Gross, Assistant Circulation Librarian, Brown University (Rockefeller Library) for permission to use their respective library holdings. Also, the many courtesies extended by our Interlibrary Loan staff have been greatly appreciated.
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### Abbreviations

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<td>ARW</td>
<td>Archiv für Religionswissenschaft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td>Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRM</td>
<td>Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift.</td>
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<td>HZ</td>
<td>Historische Zeitschrift.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGH</td>
<td>Monumenta Germaniae Historica, ed. G. Pertz et al. Hannover, 1826-.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- AA</td>
<td>Auctores Antiquissimi</td>
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<td>- EE</td>
<td>Epistolae</td>
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<td>- LL</td>
<td>Leges</td>
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<td>- SS</td>
<td>Scriptores</td>
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<td>- SS Rer. Langob.</td>
<td>Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum</td>
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<td>- SS RM</td>
<td>Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</td>
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<tr>
<td>PBB</td>
<td>Paul und Braunes Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur.</td>
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Linguistic Abbreviations

Celt. = Celtic (*)
Frank. = Frankish
Gmc. = Germanic (*)
Goth. = Gothic
IE. = Indo-European (*)
Lat. = Latin
OE. = Old English
OHG. = Old High German
OIr. = Old Irish
ON. = Old Norse
OS. = Old Saxon
Skt. = Sanskrit

* = reconstructed form

Note: OE. $\theta$ and $\bar{d}$ have been transliterated "th" and "dh," respectively.
ABSTRACT

SACRAL KINGSHIP IN EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE:
THE GERMANIC TRADITION

by

Daniel G. Russo

This thesis explores the religious or sacral dimension of pagan Germanic kingship. Although historians concede that medieval monarchy was a product not only of Romano-Christian but also ancient Germanic precedents, specific Germanic sacral kingship research has been quite limited in this country. European scholars have shown more concern for the subject, but their efforts have on the whole been inconsistent and often diffuse. Many of these research problems can be resolved by recognizing that sacral kingship is fundamentally a religious-historical matter. The present work therefore examines Germanic sacral kingship in the primary context of early Germanic religious tradition.

Attention is directed principally to expressions of royal sacrality among the continental Germanic peoples of early medieval Europe. Several key questions are posed. In the first instance, what was the position of kings within early Germanic social structure? How did Germanic royal
authority relate to the religious sphere, and to what extent were religious beliefs and practices involved in Germanic kingdom-founding? The pertinent historical sources are examined chronologically from the Late Iron Age through the early middle ages. It is seen that non-literary evidence, e.g., archeology, iconography, and onomastics, can valuably supplement and at times clarify the written record.

To provide a convenient frame of reference, a detailed review and critique is first made of sacral kingship historiography over the past century. Specialized research of Germanic royal sacrality is found to have emerged from general studies in such fields as social anthropology and comparative religion. Initial Germanic inquiries had an ideological orientation and gave considerable weight to mythology, heroic literature, and popular tradition. Subsequent attempts to consider ritual expressions of Germanic royal sacrality led directly to specific studies of sacral kingship among individual Germanic peoples. Recent research has emphasized methodology and refinement of previous ideological questions. However, a dispute between advocates of a strictly historical and a comparative mythological approach has hindered progress in Germanic sacral kingship studies and points to the need for integrated religious-historical analysis.

An examination of the historical evidence discloses that religious beliefs and practices were most actively involved in Germanic statecraft from the earliest times.
Pre-Migration Germanic kings possessed significant religious and judicial authority but little coercive power. This religious dimension of Germanic tribal kingship appears essentially bounty-bringing in nature and distinct from the martial, victory-bringing sacrality of temporary warlords. Yet during the Migrations (and to some extent even earlier) non-royal warlords established new kingdoms by leading their retinues to conquest and settlement. This federate, retinue-based kingship (Heerkönigtum) became very widespread in the early middle ages. It united both the originally distinct functions and corresponding religious dimensions of tribal king and warlord. This more complex royal sacrality is reflected in the symbolic iconography of early medieval regalia as well as a host of surviving royal rituals and dynastic traditions.

Two principal ideological tenets of continental Germanic sacral kingship belief are identified and examined. The concept of royal divine descent found expression in many royal genealogies and clan customs. Such god-sprung kings shared some of their divine ancestor's attributes without being fully equated with the deity. The Germanic king was also regarded as a mediator between god and man and could represent his divine forebear at periodic tribal ceremony. Continental Germanic kings were thus neither embodiments of natural forces nor priests or incarnate gods. They nonetheless had a semi-godlike nature by virtue of a sacrality transmitted to them from a Divine source.
INTRODUCTION: CONCEPT AND METHODS

For many years, the study of medieval kingship remained firmly in the hands of political and constitutional historians. Nineteenth-century scholarship's fervent interest in the achievements of outstanding rulers left a strong imprint on subsequent research; indeed, some truly herculean efforts were made in this political and biographical sphere.¹ Although historians have not totally lost the taste for political biography and Machtpolitik, a dramatic reorientation in medieval institutional research has recently taken place which has most significantly affected medieval kingship study. In an effort to probe beneath the surface levels of traditional political history, many historians have adopted methods and research-findings of disciplines which their predecessors had generally scorned, e.g., comparative religion, anthropology, linguistics, and archeology. This approach has disclosed valuable new dimensions in the study of medieval kingship, especially for those specialized periods such as the early middle ages where documentation is very limited.²


²J. Le Goff, "Is Politics Still the Backbone of History?" Daedalus, C (1971), 1-19 esp. 4-10; M. Altschul, "Kingship, Government, and Politics in the Middle Ages: Some Recent
This study attempts to apply these methods to the religious or sacral component of early medieval kingship. Within the chronological borders of this period, i.e., the fifth through eighth centuries AD, primary attention will be directed to expressions of sacral kingship among the Germanic peoples of continental Western Europe. Though historians are generally content with the view that medieval monarchy was a product of both ancient Germanic and Romano-Christian models, the particular Germanic component in this fusion has by no means been thoroughly or consistently investigated, especially in this country. Such an imbalance has largely resulted from a failure to fully recognize the fundamental religious-historical nature of the subject. A more valuable approach, it may be suggested, would be to examine the ideological and structural-functional features of Germanic kingship within the primary context of early Germanic religion.  


Indeed, the modern discipline of the History of Religions has long advocated such integrated theological and structural studies. Furthermore, there should be no hesitation in


employing the full range of non-literary as well as literary sources in order to approach the beliefs and practices of pagan Germanic sacral kingship.

The topic of sacral kingship constitutes an enormous field of research. In fact, it will be seen that detailed historical enquiry into the religious complexion of early medieval kingship was first prompted by more general studies conducted in the above-mentioned corollary disciplines. By the first half of this century, a number of important examinations had been made of divine or sacral kingship within specific areas of the Western historical tradition, viz., the ancient Near and Middle East, the Greco-Roman world, and among the early Celts. At the same time, a group of religious historians had reached the conclusion that beliefs and ritual practices associated with sacral kingship lay at the very heart of an ancient Near Eastern culture-pattern. This "Myth and Ritual" or "Patternist" school soon developed several distinct methodological branches, but on the whole it emphasized the similarities in Near Eastern cyclical fertility mythologies and correspondences in the cultic role of these ancient kings as representatives of bounty-bringing studies; de Vries, "The Present State of Studies on Germanic Religion," Diogenes, XVIII (1957), 91-92; P. Buchholz, "Perspectives for Historical Research in Germanic Religion," History of Religions, VIII, No. 2 (November 1968), 111-12, 136-38.

See Appendix A for a list of significant works.
deities. The argument for a single sacral kingship ideology and ritual within a homogeneous Near Eastern culture-pattern may well have been over-stated, yet this cult-historical interpretation properly called attention to the intimate and dynamic relationship that has existed between a people's cosmology and its pattern of royal ritual. Moreover, this theory has recently prompted exciting research in several related fields of sacral kingship studies. For example, the noted Romanian-American religious historian Mircea Eliade constructed an extremely perceptive cosmologic theory largely on the ground of the Patternist position. In turn, the


7Eliade and his followers have brilliantly interpreted the myth, ritual and symbols of ancient and primitive man as expressions of an archaic ontology whereby acts and objects acquired real meaning only through participation in a
integrative, cosmogonic aspect of sacral kingship has directly involved researchers of human psychic development and the "collective unconscious." Furthermore, sacral kingship


continues to be studied by many religious historians as a basal form or type (phenomenon) of religious expression.9

A continuing scholarly concern with sacral kingship is well attested by the major conferences held on the subject over the last two decades. Thus, the eighth congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, convening in Rome (1955), adopted for its central theme "The King-God and the Sacral Character of Kingship."10 While this congress's published volume contains sacral kingship studies of the utmost value on a truly global basis, there is a notable lacuna in the general area of medieval Europe, not to mention the early middle ages. Some balance was restored by Theodore Mayer's regional symposium devoted to the subject of kingship practices and royal ideology within a specific medieval cultural context.11 Indeed, important


colloquia on the religious aspects of political authority have recently been held in several fields of the social sciences. Unfortunately, the under-representation of medieval sacral kingship studies evidenced in the Rome Congress accurately reflects the state of recent historical research. This is the more regrettable, since there has been considerable progress in the more traditional areas of this field.

Historians have not, however, completely neglected the religious complexion of medieval kingship. For example, medievalists are familiar with the theocratic conception of Christian kingship, wherein monarchs became God's personal representatives by virtue of Divine Grace bestowed in consecration rites. Legal historians, meanwhile, have long been acquainted with this subject through the development of

(Constance: J. Thorbecke, 1956); and see H. Fehr's review: Historische Zeitschrift, CLXXXIV (1957), 383-86.


13See Appendix B for a list of significant works.

Divine-Right theory in the West. Recent studies of medieval saint-kings and Church-sponsored concepts of royal sanctity


have also touched the issue of sacral kingship, as have many valuable investigations of Byzantine political theology and its elaborate ceremonial. 17

All of these well-researched topics, however, must remain outside the scope of this study. In the first instance, their fully developed ideology either did not appear until far beyond the early medieval period, or else did not have direct application in Western Europe. More fundamentally, one must seriously question whether these products of Christian thought are at all valid conceptual models with which to approach pagan Germanic concepts of royal sacrality. Above all, one must not anachronistically impose upon early Germanic culture the singular peculiarities of Judaeo-Christian thought, viz., its firm distinction between the human and divine spheres, and its exclusive conception of Divinity. For the early Germans, as other polytheistic peoples of ancient and early medieval Europe, the Divine was conceived as immanent, not transcendent in Nature and society; hence, there could be no bifurcation between "politics" and "religion." All discussions of early

Germanic and other non-Christian forms of kingship must bear these fundamental distinctions firmly in mind.\(^{18}\)

As noted earlier, this study has intentionally been limited to expressions of sacral kingship among continental Germanic peoples. This means that the North Germanic or Scandinavian culture-zone will be excluded from direct consideration. Admittedly, Scandinavian literary and legal sources are more abundant than Continental evidence, yet the late provenance of this material and its possible euhemerizations seriously undermines its validity as primary religious-historical documentation for early Germanic sacral kingship.\(^{19}\)

Again, Celtic kingship certainly had possessed a significant religious dimension and exerted profound influences on at


least the structural pattern of early Germanic kingship. However, few would deny that by the early middle ages, Celtic culture and institutions played only a peripheral role in Western Europe.

Finally, some remarks may be in order concerning the choice and use of the term "sacral" in this study. On the one hand, this is simply the most frequently encountered term in current usage, having generally replaced expressions such as "divine" and "sacred." Moreover, by denoting in a strict sense inherent divinity, "sacral" appears especially valuable for institutional study of a milieu which drew no sharp distinctions between secular and religious realms. At the same time, this terminology still permits a greater range of possibilities for the religious component of kingship than some of the earlier expressions. Perhaps by its relatively

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21 The term was adopted from British social anthropologists of the late nineteenth century; German sakral is a still more recent borrowing from the English: Janet Nelson, "Royal Saints," pp. 41-42. See also The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, On Historical Principles, 3rd rev. ed. (1973), s.v. "sacral" and "sacred."

22 H. W. Wolfram, "Methodische Fragen zur Kritik am 'sakralen Königstum' germanischer Stämme," in Festschrift für
recent appearance in English scholarship, the term "sacral" also has the advantage of being a less emotionally charged word, and hence is well-suited for certain branches of Germanic sacral kingship study where a more tentative approach seems to be required. 23

After these preliminary comments, previous directions of sacral kingship research should be examined in some detail, with a narrowing focus placed upon the scholarship of early Germanic royal sacrality. Attention may then be given to the institutional development of kingship in Germanic society, and to the relationship between early Germanic religion and statecraft. In conclusion, Germanic sacral kingship ideology can itself be further clarified through description and classification of its major forms of expression.


CHAPTER I:

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF SACRAL KINGSHIP: 1890-1970

Sir James G. Frazer (1854-1941) occupies a most prominent place in the modern historiography of sacral kingship. His renowned work The Golden Bough (1890)\(^1\) combined the literary talents of a trained classicist with the global perspective of a pioneer social anthropologist. Indeed, it may quite fairly be said that this British scholar introduced the subject of sacral kingship to an entire generation.\(^2\) Frazer contested the prevailing view that kings had first stepped forth in history as simple warriors. On the contrary, he maintained, early kingship was fundamentally connected with the special beliefs and practice of tribal religion:

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What is essential to the understanding of the character of kings in early society is some acquaintance with the principles of primitive magic, and some notion of the extraordinary hold which that ancient system of superstition has had on the human mind in all ages and in all countries. For whatever else he may have been, the old king seems commonly to have been a magician.³

Frazer believed that magical practices stemmed from a specific intellectual attitude characterized by the conviction that Man can directly influence the course of Nature. Moreover, socio-political institutions in general had developed along a path which corresponded to distinctive stages of human psychic development. In Frazer's view, magic had preceded religion; the rule of sorcerors and magicians had been supplanted by that of kings. This sequential scheme is of central importance in Frazer's work and must, consequently, be given close attention.

Frazer contended that early man, upon confronting his environment, immediately formulated general rules and procedures to manipulate the forces of nature. Everyone was thus initially his own magician, exercising such generalized principles as "homeopathy" (like produces like) and "contagion" (objects once in contact remain so despite separation)⁴. But when a regular food supply and hence the communal well-being was considered to depend on continued

⁴Ibid., pp. 52-54, 237-43.
appeals to the Divine, a special class of public magicians appeared. These functionaries, set apart from the rest of society to perform the magical rites now considered essential for the common good, soon found themselves in a unique position to amass great personal wealth and authority. Consequently, it was precisely the wisest and most determined individuals who first moved into this magical, elite group. The ablest magician, having worked his way skillfully through the ranks of the new class, emerged as supreme tribal leader - the chief or king. In this fashion, an overwhelming belief in the efficacy of magic, combined with a social division of labor, had led directly from oligarchic to monarchic rule.

Thus Frazer argued that the first unitary rulers in human history were magician-kings who united in their persons temporal authority and magical powers to ensure their community's welfare. Indeed, in an age when distinctions between the human and divine spheres were normally blurred, this sweeping concentration of authority often enabled magicians to successfully pose as incarnate gods. These individuals' supernatural power was regarded as highly unstable, and hence they were subject to sometimes elaborate restrictions (tabus) and prescriptions. On the other hand,

5 Ibid., pp. 214-19, 420-21; idem., Magical Origin, pp. 149-52.

such sacral rulers could also become sacrificial victims for their community. Yet when the "Age of Magic" was succeeded by the "Age of Religion," Frazer concluded, the sacrificial Divine King became the Priest King, interceeding between his people and the gods by offering prayer and performing cultic sacrifice.

Frazer adopted a very bold comparative method to express his theory of sacral kingship, drawing evidence from ancient European literary sources as well as current ethnological reports. His main classical sources were the priesthood of Diana at Nemi in the archaic Roman religion, and the priestly kingship of ancient Hellenas. Frazer noted that the chief priest of Nemi held a titular kingship ("King of the Wood," Rex Nemorensis) well into historical Roman times. Moreover, by ancient custom this priest-king had attained office only upon killing his predecessor. Observing that tradition commonly associated the Rex Nemorensis with the god Virbius, Diana's consort, Frazer concluded that the historical priest-kings of Nemi had in fact cultically impersonated their mythical predecessor Virbius. Similarly, he regarded the early kings of Rome from Romulus to Numa as sacral kings reigning as incarnate representatives of Jupiter, just as the Rex Sacrorum and Flamen Dialis were to do during the Republic.

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8 Frazer, Golden Bough, I;1, pp. 371-72.
9 Ibid., pp. 1-24.
Frazer also pointed out that the dual kings of Sparta who, as priests of Zeus offered all state sacrifices, were considered to be constantly attended by dioscuric divinities, the Tyndarids.¹⁰

Frazer maintained that control over crop fertility was a major manifestation of the early king's magical power, and cited representative expressions among the Homeric Greeks, ancient Celts, and early Germans. Indeed, the concentration of fructifying powers in the royal person, he asserted, was a trait "shared by the ancestors of all Aryan races from India to Ireland."¹¹ The persistent popular belief in the king's healing touch has been a particularly dramatic expression of this supernatural power; numerous French and English rulers, including Clovis, St. Louis, Edward the Confessor, and Anne, are recorded as having practiced this rite. However, Frazer suggested that the healing touch be regarded as an hereditary power belonging not only to later Christian kings (as his contemporaries generally believed), but also to the more remote Germanic ancestors of Anglo-Saxon and Merovingian rulers.¹²


¹¹Frazer, Golden Bough, I;1, p. 366.

¹²Ibid., pp. 368-71.
But it was the ritual slaying of the royal victim which constituted Frazer's main case for the magical nature of early kings. The old-age and impending death of their incarnate Divine King threatened the whole community with permanent loss of the royal bounty-bringing power. Thus, in order to ensure continued prosperity, the king was put to death at the first notice of physical decline and succeeded by a more robust individual, usually a kinsman. Later, the king was granted a fixed term of office, at the end of which a substitute was chosen and slain at ceremonies involving ritual contests or single combat. As evidence of this practice, Frazer cited the "King's Flight" (Regifugium) ceremony of Imperial Rome, the fixed term and mock slaying of the Saturnalia King, the apparent ritual demise of early Roman kings, as well as the killing of the Rex Nemorensis. Moreover, he suggested that historical king-slayings underlie many aspects of traditional European folk-ceremony, and called special attention to the ritual mutilations performed upon the May King of medieval festivals. Indeed, the variety of these rites suggested to him that the Divine King could have embodied or represented not only general fructifying power, but specific vegetative spirits and deities as well.13

13 Frazer, Golden Bough, I;2, pp. 1-6, 78-96; IV, pp. 204-20, 251-55; idem., Golden Bough, Vol. IX: The Scapegoat, pp. 406-11; idem., Magical Origin, pp. 160-70. Another example may be the myth of Balder's death in North Germanic
Frazer's work has been soundly criticized on a number of grounds. In the first instance, his basic conceptual model, i.e., the relationship of magic and religion, was attacked even during his lifetime as a highly intellectualized, indeed, blatantly ethnocentric construction. It is true that the supposed progress from magic, through religion, to science dubiously emphasizes the role of deliberate reasoning in primitive religious category-formation and tends to disregard individual religious responses within a given community. Much of these difficulties are in fact attributable to the impact of Evolutionary thought, with its thirst for origins.


and systematic classifications, upon nineteenth-century scholarship, in this case the British school of social anthropologists. Indeed, The Golden Bough's broad, comparative study of religious phenomena within an evolutionary conceptual model does create the deceptive aura of ultimate, unshakable truth.

Frazerian sacral kingship has received a large measure of this general critical attack. There is thus some justice in the claim that his examples, rather than being placed in their proper socio-political contexts, were directly molded into a general theory of linear social development. To assert that kings necessarily were direct descendants of magicians and that kingship must necessarily have arisen through magical practices were clearly unwarranted and misleading generalizations. Medieval monarchs need not be the lineal descendants of magician-sorcerors, nor were king-slayings always tied primarily to vegetative cycles and

fertility deities. In fairness, however, Frazer did not proclaim his evolution of the sacral kingship as a universal law; indeed, he issued repeated warnings on the subject. This must be considered all the more curious, since his prolonged emphasis on the particular magical origin of kingship only invited such misattributions. Moreover, it should be observed that the Frazerian theory leaves little room for varying degrees of royal sacrality and hence different types of sacral kings, e.g., divinely descended rulers


17 "Therefore . . . in putting forward the practice of magic as an explanation of the rise of monarchy in some communities, I am far from thinking or suggesting that it can explain the rise of it in all . . ." Frazer, Golden Bough, I:1, p. 334; idem., Magical Origin, pp. 35-37. Frazer did produce one special study of sacrificial kingship among an early medieval people of South Russia: "The Killing of the Khazar Kings," Folklore, XXVIII (1917), 382-407. For an example of the rigidly evolutionistic view of kingship that had held sway over British anthropologists, see G. L. Gomme's article: "Some Considerations on the Origin of Monarchical Government," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Vol. 5 (1877), pp. 1-27.
or cultic representatives. Yet his discussion of royal divinization and sacrificial kingship, though overgeneralized, is certainly a useful model for one specific form of sacral kingship. In a wider sense, Frazer's work has lasting value for having so eloquently called attention to the fundamental religious complexion of kingship in early societies.

Research into the subject of sacral kingship was therefore boldly launched with The Golden Bough. However, it must be pointed out that Frazer's main conceptual premises and much of his historical evidence were derived directly from German scholarship. Frazer was particularly indebted to two fields of nineteenth-century research: (1) the school of "Lower Mythology," which sought the nature of Germanic religiosity in popular beliefs and customs and (2) "Germanic Antiquities," the reconstruction of early Germanic culture from material, linguistic, and legal survivals.

German scholars, infused with the spirit of Romantic Nationalism, had fervently collected the folklore and popular traditions of their native land. While one group of researchers regarded these folktales as secular heirs of the pagan myths and hence invaluable sources to reconstruct the ancient Germanic pantheon, another school contended that this same evidence represented a lower-level of belief quite

---

independent of the myths which, indeed, were themselves products of a more refined and recent intelligentsia. 19  
Proponents of this "Lower Mythology" thus maintained in effect that the elves, trolls, and assorted amorphous spirits abounding in the folktales existed from ancient times as the religion of the Volk over which an anthropomorphic pantheon had later been erected. Advances in comparative ethnology strengthened their argument by finding among primitive peoples a host of dominant yet impersonal spirits or forces such as mana. This view had several important implications. The most immediate was a general devaluation and reduction of the Germanic High-Gods in the prehistoric period. Furthermore, the later Germanic pantheon was then seen to have arisen from cross-cultural contacts between the Near East and the North. 20


The most influential spokesman of Lower Mythology during the second half of the nineteenth century was certainly Wilhelm Mannhardt (1831-1880). The extensive research in contemporary agrarian beliefs and practices conducted by this diligent scholar provided the basic theoretical framework and evidential foundation for *The Golden Bough*.\(^1\) Harvest customs were the particular concern of his outstanding major work, *Wald-und Feldkulte* (1875-1877).\(^2\) Mannhardt discovered the widespread popular belief that crops harbored distinct spirits that could be "captured" annually at harvest-time by the performance of certain specific rites. Moreover, he found that these collective fertility spirits were

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represented in ritual as a single vegetation god, much as Mediterranean fertility rites had been focused around Cybele/Demeter. This personification of fertility spirits, Mannhardt concluded, must have arisen from a fundamental association of human and vegetative cycles.23 Indeed, each transitional period in the Fertility Deity's "life" (e.g., birth, death/burial) was signaled by a concomittant seasonal rite. In Southern areas, this central figure was generally represented by Attis, and in the North by a king-figure. Rather than attempting to explain these similarities with diffusionist generalizations, Mannhardt limited his inquiry to a careful typological analysis of specific European ceremonies. He pointed out that the various royal figures (May King, Wild Man, Old Man) in many seasonal festivals, e.g., Whitsuntide in Bohemia, Laetare in Lausitz, normally suffer ritual death by mock decapitation, drowning or hanging, followed by a joyous "rebirth."24

Frazer took Mannhardt's May King one step further. Whereas the German scholar had interpreted this royal figure as a primeval personification of a general fertility deity, Frazer saw him as a popular survival of an historical sacral kingship vitally associated with fructifying powers. Both


views, indeed, proceed from the same initial premise:
natural fertility could be manipulated for the common good.
As Mannhardt's vegetation spirits were captured at harvest
to ensure continued prosperity, so Frazer's sacrificial king
was killed in order to harness his beneficent powers.

Frazer also drew upon the mass of material collected
in the broad field of Germanic Antiquities. He referred,
for example, to Jacob Grimm (1785-1863), whose classic study
_Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer_ had first appeared in 1828.
Although better known for his mythological studies, Grimm's
pioneering legal research had directly touched on the subject
of Germanic sacral kingship. Grimm contended that the early
Germanic king's authority had ultimately been determined not
by personal qualities such as martial strength or outstanding

25This reconstruction effort was led by archeologists
as well as ethnologists and philologists, e.g., G. Kossinna,
C. Zeuss, O. Schrader, W. Scherer, K. Müllenhoff. See: E. Wahle,
"Ur-und Frühgeschichte im mitteleuropäischen Raum," in
Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte, eds. B. Gebhardt and H.
I, pp. 1-4; Menschling, Religionswissenschaft, p. 66; Ingeborg
Weber-Kellermann, Volkskunde, pp. 23-24; "Germanistik,"

For assessments, see: de Vries, _Study of Religion_, pp. 82-83;
idem.; _AGR_, I, pp. 53-54; Chase, _Quest for Myth_, pp. 26-27;
L. Denecke, _Jacob Grimm und sein Bruder Wilhelm_ (Stuttgart:
J. B. Metzler, 1971), pp. 112-16; Feldman and Richardson,
_Rise of Modern Mythology_, pp. 408-10. Grimm was one of those
who regarded folklore and legend as genuine residue of ancient
Germanic myths, and sought to separate Nordic and Continental
material. His work has been compared with _The Golden Bough_ as
wisdom but rather on the basis of certain widespread popular superstitions regarding royalty. Thus he noted that Germanic kings were commonly blamed for the occurrence of natural disasters during their reigns. Indeed, Grimm concluded that the authority of pre-Christian kings was essentially of a high-priestly nature, citing thereby the rituals of the healing touch, bounty-bringing royal lustrations, and continuing popular beliefs equating king and priest. He suggested that as many early Germanic political and legal principles had strong religious foundations, this priestly royal authority must have been quite extensive. Furthermore, Grimm argued that the authority of pre-Christian kings had been radically altered by the early medieval change of faith. In the earlier period, "the rule of kings was priestly and peaceful, and the leader of the army attained only a limited, temporary authority." As Christianity had deprived kings


28Grimm, Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer, I, pp. 323-39; see also idem., TM, I, pp. 64-65.

of their traditional priestly role, the only way left open to restore the royal dignity was war-leadership. This specific interpretation of Christianity's impact on Germanic royalty may have little evidential support, yet it is significant that Grimm's general view of early Germanic kingship's priestly nature and sacral responsibilities reflected in popular and legal rites re-emerged as major tenets of Frazerian sacral kingship.

One of Frazer's younger colleagues, H. M. Chadwick (1870-1947), attempted to clarify the historical dimension of Frazerian kingship. His wide-ranging political and cultural study The Origin of the English Nation (1907) had a decided influence on British and German research. Chadwick was particularly concerned with the bounty-bringing qualities and responsibilities attributed to early Germanic kings. He pointed, for example, to the literary evidence which suggests that in times of famine, natural or military disasters, Swedish, Norse, and also Burgundian kings were sacrificed or deposed by their people. Indeed, in pre-Migration times, North and Continental Germanic peoples (including the Angli, ancestors of the English) had shared a bounty-bringing form of sacral kingship associated with fertility deities and seasonal vegetative ceremonies. Chadwick noted, moreover, that the Swedish royal line, the Ynglinger, can be directly

connected with the Nordic fertility god Yngvi-Frey and thence perhaps to the earlier Nerthus fertility cult. Thus he concluded that the kings of Old Uppsala were considered living representatives of Frey and, as such, credited with this deity's bounty-bringing attributes. Furthermore, such royal powers were expressed in magical rites performed at seasonal festivals similar to those popular survivals Mannhardt had observed.  

Chadwick demonstrated the important role which divine-descent beliefs have occupied in the ideology of Germanic sacral kingship. In particular, he recognized the value of early medieval royal genealogies as sources for these beliefs. Thus the Swedish Ynglinger as well as the Norse kings, both claiming descent from Yngvi-Frey, may in Chadwick's view have been regarded in cult as husbands of this god's consort, Freyr. In regard to the Anglo-Saxons, he noted that seven of the eight extant royal genealogies commence with the god Woden. The East Saxon king-list, however, has one Sceaf as eponymous ancestor; the same figure also appears in later West

Saxon literary tradition. Chadwick at some length convincingly connected this Sceaf or Scyld-Scefing with North Sea religious tradition wherein corn-sheafs and perhaps shields had been cult-symbols or manifestations of ancient agrarian deities.

Chadwick argued persuasively that the royal genealogies and king-lists should not be regarded as fictitious products compiled to add luster to aspiring dynasties. Rather, they constitute a genuine corpus of ancient tradition which, indeed, can indicate changing popular conceptions of kingship. Thus, from a fully divine priest-king, often associated with a deity, whose very person could control the forces of nature, the early medieval king had descended to the rank of a mere semi-deity. Yet he was still regarded as more than human in his bounty-bringing powers and divine descent.33

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32 Chadwick, Origin, pp. 252-77.

33 Ibid., pp. 300-303. In an important earlier study, Chadwick had described the Tacitean tribal priest (rex sacrorum) as a former priest-king deprived of all temporal power much like the Frazerian King of the Wood; the Merovingians were comparable sacral kings shorn of their priestly functions by Christianity. Continental Germanic local leaders (OE. aldorman, Frank. cotinc ), he continued, also performed priestly duties as did their Nordic counterpart, the gothi; "The Ancient Teutonic Priesthood," Folklore, XI (1900), 274-77, 286-89. See further: Bertha Phillpotts, "Temple Administration and Chieftainship in Pre-Christian Norway and Iceland," in Saga-Book of the Viking Society, Vol. 8 (1914), pp. 264-84; M. Olsen, "Le prêtre-magicien et le dieu-magician dans la Norvège ancienne," Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, CXI (1935), 117-221.
Chadwick must be credited with drawing attention to the great antiquity and cultic significance of kingship in Northern Europe. Having outlined the historical record of pre-Migration Germanic kings, he concluded that kingship had indeed once been universal in the North, though differing degrees of royal authority had existed even in early times. Chadwick also substantially endorsed and publicized K. Müllenhoff's important observation that early Germanic kingship frequently was a matter of multiple rather than unitary rulership within a single community. Of particular value were Chadwick's remarks on "the sacred peace-king," already noted by Grimm, viz., the non-military ruler intimately associated with tribal religion in a priestly and judicial capacity. It is this ancient tribal king, Chadwick implies, who represents the historical prototype of the royal figure in European festivals. The Migration Age had thus not given birth to medieval kingship, but rather had fostered social conditions which favored the rise of warrior kings over an older type of bounty-bringing sacral kingship. It need hardly be pointed out that Chadwick's view was directly opposed to the prevalent opinion on early Germanic socio-political structure. Constitutional and legal historians

34 Chadwick, Origin, pp. 289-300. The territories of such multiple kings could be very small indeed (ibid., pp. 291, 296-97); Müllenhoff, Dt. Alt., IV, pp. 182-97.

35 Chadwick, Origin, pp. 236-37, 300-302. See also Chadwick's general work The Heroic Age (Cambridge: University Press, 1912), pp. 366-72, 376-78.
had long proclaimed a pre-Migration age of "primitive democracy" when primary tribal authority lay in the Assembly of free warriors. Within this supposed egalitarian order, kings had very limited powers; indeed, Germanic royal authority only became distinctive after the Migrations and contacts with the Roman world.36

Chadwick on the contrary properly emphasized the age and diverse forms Germanic kingship had assumed, while noting at the same time the general uniformity in pre-Migration religious beliefs and practices across a wide area of North-West Europe. His literary-historical approach to complex mythological and popular traditions proved to be an especially valuable contribution in itself. Although not directly concerned with sacral kingship, as Frazer had been, Chadwick nevertheless did much to wrest the subject out of its anthropological womb. His historical conclusions, admittedly speculative at times, were also highly suggestive and struck directly at most of the issues which all subsequent sacral kingship research has had to confront.

In 1924, the young French historian Marc Bloch (1887-1944) published a study addressed specifically to the royal healing rite which Frazer had earlier observed on a larger scale. *Les rois thaumaturges* united a painstaking textual analysis with an extensive chronological scheme to become an internationally recognized landmark in the research of European sacral kingship.\(^{37}\) Bloch considered royal thaumaturgy, i.e., the healing touch of kings, to be one specific manifestation of a persistent European popular belief in royal divinity. Indeed, the great vitality of this belief is well attested by the many transformations which the rite underwent in adopting to new religious and political circumstances. A critical examination of the earliest evidence is not sufficient, he contended; one must also determine what enabled kings to claim such extraordinary powers.

Block examined the French and English evidence and concluded that the first kings whose practice of thaumaturgy can be convincingly attested are the early Capetians in France and the first Plantagenets in England. If certain early medieval kings (e.g., the Merovingian Guntram and Anglo-Saxon

Edward the Confessor) were ascribed thaumaturgic or kindred powers before this time, he believed the matter must be attributed to either Church or dynastic interpolations. The early medieval thirst for the miraculous, Bloch insisted, would scarcely have overlooked such dramatic occurrences had they in fact ever taken place. 38

In Bloch's opinion, the origins of medieval thaumaturgy lay in both Romano-"Oriental" and ancient Germanic concepts of royal sacrality. Thaumaturgy had apparently been an element of the Roman imperial-cult; the emperors Vespasian and Hadrian, for example, had both practiced the healing ritual. Although the rites of Rome's emperor-cult did not long survive the Empire's political fragmentation, Bloch argued that the "habits of thought" they reflected continued to thrive in the collective consciousness of the West. 39 In this sense, Roman beliefs and practices of sacral rulership had left a lasting imprint on all levels of early medieval society.

Germanic kingship as well was "deeply impressed with a religious character." 40 Indeed, this lower-level, popular belief in royal sacrality engendered the strong sense of

38 Bloch, Rois, pp. 29-49 passim.
39 Ibid., pp. 63-64, adding that "a certain tendency to confuse the categories of politics and divinity did not completely perish," i.e., even after the imperial-cult waned. (p. 64)
40 Ibid., p. 55.
loyalty toward specific early medieval royal lines. Bloch pointed out that such royal divinity, however, was more commonly expressed as a control over crop fertility and general well-being than a specific healing power. After their conversion to Christianity, Germanic kings could no longer claim to be divinities. Yet as in the case of the imperial-cult, old mental habits lived on to endow early medieval kings such as the Merovingians with a "vague aura of mysticism" based on lingering folk-memories of past divinization. Only this, said Bloch, can account for the dynasty's longevity after actual power had passed to Pepin's descendants, as well as the latter's repeated failures to assert independent authority.

Bloch observed that Christian unction, itself a product of Old Testament ideas circulating within the Gallic Church, had in effect reintroduced ancient Near Eastern concepts of sacral kingship into the West. Thus, when Pepin was anointed his entire dynasty acquired a new and "authentic sacrosanctity," fully Christian and biblically approved. These ideas, furthermore, took firm root in Western Europe after the ninth century, with the institutionalization of royal anointing. Yet as a result of this process, king

\[41\text{Ibid.}, pp. 55-60. See further: W. Axon, "King's Evil," }\text{EFE, ed. Hastings, VII, 736-38.}\]

\[42\text{Bloch, }\text{Rois, pp. 60-62.}\]

\[43\text{Ibid.}, pp. 65-69.\]
and priest were only further assimilated in the popular mind. Thus by the high middle ages, Bloch continued, kings were considered divine not only by virtue of age-old sacral memories but also by the more recent, Church-sanctioned rite of unction.44

Bloch's work put the substance and method of Frazerian sacral kingship to the historical test. An initial textual examination raised serious objections to Frazer's contention that Merovingian and Anglo-Saxon kings had practiced thaumaturgy by virtue of their divine natures. His findings demonstrate only too clearly, noted Bloch, that when seeking historical details, broad cross-cultural analogy must be avoided or at least held in proportion, for "one cannot expect to rediscover in Europe all the institutions of Oceania."45 But Bloch thereupon carried his historical refinements directly to the heart of Frazer's theory. In the first instance, he readily admitted that Frazer had been correct in linking early political institutions to the "primitive mentality." However, these no doubt universal mental habits attain an historical dimension as they are applied in different periods and circumstances. Historians consequently must not be satisfied with Frazer's broad functional categories

45Bloch, Rois, p. 54.
of primitive mentality. Rather, the ideas of sacral kingship rooted in the popular consciousness can be approached through their specific manifestations in rite. This way of tapping the elusive "collective consciousness" by studying documented changes in its ritual expressions was an ingenious solution to a fundamental historical problem. Bloch was surely correct when he observed that scholars have generally been repelled by what he termed the "irrational" ideas explicit in the "mystique of kingship." Furthermore, he properly emphasized that the vitality of European sacral kingship beliefs rested not only upon aristocratic but also popular traditions. It is regrettable that historians have for the most part not carried forward Bloch's pioneering investigation of this significant popular component behind European sacral kingship beliefs.

Shortly after Bloch's work had appeared, the English anthropologist and Indic scholar A. M. Hocart (1884-1939)

46 Ibid., pp. 18-21, 52-54. "There remains the intrinsic notion of the sacred and miraculous character of kings, an essentially psychological feature, and the rites we are considering constituted only one among many of its manifestations." (p. 20).

47 Ibid., pp. 18-19.

48 "If an institution marked out for particular ends chosen by an individual will is to take hold upon an entire nation, it must also be borne along by the deeper currents of the collective consciousness . . . for a rather vague belief to become crystallized in a regular rite, it is of some importance that clearly expressed personal wills should help it to take shape." (Ibid., p. 86). Moreover, Bloch implies throughout that both traditions were inseparably interwoven in the "mystique" of kingship.
presented a penetrating comparative study entitled *Kingship* (1927), based to a great extent upon the fund of Near and Far Eastern ("Panbabylonian") literary sources that had been gathered in the West since the late-nineteenth century.\(^{49}\)

Hocart observed that kings appear in the very earliest historical records and that whether in ancient Egypt, the Near East, India, or the Greco-Roman world, kings were considered divine beings, earthly representatives of the gods. The bond between king and Divinity had been understood in a quite literal sense; indeed, it constituted the ancient world's standard pattern of authority.\(^{50}\) Moreover, Hocart claimed that this symbiotic relationship may be seen in royal activities themselves. For the king, by following strict rules


\(^{50}\) Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 7-9, referring, among others, to the Homeric kings, the archon basileus, and the rex sacrorum. Hocart spoke elsewhere of king-worship as mankind's first known religion, and argued that the practice of worshipping kings under their own names, though incarnations of several gods, led to the notion that the many gods were but manifestations of the One. Monotheism, he continued, was also fostered by the conquests of a mighty king who united both the territories and the divine attributes of subjugated petty kings: Hocart, "The Origin of Monotheism," *Folklore*, XXXIII (1922), 282-93; rpt. in *The Life-Giving Myth and Other Essays*, by A. M. Hocart, ed. F. R. Raglan (1952; rev. ed. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1969), pp. 66-77. See also his later work *Kings and Councillors* (1936; rev. ed. with introd. R. Needham, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 86-101.
of conduct or tabus (Celt. geasa) to ensure well-being and by administering justice to promote social cohesion, had in effect impersonated Divinity and the divine attributes. 51

Hocart contended that kingship must be recognized as a complex institution with changing structural features. Moreover, he agreed with Bloch that royal rituals can reveal the ideological pattern of kingship. His attention was directed especially to investiture and coronation rites, which he regarded as major manifestations of sacral rulership. In Imperial Rome, for example, the title imperator was conferred after a decisive victory and as part of a triumph procession. Indeed the candidate seems normally to have impersonated Divinity by dressing as Jupiter for the occasion. Restoration of this title and ritual in the Late Empire, Hocart believed, was thus a program to restore the ideological link between Emperor and Divinity. 52

51 Hocart, Kingship, pp. 55-56. Thus the king is often represented as the sun, i.e., regularity. For the Celtic geasa which affected all social classes, see further: Dillon, "Taboos of the Kings of Ireland"; Draak, "Kingship in Pagan Ireland," pp. 662-63; J. A. MacCulloch, The Celtic and Scandinavian Religions (1948; rpt. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), pp. 51, 94.

52 Hocart, Kingship, pp. 87-96 passim. The victory had at first been a moral one, a magical contest with evil, personified as "The King's Enemies." (ibid., pp. 30-31). Hocart saw the conjunction of victory and consecration as evidence that royal authority had been conditional on manifestations of divine virtue, e.g., good harvest or military success (ibid., p. 95). For these specific Roman rites, see further: Lilly Taylor, Divinity of the Roman Emperor, pp. 44-46, 57, 153 and Versnel, Triumphus, pp. 56-93, 371-97.
Christian consecration also symbolized the king's ties with Divinity. Did not the early medieval king, like the priest, receive unction and communion in both kinds? The region between king or emperor and god had sharply narrowed in both the late classical and early medieval Christian worlds. Hocart thus regarded royal consecration rites as a form of initiation whereby the king underwent a fundamental change of nature and emerged with a sacral status. Moreover, the common elements of repetition and imitation also indicated to Hocart that these royal ceremonies were ritual re-enactments of divine precedents which had the beneficent effect of ensuring prosperity.

The king's ritual rebirth at his consecration ceremony is most dramatically recorded in Vedic ritual literature.

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Hocart properly stressed the value of this intriguing material in a comparative study of kingship. The royal anointing with water and clarified butter, administered by the priest, was central to the elaborate ceremony. Three mantles entitled respectively inner, outer, and womb of sovereignty were conferred upon the Vedic king as visual signs of his rebirth.

Thereupon the officiating priest handed him five dice, declaring, "Thou art the master: may these five regions of thine (i.e., four quarters plus zenith) fall to thy lot," and then presented a ceremonial wooden sword called "Thunderbolt."

After his crowning, the king took three steps around the altar in imitation of Vishnu; thence he circumambulated his territory, stopping at the four quarters to receive his vassals' hommage. In addition, the new king had to observe two specific tabus for a full year: his hair must remain uncut and his feet uncovered. Hocart noted that the Indic, Greco-Roman and other inauguration rites have many similar structural elements, viz., victory, impersonation, unction, investiture, and procession. Indeed, he identified their common source as the royal enthronement sequence of ancient Near Eastern seasonal festivals.56


Hocart summarized his findings by showing how the institution of sacral kingship affected conceptions of the gods. Since ensuring food supply was rather mechanical, the ancient priest-king did not enjoy great authority. But when his exemplary and beneficial personal rules of conduct were extended over others, the sacral king acquired coercive authority and ascended rapidly to awesome "majesty." It is hardly coincidental, he added, that deities with distinct personalities have appeared at a quite late period of world history. Romans, Celts, and Germans, for example, only evidenced these personalized gods under Hellenistic influence. In short, extension of the sacral king's power resulted in the gods acquiring personalities. This general spiritualization of material events, Hocart observed, characterizes all ages of religious ferment and discovery. For when belief will no longer follow established lines of accuracy, religiosity ("the persistent soul-ache") turns to more uncramped modes of expression.

A number of Hocart's assumptions regarding European sacral kingship are, however, rather unsatisfactory. How the

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57 Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 227-28. As an "impersonator of deities, his fortunes rose as the gods rose from being impersonal doubles of natural objects to the greatest heights of ideal personality"; conversely, the king's successes glorified the gods he represented (ibid., p. 238).

58 Ibid., pp. 240-42. This is but one of Hocart's significant excursuses into religious psychology; see also *idem.*, *Kings and Councillors*, pp. 72-80.
bounty-bringing king extended an essentially moral authority remains unclear in his discussion, but individuals popularly regarded as able to control the forces of nature surely fulfilled a more than prosaic or "mechanical" social role.\(^{59}\)

Hocart's solar mythological view is particularly ill-advised; Indic and Fijian analogies cannot be so summarily transposed to the West. Also, the claim that Roman, Celtic, and Germanic pantheons had first appeared by diffusion from the highly personified Hellenistic model must be seriously questioned.

Both Hocart and Frazer adopted cross-cultural, comparative methodologies in studying early kingship as a religio-political entity. Hocart, however, maintained that sacral kingship ideology had been invested in a complex institutional structure whose basic outline, though modified in time and place, can still be determined. In this way, he considerably narrowed the focus of research to specific structural elements such as consecration. Hocart's "Patternist" interpretation emerges, for example, in his objection to the Frazerian view that rituals reveal a unique, non-rational "primitive mentality."\(^{60}\) Furthermore, he considered

\(^{59}\) But Hocart did examine this issue at some length in *Kings and Councillors*, where he concluded that the king's jurisdiction had spread precisely by extending his sacrality (pp. 140-55 passim).

\(^{60}\) Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 199-202, where he argues that modern thought processes do not substantially differ from those of the past.
royal rituals as manifestations not only of sacral kingship ideology, but of an entire cosmological system. Although Hocart on occasion had sacrificed historical detail to his wider comparative and structuralist vision, he lucidly disclosed the many significant and, indeed, remarkable correspondences in the ritual and ideology of sacral kingship among later branches of the Indo-European family.

During these years, the French comparative philologist Georges Dumézil (1898-) was shaping an interpretive synthesis of Indo-European mythology, religion, and social structure. With his monograph Mythes et dieux des Germains (1939), this challenging theory was brought to bear on early Germanic kingship. In recent years, Dumézil's influence has spread far beyond the borders of mythological studies; indeed, his views have received that keen response so often accorded multi-faceted, developing hypotheses. Moreover, some of
the most significant historical research in the field of sacral kingship during the past two decades has had a decidedly "Dumézilian" conceptualization.

The early Germans, Dumézil states, shared with all other Indo-European peoples a fundamental tripartite ideology reflected in their social structure, religion, and mythology. Thus, the Indo-European divine triad: king-magician god, martial god, fertility god, correspond to a three-fold social structure with distinct functions: magical sovereignty, warrior force, agricultural fecundity. This ideological


63 Dumézil, Mythes et dieux, p. 12. In this equation of the sacred and social orders, Dumézil evinces his debt to Durkheimian sociology. Note that by "function" Dumézil also means the sacred and social strata themselves. Littleton, New Comparative Mythology, pp. 5, 39. For Dumézil's affinities with the "structuralists," especially Levi-Strauss, ibid., pp. 185, 202-203; Smith and Sperber, "Mythologiques," 580-86.
and societal tripartition, however, was most distinct on the borders of the Indo-European world, viz., among the Italo-Celts and Indo-Iranians. A priestly class charged with the maintenance of tradition, for example, is well-attested among all the Indo-Europeans except the early Germans, Slavs, and Greeks. Early Germanic society in particular exhibited an unstable dynamism quite unsuited to fixed, hierarchical classes.⁶⁴

Dumézil maintained that among the Germans, as also the Proto-Indo-Europeans, kingship ("first function sovereignty") was magico-religious in nature. The king-magician had in effect been "the guarantor of prosperity, the talisman, the living palladium of the social group."⁶⁵ Ritual slayings of such kings were performed in order to preserve the dynasty's "virtue," thereby demonstrating that this kingship was essentially "linked to family blood, not to personal merit."⁶⁶ However, Dumézil insisted that this

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⁶⁴ Dumézil, Mythes et dieux, p. 11: "The [Germanic] gods became as difficult to class, hierarchize, and define as men; social and functional criteria no longer have value - at least not as clearly and immediately as for the Gallic or Latin gods." Also ibid., pp. 5-7, observing that Germanic priesthood seems to have been more a temporary, chosen office than a fixed class.


⁶⁶ Dumézil, Mythes et dieux, p. 23. Littleton, New Comparative Mythology, pp. 63-64, 222-23.
fertility control was only a secondary aspect of a fundamentally magical, shamanistic royal personality. Furthermore, these royal sorcerors had as their divine representatives the High Gods themselves (Varuna, Ouranos, Dius, Odin), dispensers of all-encompassing magical powers. Yet this Indo-European pantheon also contained a basic element of opposition. For the universal High Gods of right-rule and stability had their potentially violent, "inspired" counterparts, e.g., the warrior gods Indra, Zeus, Mars, Thor.

Germanic kingship in practice, Dumézil suggested, constantly fluctuated between two such ideologies and forms: the virtues of blood and of force, "the administrator-magician and the conqueror-hero." As Tacitus observed, many Germanic tribes contained (indeed, reconciled) both royal varieties.

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67 Dumézil, Mythes et dieux, p. 23: Such kingship is "non-warlike, but all the more formidable since its intervention is immediate, universal, multiform."


70 Ibid., p. 25.
In effect, Germanic sovereignty could be expressed through priestly or military functions. Odin is not only rune-master, the god of prophecy, magic and disguise, but also of battle-fury. This basic polarity or bipartition was especially pronounced among the early Germans because of a progressive "military evolution" in Germanic society, and hence a militarization of their gods. Dumézil noted that Odin figured in Germanic mythology as the chief of warriors but not as an actual fighter; by the Viking Age, however, Odin (Wodan) had become the preeminent warrior deity. When the Migrations had enabled warriors to attain social prominence, their representative deity Odin assumed the warrior aspect of sovereignty:

King-god and god of the king, master of runes and patron of priests, it seems that he \(\text{\textit{Odin}}\) was able to maintain and extend his prestige only by changing from \textit{rex} and \textit{sacerdos} into \textit{dux}, by becoming the celestial guarantor of a kind of vague "Teutonic Order" where an entire people was mobilized.\(^{71}\)

Odin's judicial role was then adopted by his divine auxiliary Tyr (Tiwaz, Ullr), the protector of the law.

Suggestive though these views may be, their particular demonstration does considerable violence to historical method. As has just been noted, Dumézil insisted that the Germans had transported over millenia an ideology inherited from their Proto-Indo-European ancestors. Due to the slow militarization of Germanic society, class distinctions were more fluid.

\(^{71}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 154.
than in other Indo-European areas. However, during periods of relative tranquility, the old tripartite pattern (magical sovereignty, warrior force, agricultural fecundity) would reassert itself. Dumézil based this extensive theory upon restricted sources and unwarranted analogy. In particular, he has seen fit to reconstruct an entire continental Germanic ideology from preponderantly North Germanic (Scandinavian) literary sources, always with ready reference to comparative ("homologous") Indic and Italic material. Thus, as examples of first-function monarchs, he repeatedly cited the notorious Swedish and Norse sacrificial kings. His Continental evidence is yet more meager, far from definitive, and confined to the pre-Migration period. In short, Dumézil's presentation of Germanic kingship displays as almost flagrant insensitivity to historical diversification. Much the same criticism can indeed be levelled upon his larger view of Germanic religion.

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72 Ibid., p. 51-53.


the religious and political diversity of the pre-Migration Germanic world? Dumézil's explicit assumption that continental Germanic religion was "very closely analogous" to that of the Scandinavians thus has to be greatly modified if not rejected.

Yet Dumézil's contributions to the study of sacral kingship must not be underrated because of the particular historical shortcomings evidenced in Mythes et dieux des Germains. In fact, he made no claim to be an historian, much less a Germanist. He described his study as "a first comparative approximation," intended to raise issues and encourage further research. To this end, it has been


75Dumézil, Mythes et dieux, p. x.


In the wider Indo-European context of sovereignty, see Dumézil's Mitra-Varuna: essai sur les deux représentations indo-européennes de la souveraineté (2nd ed.; Paris: Gallimard, 1948), and more recently his series, Mythe et épopée I: L'Ideologie des trois fonctions dans les épées
an unquestioned success. In particular, Dumézil's bipartition of the sovereign function is an extremely valuable research model.

German sacral kingship research generally ignored Dumézil's new theory and, with several notable exceptions, continued along the rather confused path of nineteenth-century mythological study. It should be mentioned, however, that significant research, principally in the early Scandinavian area, was being conducted prior to the second world

war by Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish scholars.  
In the midst of this disarray, the Germanist Otto Höfler (1901-) presented an innovative, vigorous study of Germanic royal sacrality, *Germanische Sakralkönigtum* (1952). Höfler's main purpose was to determine the relationship between king and Divinity which lay at the heart of Germanic sacral kingship ideology. Moreover, Höfler brought to this task an impressive command of diverse Germanic philological, historical, mythological, and archaeological evidence.

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Höfler maintained that the early Germans, like many other peoples of Antiquity, had recognized and arranged their lives in subordination to Divinity. Indeed, all major elements of Germanic institutional and intellectual life were infused with the Divine. This sacral ordering of human society can be seen in the fact that breaches of the law were considered primarily as sacrilegious offenses. For the law was not a human construction but rather a divine gift, a part of the comprehensive world-sacrality. Royal sacrality thus constituted only one special kind of link between men and the gods. Belief in the king's holiness assumed many forms, Höfler stated, but in general the king was held to be beneath the divine power from and with which his own royal authority was tied. Moreover, the Germanic king frequently expressed this personal relationship with Divinity by a ritual consecration or dedication to a particular deity. Through this act, men saw their kings as "bearers of a special grace and . . . bound in the service of a god for life."81

Therefore, in Höfler's view both the folk-law and the king's holiness were but sections of a larger, indeed, universal divine order. He particularly emphasized the point

80Höfler, Sakralkönigkum, pp. viii-xii; he praises Grimm for having seen "the religious forces operative in the Teutonic past" (p. xii).

81Ibid., pp. xii-xiii, 83-89, 350-55 passim. Thus the king's sacrality was not a matter of inherited divinity, nor was it derived from military success or magical abilities.
that the Germanic king was seen not as a god, but a divine representative, a semi-deity who shared the divine power and dignity. That this divine pervasiveness was profoundly regarded is borne out, for example, by the close connection of the gods' names with all "the major forms of historical existence," e.g., battle-force, Thing-law, and royal power. Höfler thus believed that the essential nature of Germanic kingship lay in the link between king and people, and particularly in the ways the folk evaluated the king's dignity. In the Teutonic saga-tradition, this "historical dynamics of mythological-religious ideas" has found dramatic, lasting expression. Due to the scattered and indeterminate

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82 Ibid., pp. 85-88, and pp. xi-xii for possible forms of divine representation by Germanic kings. Höfler summarizes elsewhere: "The king has a share in the essence of the god but is not identical with him, for the god is more and greater than the king - the king stands under the god, has his dignity from him and in such manner is bound to the divine dignity by a service. Yet it is not a servile relationship as a slave is bound to his master, but an essence-link rather like that of a son to father. The son stands under the father yet bound with him in blood and thus in essence-union." "Der Sakralcharakter des germanischen Königstums," in The Sacral Kingship, p. 676.

83 Höfler has argued persuasively that Thing-sacrality bestowed a special dignity to the king whom it elected. Ibid., pp. 694-95.

84 Höfler, Sakralkönigtum, p. xiv: "The power of the numinous finds in saga a hundred and thousand-year continuing resonance." Höfler has long been a leading spokesman for the theory that basic institutional and ideological elements of Germanic culture, like those associated with sacral kingship, continued unbroken from ancient times through the Middle Ages. See his influential article, "Das germanische Kontinuitätsthema," HZ, CLVII (1938), 1-26 esp. 9-15. For an excellent summary of this wide-ranging, convincing theory, see:
nature of these sources, however, Höfler chose to proceed to the study of Germanic sacral kingship from the more concrete historical and archeological evidence.

Höfler noted various accounts which seem to substantiate his view of royal dedication. The Batavian leader Civilis, for example, reportedly began his uprising against Rome by taking an oath in a sacred grove. He thereupon dyed his hair red and vowed to leave it uncut until the war's successful conclusion. According to Höfler, this oath and its rites constitute a traditional Germanic royal consecration to divinity which, moreover, had profound social consequences. For a king thus dedicated to his patron deity and surrounded by a band of youthful, pledged followers formed in effect a cultic warrior-society of great martial and religious vitality. Höfler observed that such units were part of the Indo-European heritage and drew attention to similar bands in ancient India, dedicated to the war-god Rudra ("The Red God"), whose members in fact were distinguished by their disheveled, red-stained

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85Höfler, Sakralkönigtum, pp. 195-97. Höfler also identified a long-hair cult among the Chatti (first century AD), the Saxons and Franks (sixth century), and a hair-dyeing ritual among the Alamanni (fourth century): ibid., p. 197. He assumed that Wodan must have been Civilis' "patron" deity: ibid., pp. 199-201.

Furthermore, these cult-societies among the Germans expanded to an inter-tribal level, that is, to form confederations drawn from different peoples bound together in allegiance to a sacral king vowed to the war-god. Such were, in Höfler's opinion, the compelling ideological bases of those Germanic leagues (e.g., of Ariovistus and Odoaker) which wreaked such havoc upon the Roman world.  

However, Höfler's main case for the Germanic dedication rite rested upon his interpretation of a renowned archeological monument - the runestone of Rök. According to Höfler, this early ninth-century runic inscription of south-east Sweden relates that a certain aged rune-master, Varin, vows his son to none other than Theodoric, the fifth-century Ostrogothic king, in order to avenge the death of another

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87Höfler, Sakralkönigtum, pp. 341-43; idem., "Sakralcharakter," pp. 695-699. These "ecstatic martial cult-bands" perpetuated the Migrations and greatly enhanced their royal leader's role; hence, as Dumézil had noted, their god Wodan eclipsed the older Tiwaz of the peace and law-assembly. ibid., pp. 698-99.
son, Vermod, who had fallen to a band of twenty Viking raiders. The inscription thus contains several curious features. It recognizes that Theodoric has been dead for three centuries, yet calls upon him for aid in a forthcoming struggle. In addition, the rune-master's avenging son is yet unborn though Varin is now ninety years old.

In the first instance, Höfler noted that Theodoric was a scion of the Amal family which claimed descent from one Gapt (Gaut), an incarnation of Odin (Wodan) and his "family" the Aesir (ansis). As such, the last Ostrogothic king was likely regarded during his lifetime as a representative of Wodan, sharing the essence and attributes of his divine ancestor. At cultic occasions, the sacral king's share of Divinity fully broke forth to the point where one may speak of divinization albeit in restricted, momentary form. Höfler contended that Theodoric underwent an apotheosis after his death which fully equated him with Wodan, and he compared this process with the Greek heroes whose supernatural powers could be called upon years after their death.

The continuations of the Rök-inscription add another dimension to Höfler's interpretation. For Varin the rune-master was apparently a local priest-leader claiming descent

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88 Höfler, Sakralköningtum, pp. 4-9, 25-30, 349-50 passim.
89 Ibid., pp. 69, 352.
from the same divine family as the Ostrogothic Amals. Rök
lies in Östergötland, the tribal god of which was Gaut. Indeed, it is likely that this region was the ancestral home
of the Goths before their long migration to Italy. Thus
Varin's cultic appeal attests a ritual expression of sacral
kingship, the endurance of its accompanying belief-system
and its consolidating role in Germanic tribal life.

Höfler contended that his view of Theodorich as sacral
king is borne out by both ecclesiastical and native Germanic
saga-tradition. For while the late classical and Church
position presents the "rational," political view of Theodorich
as Imperial enemy, the "inner Teutonic recollections" as
evidenced on the Rök-stone and in saga have transformed the
historical Theodorich into the "demoniac" Dietrich von Bern
and indeed have equated him with the Wodanistic Death-Rider.
leader of the furious Wild Host so prominent in Germanic
folklore. This transformation, Höfler insisted, was no

90 See also, Höfler, "Sakralcharakter," pp. 677, 687; idem., "Abstammungstraditionen," Reallexikon der germanischen
king-list and possibly Geat of many Anglo-Saxon royal pedigrees
are likely further examples of this Wodan-hypostasis.

91 Höfler, Sakrkönigtum, pp. 94-96, 267; idem.,
Kultische Geheimbünde, pp. 36-44; idem., "Sakralcharakter,"
pp. 676-80; and de Vries, "Theodoriche der Grosse," GRM, N. S.
XI (1961), 319-30; idem., Heroic Song and Heroic Legend, trans.
See further: Grimm, TM, I, pp. 372-73, III, 936-40; Naumann,
"Dietrich von Bern," Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens,
ed. H. Bächtold-Stäubli (10 vols.; Berlin: W. De Gruyter,
1927-1942), II, cols. 293-95; L. Weniger, "Ferialis exercitus,"
mere flight of epic fantasy, but rather represented a deeply earnest "basic form of Germanic piety," a religious-historical complex of belief and rite concerning sacral kingship. The sense of religious fraternity maintained by the Goths of northern Italy and the Gauts of Scandinavia testifies to the persisting strength of these ideas and practices.92

Höfler must be commended for having consistently regarded royal sacrality in terms of fundamental Germanic religious beliefs. Indeed, in his view Germanic sacral kingship was a primary form of religiosité as well as a major religio-political institution. Yet the evidence used to support his view of royal dedication is of somewhat unequal weight. Thus the confirmation of a sacral oath by various rituals is adequately attested among the ancient and early medieval Germans, and the suggestion that royal sacrality was also linked to election by the hallowed Thing was a most valuable insight. Large scale cult-societies are less visible in continental sources but would go far to account for the remarkable dynamism of early Germanic migrations and colonization.93 The Rök-stone's value as an example of dedication

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92Höfler, Sakralkönigtum, pp. 350-52.

93Höfler distinguished a tribal or "Thing-kingship" tied to ancient fertility deities, and a more recent "retinue-kingship" associated primarily with Wodan and centered around martial bands and their sacral kings who represented the war god: "Sakralcharakter," pp. 696-99. Höfler's interpretation is akin to Dumézil's theory of royal sacrality, but he has never fully acknowledged his debt to the French scholar. See
to a Germanic sacral king, however, is wholly dependent on Höfler's reading of the runes. Specialists sharply disagree over his interpretation, but apparently cannot completely dismiss it on philological grounds. When seen within the context of sacral kingship, as Höfler first suggested, the puzzling inscription is greatly clarified. On the other hand, Höfler's desire to substantiate his theory by constant reference to chronologically indeterminate mythological and popular traditions no doubt represents the work's main historical shortcoming. It is admittedly true that Höfler's views were overstated and not always models of clarity. Nonetheless, his challenging and enthusiastic approach to a wide range of significant sources opened a new direction in modern sacral kingship research.

In a major article appearing in 1956, the distinguished Dutch religious historian Jan de Vries (1890-1964) ably summarized the prevailing state of research on early Germanic


95Oakley, "Celestial Hierarchies," 28 n. 90; Graus, Herrscher, pp. 22-24, 314-18 passim; McTurk, "Sacral Kingship in Ancient Scandinavia," pp. 142-44. Otto von Friesen, who first noted the Rök-stone's cultic significance (1920), was more reserved than Höfler.
kingship. This prominent Germanist assembled, as had Höfler, a wide range of sources yet with a more balanced and coherent presentation. De Vries first turned his attention to Tacitus' much-quoted commentary on Germanic kingship: "They, i.e., the Germans choose their kings for their noble birth, their warlords for their valor." This terse account apparently distinguished two types of Germanic leaders and authority but far from clarifies the functional relationship between rex and dux. De Vries made the important point that Tacitus in fact had source access only to the Rhineland tribes in contact with Rome and, moreover, had clearly stated that varying degrees of royal authority existed throughout "inner Germany." Kingship terminology, de Vries suggested, reflects the ideology and political configuration of Germanic royal sacrality.

For example, the early Germans seem not to have had a cognate form of the prot. IE. *reg, "king" (>Lat. rex; Celt. *riks; Skt. raj). Rather, one finds Gmc. *kunungaz (>OE. cyning, OHG. kuning) employed from the sixth century

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by the West Germans and Gmc. *thiuthanaz (>Goth. thiudans; ON. thjórðann) two centuries later among East and North Germanic groups. Like many other Indo-European peoples, de Vries continued, the early Germans regarded their kings as bearers of divine blessings in addition to being political, judicial, and military leaders. Germanic kings were held responsible for tribal prosperity and sometimes received posthumous veneration similar to the ancient Greek heroes. Moreover, this royal sacrality was rooted in divine descent, as royal genealogies and name-giving practices indicate. Indeed, the term *kunungaz (<Gmc. *kunja "family," i.e., royal family) indicates the clan-bound, descent-based nature of this sacrality.

\[\text{99}^{99}\text{Ibid., 291-92, 301-03. Thiuthanaz cognates later appeared among some West Germanic peoples as well (OE. theoden; OS. thiodan).}\\]

\[\text{100}^{100}\text{Ibid., 295: "The Heil of the king, we must conclude, is tied to the clan from which he is sprung, flows through all members from generation to generation, and finds its source in the primal ancestor. Tradition clearly shows: the primal ancestor is a god." For these family trees are really not contrived inventions of flattering court genealogists . . . a family's Heil is manifested even in the names which members of a royal house bear." See also his more succinct account of Germanic royal sacrality: AGR, I, pp. 394-96.}\\]

\[\text{101}^{101}\text{de Vries, "Königtum," 299: "We must now assume that the family from which he [kunungaz] springs was a divine family. Therein lies the pregnant sense of the root-term kunja. The regia stirps is thus properly a divina stirps."}\\]
De Vries directly employed Dumézilian theory to demonstrate how Germanic sacral kingship ideology had adapted to changing socio-political conditions. Thus, he asserted, the divine pair Tiwaz/Wodan represent, respectively, the magico-judicial and the military-"inspired" aspects of a unitary sovereign function. This polarity indeed explains Tacitus' account:

The rex is the Tiwaz-side of kingship, the leader in his sacral aspect who thus also had priestly functions . . . The dux is the leader in battle, the typical "Odinistic"-side of lordly power.102

However, the conservative rex-aspect of royal authority if left to itself could only end in social stagnation; its counterpart, the violent yet creative dux aspect, was equally necessary to revitalize the social order.103 De Vries further observed that the West Germanic migrations involved not mass movements of families, but small raiding parties led by temporary warlords (duces) who had often dedicated themselves to Wodan. Once settled, such war-band leaders founded hereditary realms as kings of new dynasties. Under these social conditions, argued de Vries, the warrior 

102Ibid., 297. De Vries believed that this division of royal authority between warlord and priest-king was a Proto-Indo-European configuration, and may account for dual kingship among the early Germans and others (ibid., 296, 299 n. 54).

103Ibid., 296. Thus royal authority "had two aspects: it maintained the old and created the new." See also idem., "Germanic Religion," 86: "An entire philosophy of royalty can be discovered in this polarity . . . the petrified system had to be broken by an eruption of creative forces . . . "
element of this kingship would certainly have eclipsed the priestly/judicial aspect. Early medieval kings had forged a new "charismatic" type of kingship whose sacrality was more immediately associated with the battle-god Wodan than the god of judicial order, Tiwaz.¹⁰⁴

De Vries, therefore, found in Dumézil's theory a valuable model to disentangle specific, often conflicting accounts of early Germanic royal authority. His pronounced sociological orientation, moreover, greatly clarified the historical dimension of Dumézil's bipartite sovereignty. However, the philological argument for a post-Migration blending of originally distinct sacral spheres, although generally convincing, remains a somewhat speculative, construction for a period whose literary remains are themselves so meager. Yet de Vries' monograph was a thorough, much-needed synthesis of the principal evidence available.

For nearly thirty years, the distinguished Germanist Karl Hauck (1916-) has been examining interrelationships between early Germanic religious ideology, cult practices, and political structures. His outstanding work in this field began with a lengthy study into the notion of so-called "blood-holiness" or hereditary sacrality among ancient and medieval Germanic peoples. Hauck first noted that the idea

of a special sanctity belonging to members of Germanic ruling families has left a clear imprint in literary sources from the fifth century onward. Most of these accounts stem from aristocratic circles and closely link royal sacrality to divine descent. However, he pointed out that there is also considerable evidence of similar beliefs existing concurrently on "popular" levels of society. The German emperors, for example, apparently supported such popular beliefs by performing various archaic rituals such as circumambulation and crop blessing. At the same time, they were themselves enthusiastically proclaiming links with previous ruling dynasties, most notably the Carolingians. This glorification of blood-ties can also be seen in the claims made by many a noble German family to descend from traditional heroes and semi-deities, e.g., the Harlungen or Dietrich von Bern. Descent-ties to classical figures and people are variations of the same process.

Hauck then directly turned his attention to the pre-Christian origins of blood-holiness. Occasionally, he noted, the tribal god appeared directly as ancestor of the royal clan and source of its sacrality. Yet in most cases, belief


in the king's inherent holiness arose from an outstanding, heroic achievement, usually a decisive military victory that confirmed the lord's sacral quality. Cultic celebrations, including acclamation and shield-raising, often marked the event and served to strengthen the sacral battle-victor's charisma. Such victorious leaders then became kings of new peoples and consequently appear at the head of many royal genealogies as semi-deities. Indeed, Hauck noted that according to Ottonian and Staufian chroniclers, the claim to the Imperial title was often based on such an epoch-making victory and the therein manifested "magical power of victory" (virtus).

Hauck thus suggested that the Germanic concept of blood-holiness had two complementary aspects. Firstly, he identified a popular belief in the sacrality of royal blood and its bounty-bringing virtues which was indeed readily translated after the Christian conversions into the "work-holiness" of saintly rulers. On the other hand, the equally


archaic glorification of the royal clan continued to be expressed in aristocratic descent-claims into the high middle ages.\textsuperscript{109} Hauck's study represents one of the few attempts since that of Bloch to emphasize the remarkable persistence of the popular element in sacral kingship ideology and its continuing reflection in medieval records.

Four years later, Hauck made a noteworthy contribution to P. E. Schramm's magisterial work on medieval symbology, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik.\textsuperscript{110} His particular

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This fertile research-area builds upon the older fields of Germanic legal archeology and legal symbolism. In addition to J. Grimm's *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer, supra n. 27,
The subject was the role of the golden neck or collar-ring (torques, monile) and the long-staff (baculus) in Germanic religious and political tradition. Hauck first presented the archeological and iconographic evidence of the golden torcs in great detail from the Northern Bronze Age through the Migration period. In pre-Christian times, he observed, these ornaments were used as votive offerings, rewards from king to follower, and in judicial procedure. On the whole, the neck/collar ring was a distinctive emblem of gods and ruling clans; indeed, Germanic noble families generally maintained this tradition long after their change of faith.


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Of course the neck-ring was also prominent in Roman and Celtic tradition: E. Schuppe, "Torques," RE, eds.
Literary evidence from such authors as Tacitus, Ammianus, Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Widukind confirms the archeological record of the golden neck-ring as insignia of Germanic deities, priests, and lords. According to Hauck, the torc played a role in royal inauguration ceremony closely akin to that in holy grove, temple, and assembly, viz., as a sacral cult-object which enabled king and priest to intimately approach the Divine. Indeed, medieval insignia-investiture may thus be a later example of an ancient Germanic practice. Similarly, Hauch contended that the bearded human faces with torcs found on certain early Germanic long-staffs (e.g., Sutton Hoo; Spholt, Vimose) and other royal grave-goods probably represent the royal clan's divine ancestor, generally Wodan (Odin). These early scepters, like the


neck-rings, must thus be regarded as ancestral insignia of a "religiously-based statehood" comparable, for example, to the sacral high-seat pillars or ancestor-columns which Norse chieftains so carefully transported in their land-taking operations.\(^{114}\)

Hauck followed his insignia study with a penetrating investigation of Germanic tribal and royal genealogies as primary sources for pre-Christian cult practice and political

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Lanze (Bonn: Universitäts Verlag, 1947). There is also a strong parallel tradition of staffs as insignia of seers and prophetesses, esp. among the North Germans: Berges and Grauert, "Szepter," p. 266; Hilda Davidson, Gods and Myths, pp. 42, 118-20. Grönbech plausibly inferred from saga tradition that the staff had a role in Germanic sacrificial rituals performed during seasonal festivals: Culture of the Teutons, II; 1, pp. 273-80.


The tribal genealogies, he argued, represent pagan Germanic sacred history; indeed, their cosmogonic elements strongly indicate a function as cult-mythology, that is, as sources of norms for cult practice which in turn fostered tribal identity and cohesion. Moreover, such genealogies (origines, primordia) also established cultural standards, e.g., costume and nomenclature of a tribe or league united in cult. Hauck further observed that the tribal origo's primal ancestor was often identical with the royal clan's divine ancestor. In accord with the cult-myth's scenario, he contended, the early Germanic king assumed the role of primus rex, embodying the tribal ancestor, in solemn periodic festivals. He therein underwent a "temporary


divinisation" and also performed certain cultic acts, derived from the origo-model, designed to promote prosperity and order, e.g., lustration and sacred marriage (hieros gamos). Other royal rituals were popular acclamation, shield-raising, the bestowal of sacral honor-titles, and masked impersonation. Aristocratic and royal families to a large extent maintained these traditions as they preserved their genealogies after the conversions.


Finally, in a fine summary article for the Eleventh International Congress of Historical Sciences (1960), Hauck concisely reviewed and clarified his research position on Germanic sacral kingship. He emphasized, for example, that early Germanic socio-political structure must best be described as an aristocracy with monarchical apex; the royal clan thus stood within not above the tribal order as the noblest among noble families. Nobles, kings, and priests, representing the leading social stratum, were primary tradition-bearers, and consequently had direction of political and religious affairs.

Already in ancient times, contended Hauck, Germanic gods and heroes were taken up into lordly pedigrees by a genealogically oriented aristocratic theology. Royal genealogies indicate the duality of a Germanic king's authority: by divine descent kings stood above other men but beneath the god's power. As fountainheads of the royal clan's sacrality, moreover, the divine ancestors bestowed their own particular attributes to their descendants. In this study, Hauck directly likened Germanic royal sacrality to an "hereditary charisma" - fundamentally a divine gift not acquired through magical acts. Indeed, this charisma was

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strengthened and revealed by the king's role in public cult, e.g., sacrifice, lot-drawing, and temporary divinization. Its manifestations included both bounty and victory-bringing qualities, certain prescribed augural abilities, and exemplary, fame-inspiring conduct. In this way, royal sacrality ultimately affected the destiny of the whole social order.¹²⁰

Hauck saw an essential continuity in the transition from Germanic to Christian sacral kingship ideology, though he suggested the process was facilitated by previous Christianization of Celtic and late classical concepts of lordly "luck." This ideological continuity, maintained by noble and peasant strata alike, had been strengthened by the victory of Christian theocratic kingship. For in hallowing royal authority, Christian consecration (like similar pagan Germanic royal rites) greatly increased the early medieval king's actual power.¹²¹

Through a selective textual analysis, Hauck then showed how early Germanic royal sacrality had normally been strengthened by public rituals of both a peaceful and martial nature.¹²² Indeed, he rightly stressed the point that both Germanic and medieval Christian statehood were rooted in a religiously conceived world-order. Hauck observed in

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 97-103.
¹²¹Ibid., pp. 106-108.
conclusion that Christianity intensified Germanic leadership forms by offering new possibilities of religiously motivated hegemonic politics as well as by opening up a stimulating spiritual and intellectual world. Hauck has convincingly demonstrated the manner in which many neglected literary and non-literary sources may be used for significant research in the field of early Germanic religion and statecraft. In the process, he has properly drawn attention to the fundamental interconnection of myth, religion, and politics among the early Germans and to the dynamic role of Germanic kings in cult and tribal integration.

In 1964, one of the most prominent scholars of Nordic culture, Walter Baetke (1884-), injected a sharp cautionary note into the growing historiography of early Germanic sacral kingship. His succinct study Yngvi und die Ynglinger: Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung über das nordische 'Sakralkönigtum' quickly became a rallying point for "anti-sacralist" research. Although Baetke's main concern, the religious component of ancient Scandinavian kingship, lies outside the

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123 Ibid., p. 116.

scope of the present investigation, his general comments on Germanic sacral kingship have important methodological implications.  

Baetke in the first instance regarded the limited authority of early Germanic kings as incompatible with any sacral status. Indeed, in his view this pre-Migration Germanic kingship was essentially neither priestly nor charismatic but political and legal in nature. Only as managers of general tribal affairs and cult-leaders did these kings have any connection with the sacral sphere. Baetke did not deny the existence of popular beliefs in a king's "luck." However, he contended that such ideas were not specifically royal and, moreover, belonged to the quite distinct realm of magic. Sacral kingship properly speaking will be found only

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125 Baetke isolated three main principles of modern (Nordic) sacral kingship research for discussion: (1) royal sacrality as direct divine powers and abilities; (2) royal sacrality from cult-office; (3) belief in royal divine descent (Yngvi, pp. 6-7). He insisted that uncritical, bold assumptions about Nordic sacral kingship resulted from the historically inconclusive nature of saga material and the euhemeristic design of its authors (ibid., pp. 10-11, 96-103).

"where the king is in some way the object of cult, where one offers him sacrifice or renders him other divine honors," as exemplified by "primitive" royalty and ancient Near Eastern divine kingship.\(^{127}\)

Thus Baetke argued that sacrality flowed from the gods to the folk via cult and was not a distinct royal possession. Like the district priest and the local chieftain, kings were mediators with the Divine and had responsibility for the maintenance of cultic affairs.\(^{128}\) Furthermore, he emphasized that the roots of medieval royal sacrality lay in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Old Testament, not in pagan Germanic religious ideology. Indeed, Christian anointing and consecration had created a new type of kingship which was far elevated over the folk. "Blood-right" as a basic principle of royal succession did exist but was founded upon political rather than religious factors.\(^{129}\)

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\(^{127}\) Baetke, Yngvi, pp. 37-39 noting also, "the fact along that magical abilities are ascribed to a man does not make him a sacral person. Royal sacrality as expression or emanation of a magical power (however one may conceive this) cannot alone establish a sacral status of Nordic kings." (p. 38). And again: "Sacral kingship, where we find it ... exists neither in mythical ideas (which of course could be linked to it) nor in the belief in magical powers; rather, it is by its nature a religious institution inserted into the politico-legal order and is in most cases the very heart of the State-cult." (p. 39).

\(^{128}\) Ibid., pp. 67-68.

\(^{129}\) Ibid., pp. 171-75: "A new political existence began for this people [The Christianized Germans] with their entry into the Romano-Christian world ... [medieval] blood-right indeed had a charismatic nature - not, however, as a
Baetke concluded that advocates of Germanic sacral kingship ("the sacralists") have fallen into two basic methodological errors. Firstly, he noted the practice of projecting into Germanic antiquity ideas drawn from modern religious philosophy which were quite foreign to early Germanic thought. Equally hazardous has been the desire to see an enduring impact of ancient Germanic beliefs and practices upon medieval political institutions, especially kingship. Nor can one hope to illuminate the medieval world of ideas, as expressed in Latin terminology, with the help of ancient Germanic concepts.

continuation or substitution of a pre-Christian blood-right, but on the basis of an entirely new concept of kingship on the part of the papal Church."

130 Ibid., pp. 176-77. Baetke had especially harsh objections against Höfler, as well as Beumann and Hauck, for espousing a "mysticised" meaning of Germanic religion: "Ideas like Substance, Divinity, Transcendence were foreign to the Germans; they did not even have a word for religion . . . Indeed, sacrality had a tie to the socio-legal sphere but contained no moral valuation and referred wholly to this world." (Ibid., pp. 177, 180 n.1). For elaboration of this view, see idem., "Germanische Religion," Religion in Geschichte, ed. Galling, II, cols. 36-44.

131 Baetke, Yngvi, pp. 177-81: "Many of our modern medievalists get themselves into a circulus vitiosus. They interpret a Germanic royal sacrality (which they falsely comprehend at that) right into medieval events and documents, and then use these again to support that notion for ancient times. Led on by the idea of Germanic continuity, they misunderstand that the Middle Ages dwelled in an entirely different intellectual world than the ancient Germans. They do not want to admit that this world drew its ideas and values from Roman antiquity and Christianity." (p. 180).
Baetke's work has been soundly criticized by a diverse spectrum of medievalists. H. Wolfram, for example, has rightly observed the contradictions resulting from Baetke's narrow definition of sacrality. Thus, having seen no conclusive evidence of Germanic king-worship, Baetke excluded kings from the sacral sphere (understood as that which stands in direct contact with cult) but then spoke of the king's important cult-office, tied to the sacral sphere. In addition, he either rapidly passed over or else ignored significant Continental Germanic literary evidence which attests a corpus of beliefs in the special hereditary sacrality and even divinisation of Germanic kings.\textsuperscript{132}

The Leipzig religious historian was simply incorrect when he stated that Germanic sacral kingship study in general must begin with the later sagas since there is no significant evidence for any fundamental religious component in pre-Migration royal authority. His claim that early Germanic kingship had a purely legal and political basis summarily dismisses the work of modern constitutional and legal historians which has properly emphasized the religious

foundations of early Germanic leadership and state-formation.  

The significant research by Schramm and Hauck on the religio-
political symbols of early Germanic kings is also ignored.

Baetke's specific grounds for denying a Nordic sacral 
kingship have been called into question as well. E. O. Turville-
Petre believed that he has drawn too sharp a distinction between 
the religious status of ancient Scandinavian kings and that of 
other chieftains, especially in view of the close connection 
of political and religious authority in the North. Moreover, 
Baetke's general dismissal of saga evidence as learned euhemer-
erism has doubtful validity.  

Even if Nordic kingship was 
not the object of cult and not considered descended from 
divine ancestors, one of course must still admit a signifi-
cant interrelationship between kingship and religious beliefs 
and practices among the ancient and early medieval Scandinavians.  

133 Such as H. Mitteis, Der Staat des hohen Mittel-
alters (8th ed., Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1968), pp. 6-8;  
Schlesinger, "Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft"; Wenskus, Stammes-
bildung und Verfassung; G. Tellenbach, Der Entstehung des 
deutschen Reiches (Munich: G. Callwey, 1940); H. Conrad, 
Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte (2nd ed., 2 vols.; Karlsruhe: C.  
F. Müller, 1962-1965), Vol. I: Frühzeit und Mittelalter, 
pp. 15-18. Nor do the "popular" limitations on the election 
of early Germanic kings preclude their holding a sacral 
status: Oakley, "Celestial Hierarchies," 30; Höfler, 
"Sakralcharakter," pp. 94-95.  

134 Turville-Petre, review of Baetke, Yngvi (supra n.  
124), 353-54. See also Ejerfeldt, "Germanische Königttum," 
334-36.  

135 McTurk, "Sacral Kingship in Ancient Scandinavia," 
pp. 148-52. Baetke's interpretation has not replaced that 
of Schröder, Ingunar-Freyr, p. 29f.
On the other hand, Baetke's work was a rather sobering counterbalance to some of the more extreme Germanic sacral kingship studies. Regrettably, it had a greater Tendenz (and a much more distasteful, combative style) than that of his opponents.

The decade following Baetke's work has seen an increasing trend toward more detailed studies of royal sacrality among particular Germanic peoples. In this regard, special attention must be directed to The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England (1970) by the American medievalist W. A. Chaney (1922-). Chaney regarded kingship as a basic integrating element of Anglo-Saxon society during both its pagan and Christian periods. Indeed, he contended that Anglo-Saxon kings continued to fulfill the dynamic societal role of earlier Germanic sacral kings. Tied into both mythic and temporal history by divine descent, they were ideal mediators between the gods and their people. Thus in the transition to the new religion, Anglo-Saxon kingship remained the focus of a cult-centered society. Chaney supported his case for continuity by an impressive synthesis of evidence from such diverse fields as archeology, law, comparative religion, and iconography, to name but a few.

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*136* Baetke's own narrow focus has likely prompted this research direction.

Chaney strongly emphasized the importance of divine
descent in Anglo-Saxon royal ideology. For it was by virtue
of their "god-sprung" lineage that pagan Anglo-Saxon kings
mediated an hereditary sacrality to their tribe. Ecclesi-
astical support of royal legitimacy indicates the enduring
strength of these ideas, as do the additions to royal gene-
alogies which cast Anglo-Saxon kings as descendants of bib-
lical figures. Chaney properly observed, however, that the
primary Anglo-Saxon royal deity was Woden, and outlined the
widespread evidence for a Woden cult in England. 138 相似-
ly, he contended that the priestly role of Anglo-Saxon
rulers, derived from their mediatorship with divine forebears,
lived on in the Christian Anglo-Saxon king's role at seasonal
festivals, the royal touch and other ascribed thaumaturgic
abilities, the bestowal of sainthood upon kings, and the cor-
relation of royal palace, pagan temple, and Christian Church. 139

Furthermore, Chaney considered the bounty-bringing
attributes of Anglo-Saxon kings as striking parallels to the
sacral peace-kings of the North whose reigns promoted "peace
and plenty." Hallowing of the royal burial mound, he suggested,

138 Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 15-42. See further:
E. A. Philippson, Germanisches Heidentum bei den Angelsachen.
Kölner Anglistische Arbeiten, Vol. IV (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz,
1929), pp. 156-61. F. M. Stenton, "The Historical Bearing of
Place-Name Studies: Anglo-Saxon Heathenism," Transactions of
in Doris Stenton, ed., Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England
in England: Evidence from the Poetry for a Cult of Woden in
Anglo-Saxon England," Folklore, LXXXIV (1963), 460-80; B.
Branston, The Lost Gods of England (New York: Oxford Univer-

139 Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 54-85.
amounted to a Christianization of these beneficent royal powers.\textsuperscript{140} The Germanic king's victory-bringing attributes were also manifested in the new religion by royal intercession for divine aid in battle. Indeed, Chaney claimed to have identified evidence for Wodanistic king-slaying in Anglo-Saxon England akin to the more dramatic royal sacrifices of the North.\textsuperscript{141} Thus he could conclude:

The role of the sacrificial king of heathenism thus continued in Anglo-Saxon England. Enmeshed in the folk's expectation of fertility and plenty, peace, and victory in battle, the monarch drew on ancient traditions of the Germanic peace-king, royal responsibility for the harvest, veneration for the body and mound of the heil-bringing king, sacrifice, ritual king-slaying, sanctuary and asylum associated with his sacral person, and divine intervention for victory obtained by the ruler.\textsuperscript{142}

Chaney drew particular attention to the close association of Anglo-Saxon kings with certain animals, birds, and symbolic insignia that, in turn, were prominent in cults of Germanic deities. Indeed, he contended that such objects were visible signs of royal sacrality which, like divine descent and popular beliefs in royal magic, linked the king with the Divine world even after the conversions.\textsuperscript{143} Chaney


\textsuperscript{141}Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 109-19. Thus King Penda's dismemberment of the Northumbrian Oswald (d. 642) may be a Wodanistic rite (ibid., pp. 116-19).

\textsuperscript{142}Ibid., pp. 119-20.

\textsuperscript{143}Ibid., pp. 121-55; idem., "Grendel and the Gifstol: A Legal View of Monsters," Proceedings of the Modern Language
believed that the Anglo-Saxon king's prominence in tribal conversion further attests that a cult of kingship had occupied a central place in Anglo-Saxon society. By virtue of their sacral status, kings took the lead in bringing the folk to Christianity. Royal apostasy resulted not only in tribal apostasy, but also loss of kingdom, just as it had in pre-Christian times.\textsuperscript{144}

Chaney concluded his study with a detailed examination of the legal evidence for an Anglo-Saxon sacral kingship.\textsuperscript{145} He observed, for example, that the word of the Anglo-Saxon king unsupported by oath is incontrovertible in the dooms, and that plotting against the king's life carries the death penalty. Indeed, Chaney contended that the traditional sacrificial-priestly role of Germanic sacral kingship was continued in the provisions relating to the Christian Anglo-Saxon king's priestly authority. Thus the physical area of the king had a special protection in Anglo-Saxon law. The royal residence was an area of legal asylum, as the pagan temple had been; he who fought in the king's presence was subject to death. Indeed, the decrees prohibiting a homicide from approaching the king have the ring of a royal tabu akin


\textsuperscript{145}Chaney, \textit{Cult of Kingship}, pp. 174-220 \textit{passim}. 
perhaps to the banning of outlaws from the pagan holy precinct. The equation of royal and episcopal periods of asylum (nine days) further strengthens Chaney's argument that Anglo-Saxon asylum stemmed from sacral rather than constitutional grounds.  

According to Chaney, the integration of Christianity into Anglo-Saxon society left the king only his sacral protector role, his sacrificial role having passed to the episcopal hierarchy. Christian consecration and anointing created a new royal sacrality which, in return for specific rules of Church and folk protection, greatly increased the king's authority. Yet the ultimate relationship between royal and episcopal authority as seen in the dooms was not that of conflict but rather mutual support, very much, indeed,


in the tradition of sacral kingship's integrated political and religious authority.147

Chaney may be criticized for overemphasizing correspondence between Anglo-Saxon and much later Scandinavian religious-historical evidence. Also, his argument for continuity in early Germanic and Anglo-Saxon beliefs and practices uncritically dismisses the difficult matter of extricating and interpreting what is "pagan" and "Germanic" in medieval Christian literary texts. Still more serious, however, is his confused and inadequate presentation of the nature of early Germanic royal sacrality.148 Terms such as "mana," "charisma," and "luck" appear indiscriminately. In general, Chaney seems to regard the early Germanic king as a semi-divine figure whose duty was to mediate tribal sacrality with the gods by proper sacrifice: "The early Germanic king is, consequently, not a god and not all powerful, but he is filled with a charismatic power on which his tribe depends for its well-being."

Although he apparently accepted Dumézil's theory of Germanic royal polarity (but only via de Vries' discussion),150 Chaney failed to consider Germanic kingship in the context of Continental state-formation. Also,

148 Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 11-16.
149 Ibid., p. 15.
150 Ibid., pp. 13-14, 34-35.
his treatment of sacral kingship in Anglo-Saxon law is extremely speculative, primarily because these sources have such a meager pre-Christian religious content. Here as throughout his work, Chaney has been perhaps overly swayed by the spectre of Chadwick's sacrificial "peace-king."

The fact that most of Chaney's chapters have essentially appeared as separate periodical publications over the previous decade no doubt accounts for this work's generally uneven and repetitious presentation. Its author clearly is more adept at wide-ranging synthesis than detailed textual analysis. Yet Chaney's elaboration of the Anglo-Saxon king's divine descent, and the integrating role of sacral kingship in tribal life is particularly praiseworthy. His chapter on royal cult-objects, with special reference to Sutton Hoo, is one of the very few studies available in English on this important subject. Chaney's suggestive work may admittedly amount to an extreme statement, but he has done well to redirect scholarly attention to the formative Germanic roots of early medieval kingship.

A review of modern sacral kingship research cannot overlook the recent study Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent (1971) by one of England's leading medievalists, J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (1916-)\textsuperscript{151} Although this work was devoted to a broader theme, \textit{viz.}, the common

\textsuperscript{151}J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, \textit{Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent}. The Ford Lectures 1970 (Oxford:
ideological features and practices of English and Continental kingship in the early middle ages, its initial chapters have particular bearing on the subject of Germanic sacral kingship. Wallace-Hadrill immediately expressed his doubts concerning the use of non-literary evidence for a history of early Germanic kingship. Rather, one must proceed from the more secure record of later Roman historians. In his opinion, the Germanic king of Tacitus' *Germania* emerges as a tribal leader chosen primarily for his *nobilitas*; he plays a prominent role at the Assembly but does not wield absolute authority.152 Indeed, by the first century AD, Germanic political organizations had already been significantly influenced by Celtic and Roman contacts, though not to the point of uniformity. For example, the Germanic chieftains who led confederate wars against Rome possessed that intensified, more permanent authority which Roman writers understood as royal.153


152Wallace-Hadrill, Early Germanic Kingship, pp. 1-3. He observes that Roman writers and their public were quite aware, from their own historical experience, of the possible religious component in kingship. For more sceptical comments on the archeological findings, see idem., "The Graves of Kings: An Historical Note on Some Archaeological Evidence," *Nuovi Studi Medievali*, 3rd ser., I (1960), 177-94.

153Wallace-Hadrill, Early Germanic Kingship, pp. 4-7.
Wallace-Hadrill stressed that even into the Migration Age, kings, while apparently more numerous and more powerful, were not universal among all Germanic people.

Wallace-Hadrill then directly examined early Germanic sacral kingship in its socio-political context. He contended that the kings of those Germanic peoples who migrated south into Europe and beyond, like those of ancient Scandinavia, were traditionally regarded as sacral, "by which we mean that they were cult-kings, representing the moral lives and domestic ideals of their people, incapsulating good-luck." 154 Yet in the course of migration, warfare, and settlement, they began to claim semi-divine rank, principally through divine descent. Wallace-Hadrill conceded that this North Germanic kingship had frequently been associated with warband (comitatus) leadership dedicated to Wodan. However, he observed that the mere presence of such Wodanistic rites and associations need not necessarily indicate a martial, warband kingship. For just as Wodan was not exclusively a war-god, the warband was never entirely separate from its tribe. Indeed, the sacrality bestowed upon kings by Thing-election and shield-raising further attests that a sacral king could remain fully integrated into the tribal structure: "Gens and kin and warband blend into one another to form a society. Kings have to do

154 Ibid., p. 8.
with every part of it." Thus, Wallace-Hadrill regarded Germanic warband-leadership as only one function of a wider, divinely protected tribal kingship which also (and more normally) had to contend with the everyday, peaceful affairs of peasant cultivators.

The religious elements of early Frankish and Anglo-Saxon kingship must also be seen in their respective societal contexts. The early Merovingian kings were powerful warband and confederate leaders but did not wholly abandon traditions of an older tribal kingship. It would even appear that Clovis, undeniably a mighty warrior-king, paid some heed to his family's divine genealogy and sacral background before and after his conversion to Christianity. Wallace-Hadrill thus suggested that the foundations of Frankish rulership rested securely upon ancient traditions of a bounty-bringing tribal kingship. The Frankish kings' union of successful conquests and sacral traditions gained enduring popular support for the dynasty.156

Similarly, Wallace-Hadrill observed that even though early Anglo-Saxon kings were predominately warband leaders (duces in the Tacitean sense), some at least were older tribal kings and others combined both rulership traditions. Moreover, descent from pagan gods and semi-deities continued

155 Ibid., p. 15.

to matter even after Anglo-Saxon dynasties adopted Christianity, for "Christian kings needed pagan ancestors of heroic standing." Thus, on the eve of Augustine's mission to King Aethelberht's court (596 AD), pagan beliefs and practices were widespread and intensely supported by the Kentish people and its royal line. Wallace-Hadrill attributed Aethelberht's conversion to the promises of battle-victory, personal good fortune, and dynastic stability which the new religion offered. Indeed, he pointed out that the Kentish king's decision, like many another early medieval royal conversion, did not mean abandoning ancestral gods, but merely adding another victory-bringing deity to the royal pantheon. Furthermore, Aethelberht's action may have been prompted by military reversals and declining prestige, circumstances which often led to deposition according to Germanic concepts of sacral kingship.

Wallace-Hadrill's study makes a number of valuable points. His discussion of the dual forms of leadership and sacrality contained within early Germanic royal ideology is particularly useful, not the least for reference to recent German scholarship on this matter. One would rather expect here a better appreciation of Dumézil's contribution.

158 Ibid., pp. 27-32, 44-46.
159 He briefly mentions, and dismisses, Dumézil's work as "still too conjectural." Ibid., p. 23 n. 11.
Wallace-Hadrill admits he is more willing to accept a sacral element in Germanic kingship than he previously has been, but his exposition of the nature of this royal sacrality remains fragmentary. For example, he apparently draws a distinction between the sacrality of ancient North Germanic "cult-kings" and that of later, divinely descended Continental reges. His definition of a cult-king is unclear, but would seem to be an ancient tribal ruler akin to the Frazerian sacrificial king. At the same time, however, he frequently emphasizes the importance of divine descent to ancient tribal sacral kingship. Nonetheless, Wallace-Hadrill's warnings against our forming too rigid and exclusive conceptions of early Germanic political organization and its religious component should be well taken. Again, much more could have been done with kingship terminology and non-literary evidence, both of which are highly elucidative if admittedly not fully conclusive sources. It should finally be observed that although in this work Wallace-Hadrill has given considerable weight to the pre-Christian religious elements of Germanic kingship, Romano-Christian features still dominate his overall vision of early medieval kingship.

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161 Wallace-Hadrill, Early Germanic Kingship, pp. 8-9, where it is briefly suggested that royal divine-descent claims among the Germans owed something to Romano-Christian influence.
Research into the religious complexion of early Germanic kingship thus emerged from a general anthropological and mythological background. Frazer's pioneering work laid the foundation for a generation of more specialized sacral kingship research. Chadwick, for example, greatly clarified the nature of early Anglo-Saxon and continental Germanic kingship with his ethnographic and literary-historical study of early English society. The significant ritual pattern of Indo-European royal inaugurations was disclosed by Hocart's comparative research, while Bloch was able to tap the lower, popular levels of European sacral kingship beliefs by examining royal thaumaturgic rites. A new stage in Germanic sacral kingship research commenced, however, with Dumézil's challenging theory of Indo-European ideological and societal tripartition. His view of the inherent polarity in the beliefs and practices of kingship, as further refined by Germanist supporters such as de Vries and Betz, has been a particularly valuable research-model for the ideological component of Germanic sacral kingship. Höfler's research, incorporating a wide range of mythological, cultic, sociologic, and popular evidence, made an equally significant contribution to this ideological aspect of Germanic sacral kingship research.

The progress of research over the past decade has in some respects been disappointing. A trend toward specialized studies of royal sacrality among individual Germanic peoples, as forecast by the monographs of Baetke and Chaney, has not
continued. This is unfortunate, for there remains ample
grounds for research of sacral kingship among a number of
important early medieval peoples, in particular, the Franks,
Lombards, and Goths. However, the religious dimension of
pagan Germanic kingship has received growing attention by
constitutional and legal historians as well as more socio-
logically oriented scholars.162

In general, recent Germanic sacral kingship study has
attempted to clarify conceptual difficulties raised by ini-
tial research. On the one hand, more direct attention has
been given to problems of sources and methodology.163 As a
result of this very necessary effort to attain a more secure
evidential footing, mythological and literary-historical

162 For example: Wenskus, Stammesbildung und Ver-
fassung, pp. 68-70, 305-14; Conrad, Dt. Recht., I, pp. I7-18;
Wolfram, "The Shaping of the Early Medieval Kingdom," Viator:
Medieval and Renaissance Studies, I (Berkeley: University of
California Press, 1970), pp. I-20; and Bosl, Die Gesellschaft
in der Geschichte des Mittelalters (Tübingen: Vandenhoeck &
Ruprecht, 1966), pp. 29-31; idem., "Staat, Gesellschaft, Wirt-
schaft," p. 596; C. Friedrich, "Political Leadership and the
Problem of the Charismatic Power," Journal of Politics, XXIII
(1961), 3-24 esp. 16-18; N. Wagner, "Dioskuren, Jungmann-
schaften, und Doppelnkönigtum," Zeitschrift für deutsche
Philologie, LXXIX (1960), 1-17, 225-47; A. H. Price, "Dif-
erentiated Germanic Social Structures," Vierteljahrschrift
für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, LV (1968), 433-48 esp.
438-40; Mensching, Soziologie der Religion (2nd ed.; Bonn:
Röhrscheid, 1968), pp. 60-71; E. M. Loeb, "Die Institution

163 Wolfram, "Methodische Fragen"; McTurk, "Sacral
Kingship in Ancient Scandinavia."
interpretations have fallen into some disfavor. Such a reaction is not without justification and, indeed, reflects an "historicist" trend in the larger research-field of early Germanic religion. Yet a strictly historical approach is not entirely sufficient in itself, since sacral kingship represents a complex system of beliefs as well as a corpus of documented ritual practices. In this regard, Karl Hauck's cult-historical studies are extremely valuable for having demonstrated how Germanic royal rites and symbols were vital expressions of sacral kingship ideology. Future research should certainly take non-literary sources into account as valuable supportive evidence. Substantial progress can be achieved by a thorough examination of both the historical evidence and the ideological or dogmatic content of Germanic sacral kingship. Such a religious-historical approach provides the necessary balance for the study of this complex subject.

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164 Derolez, *Dieux des Germains*; Buchholz, "Perspectives."
CHAPTER II:
GERMANIC KINGSHIP AND ITS RELIGIOUS BASES:
HISTORICAL EXPRESSIONS

In order to assess the nature of Germanic royal sacrality, one must first consider the political configuration of early Germanic kingship. What does the historical evidence tell us about the position of kings within early Germanic socio-political organization? In what ways, moreover, did early Germanic royal authority relate to the religious sphere, and how did such connections affect the function of kings and the processes of early Germanic statecraft? It may be useful to consider these questions by examining the historical evidence within the following chronological sequence: (1) the Late (Pre-Roman) Iron Age, c. 250-100 BC; (2) the Pre-Migration or Augustan Age (Early Principate), c. 50 BC-100 AD; (3) the Migrations (Völkerwanderung), c. 200-500 AD; and (4) the early middle ages, c. 500-800 AD. On the one hand, the presence of kingship among the Germanic peoples is attested at a considerably earlier date that has generally been recognized. These early Germanic kings, moreover, performed a wide variety of military, judicial, and religious duties. Indeed, it becomes apparent that both the functional roles of Germanic kings, and Germanic socio-political structures themselves, were highly fluid and more complex from the earliest times.
The Late Iron Age (c. 250-100 BC)

An important early reference to Germanic kings occurs in connection with the Bastarnae, an East Germanic people. In 182 BC, a band of Bastarnae composed of "noble youths and some of royal birth" appeared before King Philip V of Macedonia to support his struggle with Rome. Four years later, enticed both by Macedonian promises of new lands and direct subsidies, the gens Bastarnorum crossed the Danube in a model large-scale East Germanic migration. However, bitter local resistance and severe storms impeded their march through Thrace; indeed, many warriors along with some principes and nobiles were reportedly lost. Nonetheless, a certain Clondicus (dux) successfully led a contingent of Bastarnae as planned into Upper Moesia.

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3Livy, Rom. Hist., xl.58. According to the Macedonian alliance, the Bastarnae were to destroy the Illyrian Dardani,
This figure is a fine example of an early Germanic warlord emerging from his tribe to head a specific military campaign. Furthermore, Clondicus' dealings with the new Macedonian king, Perseus, would indicate sole command of at least this particular enterprise. On the other hand, there are references in a variety of literary and epigraphic sources to kings among the Bastarnae. In particular, it is with the Bastarnae that we first confront Germanic multiple kingship (Vielkönigtum). This form of rulership, with its several variations, e.g., district kingship (Gaukönigtum, Kleinkönigtum), and dual kingship (Doppelkönigtum), was actually far more common in early Germanic institutional history than unitary kingship, i.e., monarchy. One must conclude that the Bastarnae had both a royal clan (genus/stirps regia) and numerous warlords (duces, principes) from perhaps as early as the second century BC. Indeed, war leadership was a primary concern of all these chieftains, whether or not they already were of royal lineage.

settle on their lands, and thus threaten Northern Italy (ibid., xl.57). A "Clondicus regulus" led a force of 20,000 unsuccessfully against the Romans in 168 BC, (ibid., xlv.26-27).


Multiple kingship is even more evident in the first direct Germanic assault on Roman territory, the so-called "Cimbrian Invasion" (c. 115-101 BC). Land acquisition seems to have been the major goal of this massive raid, as it had been with the Bastarnae. However, whole-peoples (gentes) were not involved in this invasion; instead, large splinter-groups from three distinct West Germanic tribes (Cimbri, Teutones, Ambrones) as well as several Celtic peoples (Tigurini, Helviti) had joined into a loosely knit confederation. Moreover, each component Germanic group

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7 Mildenberger, Kulturgeschichte, p. 107: "Only parts of tribes evidently went along and bands from others attached themselves to the itinerant sections. Thus a large migration-group gradually was formed, consisting of splinters of various tribes, in this case Germans and Celts." For a useful classification of early Germanic migrations, see S. Gutenbrunner, "Volkstum und Wanderung," in Germanische Altertumskunde, ed. H. Schneider (2nd ed.; Munich: C. H. Beck, 1951), pp. 9-11.
apparently had numerous kings and chieftains in its ranks. For example, at the battle of Aquae Sextiae (102 BC), King Teutobad was taken prisoner along with two other kings of the Teutones. The Cimbri lost four kings at Vercellae (101 BC): Boirix and Lugius were slain, Claodicus and Caesorix captured.\(^8\)

It is difficult to determine qualitative differences in these Cimbrian leaders' authority which, indeed, would seem to be suggested by terminological distinctions (reges, reguli, duces). King Boirix, however, has the stature of an overall commander: he personally negotiated with the Roman general Marius and held the most prominent position in battle. Moreover, Boirix is specifically said to have a retinue.\(^9\)

One might speculate that the most outstanding and accomplished among many such independent tribal leaders was chosen for unitary command before a major battle. In any event, this martial kingship, rooted in retinue command and involving a Germanic confederation, will be encountered with growing

\(^8\)Florus, Rom. Hist., i.38; Plutarch, Marius, xxxiv. Orosius, however, calls Teutobad dux, and refers also to Cimbrian reguli (Hist., cols. 954, 956). For able discussions of all these leaders, see Dahn, Könige, I, pp. 99-101 and Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 112.

\(^9\)Plutarch, Marius, xxv: "And now Boirix the king of the Cimbri, with a small retinue, rode up towards the camp and challenged Marius to set a day and a place and come out and fight for the ownership of the country"; Florus, Rom. Hist., i.38: "King Boirix fell fighting energetically in the forefront of the battle, and not without having inflicted vengeance on his foes." Note that while still in Gaul, Boirix is called rex and is prominent enough to execute a captured Roman legate:
regularity amidst the turbulence of East and West Germanic migration.

There is admittedly little direct evidence of any religious dimension or functions attributed to Germanic kings in this early period. However, a number of significant religious rites were associated with the Cimbrian invasion. In the first instance, Strabo reported that Cimbrian campaigns customarily included a number of prestigious tribal priestesses. Indeed, he vividly described these imposing white-robed figures elaborately sacrificing war-prisoners and uttering battle-prophecy from the swirling gore. Ceremonial cult objects, no doubt carried from the tribe's North Sea homeland, are also much in evidence among the Cimbri. The priestesses in Strabo's account, for example, used a massive sacrificial cauldron to catch their victims' blood; the Cimbri of Jutland later presented a similar sacred vessel to the emperor Octavian in confirmation of a peace accord (5 AD). Again, after the Cimbri had defeated a Roman

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10Strabo, Geog., vii.2.3.

11Ibid.
garrison and forced a passage over the Alps (101 BC), they
pardoned their Roman prisoners by having them take oath upon
a bronze bull-statue. 12

The presence of priestesses and bull worship points
to chthonic, fertility beliefs and practices among the
Cimbri. Indeed, until the Migration Age, priestesses, god-
desses, fertility cults, and cult-leagues were very prominent
among the Germans. 13 On the other hand, there is evidence
of a very different form of sacrality involved in the Cimbrian
invasion. Orosius relates 14 that after the battle of Arausio
in southern Gaul (105 BC), the Cimbri and Teutones, "in

12 Plutarch, Marius, xxiii. These elaborate rites, a
class of religious specialists, and bull-worship must put one
in mind of the ritual scenes on the (Cimbrian?) Gundestrup
cauldron, and may represent Celtic influences. See: Schütte,
Forefathers, I, p. 320; Klindt-Jensen, Denmark before the
Vikings, pp. 91-93; but cf. de Vries, AGR, I, pp. 368-69, who
casts doubts on Plutarch's report.

13 de Vries, AGR, I, pp. 483-86, II, pp. 163-208 passim;
Schwarz, Stammeskunde, pp. 37-40; Hauck, "Carmina Antiqua,"
8-23; E. Polomé, "La religion germanique primitive, reflet d'une
structure sociale," Le Flambeau, XXXVII (1954), 437-63 esp. 450f.;
Derolez, Religion des Germands, pp. 112-13; F. Genzmer, "Staat
und Gesellschaft in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit," in
Ger. Alt., ed. Schneider, pp. 137-41; Philipson, Genealogie
der Götter, pp. 6-19; Chadwick, Origin, pp. 306-23; R. Brif-
1927), I, pp. 414-17, II, 541-43, III, 64-68. There are good
accounts of these early Germanic priestesses in Grimm, TM, I,
pp. 94-98 and de Vries, AGR, I, pp. 404-406. For the archeo-
logical background, see: Mildenberger, Kulturgeschichte, pp.
G. Kossack, "The Germans," in The Roman Empire and Its Neigh-
307-17; Owen, Germanic Peoples, pp. 186-99.

14 Orosius, Hist., v.16, col. 953.
accordance with a strange and unusual oath," destroyed all their rich war prizes and hung their Roman prisoners. In fact, this incident is quite familiar within the context of early Germanic religious tradition. Before a major battle, the Germans often dedicated their opposing army to the gods and then carried out mass prisoner-sacrifice. Moreover, such battle dedications and subsequent ritual hangings were very distinctive features of Wodan (Odin)-worship. There is, indeed, further evidence of Wodanistic rites among the Cimbri. For example, incidents of both male and female self-sacrifice are reported, and votive inscriptions to a Mercurius Cimbrianus have even been found. Thus it would appear that a single migrating Germanic group could exhibit not only a variety of leaders, but also religious rites springing from several distinct sacral spheres.


The Pre-Migration Age (c. 50 BC-100 AD)

However, the first detailed accounts of Germanic socio-political organization appear only during the later Roman Principate and the Augustan Age. It may be observed that this heightened historiographic interest in the Germans significantly coincides with Roman military and political expansion into continental Europe. Our principal sources for this pre-Migration period are Caesar and Tacitus. Each author discusses early Germanic political authority from two perspectives: first, through a general descriptive account of Germanic socio-political structure, and secondly, by specific examples of the careers of outstanding Germanic kings. Thus it is possible to consider both the constitutional position of early Germanic kings and the actual process of kingdom-founding among the Germanic peoples.

The circumstances of Julius Caesar's encounter with the Germans are well known from his work *De Bello Gallico*.18 As proconsul for the province of Transalpine Gaul, he had responded to a request for Roman military aid from an allied Gallic tribe under attack by Germanic war-bands. After some initial delay, Caesar defeated these formidable opponents...
and drove them back across the Rhine (58 BC). Indeed, this success directly paved the way for the conquest of Independent Gaul (Gallia comata). Two years later, Caesar returned to Gaul to check further trans-Rhenane Germanic incursions (55-54 BC), and in the following year he again bridged the Rhine to punish the Germanic allies of Ambiorix's Gallic revolt.

At first sight, then, it would appear that Caesar was in a position to give particularly valuable testimony about the Germans. There are a number of difficulties, however. For example, Caesar's knowledge of Germanic affairs was for the most part derived from Gallic informants who might not be expected to provide an accurate accounting of their enemies. It should also be noted that even those Germans whom Caesar did personally confront were in a state of migration and warfare. Indeed, Caesar's references to the Germans are on the whole only incidental and rather vague. One must bear in mind that he was composing not an historical or ethnographic treatise but in essence a military report meant to be read in Rome and further his own political fortunes. Nonetheless,

it is unlikely that Caesar completely fabricated his evidence, and what he does say merits attention as the first significant description of Germanic socio-political organization.

Caesar's general account of early Germanic institutions may be briefly set forth. He reported that each Germanic people or "state" (civitas) was comprised of various tribes (pagi, gentes) and clans (cognationes). In peacetime, a people managed its affairs on a local level; there was no common official for the civitas as a whole. Rather, prestigious "leading men" (magistratus, principes) of each component tribe met annually in local councils to allocate arable land to the clans, settle disputes, and generally "do justice" in their own districts. In wartime, however, the civitas normally chose a number of leading men for military command. Also, a princeps had the right to

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21When a civitas was faced with sudden invasion, a council of all leading men might be convened and take military decisions: Caesar, Gallic War, iv.19; this body could even accompany the chosen war-leaders in negotiations: ibid., 1.43, iv.11, 13.

Latin institutional terminology and its application to the early Germans is a significant problem. One should recall Cicero's influential definition: "When the supreme authority is in the hands of one man, we call him a king, and the form of this State a kingship." The Republic, 1.26, ed. C. Keyes. The Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1966). Roman political thought in the time of Caesar and Tacitus was strongly anti-royal. See: A. Rosenberg, "Rex: Die antike Traditionen," RE, eds. Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, 2nd ser., I;1, cols. 711-16; Dvornik, Political Philosophy, II,
conduct individual plunder-raids into neighboring territory by announcing his enterprise at the Assembly of warriors and there gathering a retinue.22

It will have been noticed that kings are singularly absent from this account. Indeed, with but one exception which shall shortly be discussed, Caesar does not speak of kings among the Germans. Who, then, were these leading men (principes)? As has been pointed out, a princeps enjoyed rather extensive civil and military functions. In peacetime he might expect to become a judge in his district or a retinue leader abroad, and in war a military commander for the civitas. However, the princeps did not wield coercive authority, except perhaps as chosen war-leader, when he did have the power of life and death over his men.23 But even this role was most likely temporary and, again, involved multiple leadership.24 Furthermore, Caesar explicitly states

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23 Caesar, Gallic War, vi.23.

24 Ibid. A dual command, however, may have been becoming more prevalent (ibid., i.37). Thompson, Early Germans, pp. 13-14.
that these leading men did not possess outstanding personal wealth. One is therefore faced with the conclusion that the principes' influential social position was essentially a matter of prestige based on noble birth. It is likely that every Germanic tribe had such an ancient nobility of birth from whose ranks war-leaders and judges were chosen.

The next major study now extant of Germanic socio-political structures appeared in Tacitus' *Germania* (98 AD). There has been much debate on the composition, purpose, and

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historical accuracy of this work. It will suffice here to merely observe that the Germania stands in the tradition of Greco-Roman ethnography which includes such authors as Herodotus, Poseidonius, Strabo, and the Elder Pliny.\(^{28}\) While earlier scholarship tended to question Tacitus' objectivity, recent research has more justifiably upheld the work's historical reliability.\(^{29}\) However, one must approach


Tacitus' institutional comments with some care, as many unfortunate excesses have resulted from an uncritical acceptance of his every remark.30

Tacitus describes three main organs of government among the Germans. In the first instance, a council of leading men (principes) from the tribes (pagi) met in peace-time to settle minor judicial matters of the whole civitas. A princeps, according to Tacitus, was a free warrior who could claim either noble birth or outstanding services rendered by his forebears. Before taking his place on the noble council, however, a young princeps had to serve a military apprenticeship in the retinue of an established leader.31 More important issues, such as decisions of war and peace, election of judges for the pagi, and punishment of communal offenses, were first considered by the leading men and then brought before another deliberative body, a General Assembly of free warriors. The Assembly convened at fixed times and generally

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31 Tacitus, Germania, xi, xiii-xiv. A princeps received rich gifts from outside communities and leaders (ibid., xv). Between the time of Caesar and Tacitus, Germanic retinue leaders, i.e., principes, had emerged as an independent and "international" class through the acquisition of personal wealth and subsequent prestige: Thompson, Early Germans, pp. 50-60.
in a sacred precinct of the civitas, which thereby imparted a religious sanction to its proceedings.32

Several kinds of Germanic chieftainship are mentioned by Tacitus. On the one hand, he refers to the warlord (dux), chosen for martial prowess. Any distinguished free warrior could become such a leader, but his command likely encompassed only a specific campaign and did not convey coercive authority.33 Secondly, Tacitus speaks of the Germanic king (rex), chosen on the basis of noble birth. In some respects, he appears but little removed from a princeps or a dux. For example, in peacetime, a king could bring proposals before the Assembly, yet their approval depended more on his persuasive ability than any invested coercive power. Similarly, a king commanding in the field could not summarily impose his will on his men nor inflict punishment.34 Yet the Tacitean rex has several distinct privileges. Thus, part of the compensation in private cases before the Assembly accrued directly to the king, who seems also to have exercised a personal right of protection over freedmen.35 Moreover, the


33Tacitus, Germania, vii. Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum" p. 110. But this temporary war leadership was now apparently concentrated in the hands of one or perhaps two duces. Thompson, Early Germans, pp. 32-33, 39.

34Tacitus, Germania, vii, xi.

35Ibid., xii, xxv.
king participates in a notable religious rite, viz., the interpreting of a people's most sacred auspices, the neighing of the white horses.\(^{36}\) The Germanic king in Tacitus' account thus holds an essentially moral and honorific constitutional position; he possesses significant judicial and religious authority (\textit{auctoritas}) but very little actual power (\textit{potestas}).

Several points need further clarification, however. Tacitus indicated that kingship, though a definite part of early Germanic political life, was not universal. Whereas kingship is said to be especially vigorous among Scandinavian and East Germanic groups, some peoples were apparently ruled by local oligarchies of leading men (\textit{principes}), much as Caesar had described one hundred and fifty years earlier.\(^{37}\) But one must not hastily conclude that all Germanic tribes were statically arranged into "non-royal" and "royal" groupings, or (worse still) into "republics" versus "monarchies."\(^{38}\) For some so-called monarchical peoples of this

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\(^{36}\) \textit{Ibid.}, \textit{x}. These animals were kept at public expense in holy groves; for the auspices, they were yoked to a sacred chariot and then led about by a priest with king or leading princeps attending. See further: \textit{de Vries, AGR}, I, pp. 393, 428.

\(^{37}\) \textit{Tacitus, Germania}, xliii-xliv. The presence of these non-royal principates may be surmised from juxtapositions such as "\textit{rex vel princeps,}" "\textit{rex vel princeps civitatis,}" "\textit{regi vel civitati}" (\textit{ibid.}, \textit{x}, \textit{xi}, \textit{xii}). Like the \textit{rex}, the \textit{princeps civitatis} had prescribed religious function; see \textit{Thompson, Early Germans}, pp. 32, 44.

time are known to have returned to rulership by their leading men, while tribes that had lived for many years without kings could suddenly choose a royal leader. Nor is it fully warranted to maintain that a people among whom kingship is attested could not at the same time elect a temporary warlord (dux); for as we shall see, pre-Migration kings could certainly be military commanders.

Moreover, it is likely that Tacitus' general description of Germanic socio-political structure refers primarily to the West Germanic peoples and was founded upon reports of Roman soldiers as well as merchants trafficking along the Rhine frontier. Indeed, the fact that West Germanic tribal kingship was quite weakly established in the pre-Migration period would have impressed Tacitus, who generally conceived of kingship as a permanent and coercive authority. Various division into "popular" and "royal" constitutions is somewhat better but still misleading: Conrad, *Dt. Recht.*, I, pp. 15-16. See further: J. B. Bury, *The Invasion of Europe by the Barbarians* (1927; rpt. New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), pp. 11-15; Genzmer, "Staat und Gesellschaft," pp. 148-149; Dopsch, *Social Foundations*, pp. 173-75; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, pp. 313-14.


40 Thompson, *Early Germans*, p. 32 n. 1; Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 137.


explanations have been offered to account for such a temporary eclipse of West Germanic kingship. For example, it is possible that conflicts and jealousies within and between local Germanic oligarchies mitigated against the emergence of an enduring royal rule over an entire people.\textsuperscript{43} Clan rivalry could certainly be divisive; yet there is another, external historical factor which may also have had a significant role. It has recently been pointed out that tribal kingship, that is, royal rulership on the lower-level of constituent pagi, had itself been effectively abandoned by the West Germans even before Caesar's time, perhaps in response to a similar development among the neighboring Celtic tribes of Gaul.\textsuperscript{44} Indeed, we shall see that it was precisely a supra-tribal kingship which began to take precedence in the pre-Migration period among the West Germanic peoples.

Many interpretive problems connected with Tacitus' account have derived from attempts to force early Germanic political organization into rigid and anachronistic categories. An alternate interpretation which takes the fluidity of early Germanic constitutional structure into account may thus be suggested. Tacitus acknowledges that a royal clan (stirps

\textsuperscript{43} Demougeot, Formation de l'Europe, pp. 289-96; Thompson, Early Germans, pp. 72-108, passim.

regia) existed among some West Germanic peoples and that kings were chosen on the grounds of noble birth. The royal clan can hence be regarded as the noblest of many noble families in a civitas. Such a clan could likely be found among most pre-Migration Germanic peoples, even though its members were not always chosen for communal leadership. When royal election did occur, the council of principes apparently designated one of its own who belonged to the royal clan for approval by the Assembly. In this way it can be said that early Germanic kings were "elected," and probably for life; yet the choice was already confined to a single family. Early Germanic kingship was therefore an exalted form of noble lordship, and Germanic constitutional structure may perhaps best be described as aristocratic with a royal apex.

Caesar and Tacitus also furnish valuable accounts of individual Germanic kings which reveal the processes of early Germanic statecraft as well as the relationship between religion and kingdom-founding among the early Germans. First, there was Ariovistus, Caesar's formidable Germanic rival.

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45 Thompson, Early Germans, pp. 35, 40-41. This fusion of elective and hereditary rights is called Geblütsrecht by German historians: Kern, Kingship and Law, pp. 12-14; Mitteis, Der Staat, pp. 7-8; Conrad, Dt. Recht., I, p. 16.

in the Gallic civil wars. His origins are somewhat unclear but Caesar calls him rex Germanorum, and from additional evidence it can be concluded that he was of Suebic royal birth. It is difficult to proceed much further, since in contemporary Roman historiography "Suebi" was a collective term for trans-Rhenane Germans. The later course of this Germanic king's career, however, merits particular attention. Ariovistus and his followers apparently had taken an active part in the bitter fighting which brought various Suebic

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48 Caesar, Gallic War, i.31, and Florus, Rom. Hist., i.45.

49 Ariovistus is probably the rex Sueborum Pliny says was ruling in 61 BC: Natural History, II.67.170; ed. H. Rackham. The Loeb Classical Library (10 vols.; London: Heinemann, 1967), I; Appian, Rom. Hist., iv.16: "Ariovistus, the king of the Germans beyond the Rhine." His first wife is said to be "of Suebic nationality whom he had brought with him from home." Caesar, Gallic War, i.53. The great Völkerwanderung scholar Ludwig Schmidt thought Ariovistus was a king of the Triboci, a Celticized Suebic tribe: "Ariovist," Hermes, XLII (1907), 509-10.

sub-tribes across the Rhine into Gaul (c. 72 BC). Ten years later, Ariovistus' war-band was hired by the Celtic Sequani to destroy a powerful rival tribe (61 BC). After his great victory, however, the Suebic king seized a large part of the Sequani's land, demanded tribute and noble hostages, and collected reinforcements from beyond the Rhine.

It should be noted that even at this time, some four years before Caesar's arrival, references could be made to Ariovistus' "royal authority." In 59 BC, the Suebic king was officially proclaimed "King and Friend of the Roman People" (rex et amicus populi Romani) by the Senate. The bestowal of this title certainly did not make Ariovistus a king, but rather confirmed his authority as a power in eastern Gaul and freed him from Roman interference. Indeed, this action no doubt had Caesar's approval, as it occurred in his consular term. Nonetheless, by the following year Caesar

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51 Ariovistus boasted that his war-band had not been beneath a roof in fourteen years: Caesar, Gallic War, i.36. Callies, "Ariovist," 407.


54 Caesar repeatedly claimed that he himself had secured Ariovistus this honor: Gallic War, i.35,43. Gelzer, Caesar,
apparently had determined to repulse the Germanic king and, under the pretext of aiding allied Celtic tribes, advanced into Ariovistus' territory. After lengthy personal negotiations with the Germanic king broke off, Caesar attacked and soundly defeated Ariovistus' forces near Besançon (58 BC). The Suebic king Ariovistus had thus first made his mark as an enterprising retinue-leader or princeps in Gaul. However, instead of relinquishing his military command, he began at once to consolidate and expand his position by land seizure, settlement, and tribute demands. Ariovistus thereby erected a confederate kingship comprised of seven West Germanic splinter-tribes and assorted war-bands, rather than whole-peoples (gentes). Yet the retinue and its lord remained the focus of this supra-tribal political organization. Indeed, Ariovistus' "state" resembles an extended retinue, with each component group likely bound to him along the model of his original Suebic war-band.

p. 108. The Germanic king seems to have made a legation to Rome: Caesar, Gallic War, i.43.

55 Ibid., i.37-41 (the advance against Ariovistus), i.42-47 (the negotiations), and i.51-53 (the battle). Caesar's account of his diplomacy with Ariovistus is remarkably detailed but highly suspect. As Walser pointed out, the purpose is to vindicate Caesar's aggression against Ariovistus (Caesar und die Germanen, pp. 27-34); but he rather exaggerates the role of rhetorical distortion (ibid., pp. 24-27). Cf. Dio Cassius, Rom. Hist., xxxviii.34-35 for a more impartial statement.

56 Schwarz, Stammeskunde, pp. 159-63; R. Much, "Die Sudmark der Germanen," PBB, XVII (1893), 18-20, 100-108; Gutenbrunner, "Volkstum und Wanderung," p. 11.

57 Schlesinger, "Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft," pp. 153-54. Ariovistus is said to have actively sought and welcomed
German historians have termed this new confederate lordship Heerkönigtum. By a process of war-band leadership and settlement, West Germanic retinue-lords seized the opportunity to establish hereditary realms. Yet the survival of such kingdoms greatly depended on the martial king's maintaining his high level of prestige by a continued series of victories. Ariovistus was clearly well on the way toward forging such an enduring, unitary state; with defeat, his federate realm rapidly unravelled. The extent of Ariovistus' authority, however, must not be underestimated, even though Caesar may have somewhat exaggerated his Germanic rival's position. Ariovistus' far-reaching alliances, the receipt of fresh Germanic war-bands from across the Rhine (Dio Cassius, Rom. Hist., xxxviii.35; Caesar, Gallic War, i.35,44). Note the appearance on the Rhine of a Suebic splinter-group under dual command of two brothers (ibid., i.37).

58 The constitutional historian Walter Schlesinger has been the leading spokesman of this concept. As Schlesinger defines it, Heerkönigtum began with, but went beyond war leadership. It meant the acquisition "not only of a temporary authority, but an actual lordship which initially covers only the participant personally in a land-taking martial operation. But with victory it soon gains supra-personal elements as well, which will relate to the subjugated region and not diminish again after the conquest, but become hereditary in many cases within the Heerkönig's family." ("Heerkönigtum," pp. 105-106). See further on Heerkönigtum: Bosl, "Staat, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft," p. 506; Genzmer, "Staat und Gesellschaft," pp. 148-49; Schwarz, Stammeskunde, pp. 220-21; Wenskus, Stammesbildung und Verfassung, pp. 409-10; Lütge, Sozialgeschichte, pp. 22-23; Immink, Roots of Medieval Society, p. 43; D. Hanson, From Kingdom to Commonwealth (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 75; Wolfram, "Early Medieval Kingdom," pp. 4-5.

59 Walser, Caesar und die Germanen, pp. 22-23. See Dio Cass., Rom. Hist., xxxviii.34. Demougeot regards Ariovistus as the leader of a shifting war-league (Formation de l'Europe,
of an amicus-title, and the federate structure of his kingdom are all indicative of a nascent foreign policy. He even appears to have issued his own coinage.

Ariovistus' confederate retinue-leadership must also be distinguished from the earlier migration and warfare of whole-people such as the Cimbri. Moreover, Schlesinger has observed that the retinue warfare of Germanic leagues did not initially bear the pronounced sacrality associated with tribal or "popular" migration and warfare. In the latter case, the warlord's authority was not absolute, but shared with tribal religious specialists. On the other hand, the leader in retinue warfare seems to have had unrestricted authority. This suggestion is borne out by a notable incident in Ariovistus' career. For it is reported that the Germanic king delayed joining battle with the Romans for

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pp. 60-61) and Thompson also concludes "there is no reason to think that Ariovistus had any authority of a kind unknown elsewhere in Germany at that time." (Early Germans, p. 95 n. 1 and p. 70 n. 3).

Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," pp. 116-17; Callies, "Ariovist," 408. Ariovistus' second wife was the sister of the Celtic king of Noricum, and he could himself speak Celtic: Caesar, Gallic War, i.53,47.


The useful German terminological distinction is Gefolgschaftskriege and Volkskriege: Kuhn, "Kriegswesen und Seefart," pp. 101-102; Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 119; Wenskus, Stammesbildung und Verfassung, pp. 319-20.

Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 120; cf. Caesar, Gallic War, vi.23 and Tacitus, Germania, vii.
several days because certain tribal priestesses (matres familiae), presumably in his camp, had foretold disaster if he fought before the new moon. However, Ariovistus cast these warnings aside when an initial skirmish seemed in his favor. The Heerkönig's authority was clearly superior to these seers', whose position is thus not comparable to that of the influential Cimbrian priestesses.

Another renowned Germanic leader who engaged in this kind of supra-tribal statecraft, and with considerably greater success, was the Marcomannic king Maroboduus. When Drusus and later Tiberius were carrying Roman standards beyond the Rhine, Maroboduus withdrew a large number of the Marcomanni from the Main region and led them to new homes in Bohemia (c. 5 BC). There, he soon subjugated Celtic and neighboring Germanic tribes with a powerful army, welcomed adventurous war-bands, and offered asylum to those disaffected with Rome. Moreover, he built a palace set aside from his people's main stronghold and amassed a royal treasury. In less than a

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64 Caesar, Gallic War, i.44. Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 117.

decade, Maroboduus had created a strong confederate kingdom; indeed, his suzerainty extended over the influential Suebic Semnones and even the Lombards along the lower Elbe. In 6 AD, he secured from Tiberius the official position of amicus, and did not participate in the great Cheruscan revolt culminating in the Teutoberg Forest (9 AD). Thereupon, the victorious Arminius denounced his Marcomannic rival as a tyrant and traitor to all Germans. Deserted by his northern allies, Maroboduus was defeated and fell back into inner Bohemia (17 AD). Three years later, he was deposed by a rival chieftain and driven into permanent exile at Ravenna.

The stages in Maroboduus' career are again significant. In the first instance, Maroboduus seems to have directed the Marcomannic emigration to Bohemia as temporary warlord (dux, princeps), though he was likely of royal birth and already invested with the limited authority generally ascribed to Germanic tribal kings.\(^6\) The reasons for this move and the subsequent effects on the nature of Maroboduus' authority were acutely noted by the Roman historian Velleius Paterculus, who was himself a veteran of the Marcomannic wars:

Maroboduus, a man of noble family (genere nobilis), strong in body and courageous in mind, a barbarian by birth but not in intelligence, he achieved among his

\(\text{\textsuperscript{6}}\text{Strabo, Geog., vii.1.3. Tacitus also calls him rex, though in the context of his later Bohemian realm: Annals, ii.26,44. Dobias, "King Maroboduus," 156.}\)
countrymen no mere chief's position (principatus) gained as the result of internal disorders or chance or liable to change and dependent on the caprice of his subjects, but, conceiving in his mind the idea of a definite empire and royal powers (certum imperium vimque regiam), he resolved to remove his own race far away from the Romans and to migrate to a place where, inasmuch as he had fled before the strength of more powerful arms, he might make his own more powerful. 67

Maroboduus erected his new authority by a process much like that of the earlier Heerkönig Ariovistus, viz., war-leadership, conquest, and settlement. Land-hunger as well as general fear and disaffection with Roman rule were again significant compelling factors. Similarly, the component peoples in Maroboduus' kingdom were not whole-peoples (gentes), but splinter-groups from many larger tribes. 68 Independent Germanic war-bands also attached themselves freely to the Marcomannic king's enterprise: even Ingviomerus, Arminius' uncle, brought his large retinue to Maroboduus' support during the Cheruscan uprising. 69 However, his authority in Bohemia exceeded the bounds of Heerkönigtum. From a confederate war-lord, Maroboduus had become an autocratic ruler who subjugated


69 Tacitus, Annals, ii.45. Thompson, Early Germans, pp. 82-83.
both foreign and Germanic peoples with a powerful standing army and forged an empire which stretched from the lower Elbe to the Danubian plain.\textsuperscript{70}

Indeed, the growth of Maroboduus' power, the strength of his army, and his proximity to northern Italy, aroused considerable suspicion and anxiety in Rome, despite the Marcomannic king's avowals of his peaceful intentions.\textsuperscript{71} The result was Tiberius' massive but inconclusive invasion of Bohemia. His negotiations and peace-accord with Maroboduus,\textsuperscript{72} moreover, had far-reaching consequences. For Maroboduus remained loyal to Rome in the turbulent days following Arminius' victory. Not only did he refuse to join the Cheruscan king, but he returned Arminius' generous gift of Varus' severed head to Tiberius for proper burial in the family tomb of Augustus.\textsuperscript{73} Arminius' effective propaganda against his

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\textsuperscript{71}Velleius Pat., Rom. Hist., ii.109: "The body of guards protecting the kingdom (imperium) of Maroboduus... soon placed him in a position of power that was dreaded even by our empire. His policy toward Rome was to avoid provoking us by war... the envoys whom he sent to the Caesars sometimes commended him to them as a suppliant and sometimes spoke as though they represented an equal."
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\textsuperscript{73}Velleius Pat., Rom. Hist., ii.119.
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Marcomannic rival also reveals that Maroboduus' absolutist authority had become extremely unpopular. Thus, when Maroboduus withdrew before Arminius' army, several important allies immediately abandoned his cause, while Tiberius' secret negotiations with discontented Marcomannic nobles sealed Maroboduus' downfall. It should be noted, however, that despite his reverses, Maroboduus succeeded in establishing an hereditary kingship, for Tacitus speaks of Marcomannic kings belonging to "the noble line of Maroboduus" in his own day.

The nature and extent of Roman influence upon Maroboduus' statecraft must finally be considered. It has been observed that the Marcomannic king's autocratic rule was quite exceptional in the pre-Migration Germanic world. Now Strabo reports that Maroboduus had, in fact, been raised in Rome and enjoyed the favor of Augustus. A major feature of Imperial diplomacy toward the Germans was the policy of taking and educating noble hostages. Such tribal leaders could then put their new knowledge of Roman administrative and military organization to work in overthrowing their

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74 Tacitus, Annals, ii.44: "But while his kingly title rendered Maroboduus unpopular with his countrymen, Arminius aroused enthusiasm as the champion of liberty." Dobias, "King Maroboduus," 163-64.

75 Tacitus, Annals, ii.44,62-63; Velleius Pat., Rom. Hist., ii.129.


77 Strabo, Geog., vii.1.3; Velleius Pat., Rom. Hist., ii.108.
peoples' traditional social order. E. A. Thompson has argued convincingly that the grounds for Maroboduus' "personal tyranny" were in fact prepared by dramatic socio-political changes occurring among some Germanic peoples. He suggests that in areas of intense Roman commerce, privately owned wealth had undermined the old clan-nexus of society and accentuated class distinctions. In particular, the leading men among the Marcomanni, Cheruscí, and Chatti emerged as a legally privileged class able to wield coercive power by means of reorganized "state" armies.

The final stage of Maroboduus' statecraft certainly ran counter to traditional Germanic conceptions of limited royal rule and at the same time posed a threat to the increasingly powerful Germanic nobility. Roman influence can here be seen both indirectly in the form of socio-economic penetration and more directly in the matter of Maroboduus' statecraft. As Thompson has argued, the adoption of something like a State army was only possible when something like a State organization of society in general had taken the place of the organization based on the clans.  

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79 Ibid., pp. 63-67: "The warriors were no longer all upon the one footing, and the chiefs were no longer merely the first among equals . . . The adoption of something like a State army was only possible when something like a State organization of society in general had taken the place of the organization based on the clans." (p. 66).
background. Yet the Marcomannic king achieved his political goal through an intensified form of federate, retinue leadership which was not unfamiliar to early Germanic socio-political organization. It will reappear in the formation of the post-Migration early medieval kingdoms.

Even Arminius, the Cheruscan leader who thwarted a permanent Roman conquest of Germany, had training in Imperial arms. Indeed, he had commanded a Germanic auxiliary unit with distinction, probably in the Pannonian wars (6-9 AD), and held equestrian rank as well as citizenship. By 9 AD, Arminius was back among the Cherusci where he helped organize a revolt against the Roman military governor Quintilius

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81Velleius Pat., Rom. Hist., ii.118; Tacitus, Annals, ii.10. Arminius' military service (Thompson, Early Germans, p. 73) or by a prior stay at Rome (Hohl, "Lebensgeschichte," 463-65). Of course, he could also have held citizenship by his noble birth: Velleius Pat., Rom. Hist., ii.118; Callies, "Arminius," 417. Arminius probably was an equestrian praefectus commanding a regular auxiliary unit of Cherusci: Timpe, Arminius-Studien, pp. 35-41.
Varus. Following his magnificent victory in the Teutoberg Forest, Arminius headed opposition to Germanicus' advances and also led attacks upon pro-Roman rivals such as King Maroboduus (15-17 AD). However, he was murdered shortly thereafter (21 AD?) by his own relatives, when he apparently attempted to create an enduring kingship. It is of no passing significance that the man who preferred to be known as a champion of freedom should ultimately have followed the autocratic path of his bitter rival, Maroboduus.

Arminius, unlike Ariovistus and Maroboduus, led a confederation of united gentes for freedom, and did not succeed in combining battle-victory with settlement to erect a lasting

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82Velleius Pat., Rom. Hist., ii.117-18; Tacitus, Annals, i.55. It seems clear from these two accounts that the "revoIt" of 9 AD was fomented by conflicts between pro- and anti-Roman factions of the Cheruscan nobility. Arminius' own brother, Flavus, and his father-in-law, Segestes, were staunch Roman supporters (ibid., i.58, ii.9); see Thompson, Early Germans, pp. 73-79. Arminius, who probably was still in Roman service, merely delivered the opening blow with his troop-mutiny and surprise attack; he did not act alone at this point: Timpe, Arminius-Studien, pp. 104-10; Callies, "Arminius," 418, 419.

83Tacitus, Annals, i.88: "Arminius himself, encouraged by the gradual retirement of the Romans and the expulsion of Maroboduus, began to aim at kingship (regnum adfectans), and found himself in conflict with the independent temper of his countrymen. He was attacked by arms, and, while defending himself with chequered results, fell by the treachery of his relatives (propinquorum)." Thompson rightly observes that assassination by kinsmen is the most heinous crime known to clan society and "a striking indication of the intensity of the feelings aroused by his anti-tribal activities." (Early Germans, p. 84).
kingship. Thus he remained essentially a renowned retinue-leader.\(^84\) It should be noted that Arminius never possessed overall military command, for his decisions could be overruled by other leaders (duces, principes, proceres) who also appear in the Cheruscan operations.\(^85\) Yet Arminius was known to be of noble birth, and Tacitus reports that the Cherusci did have a royal clan (stirps regia).\(^86\) Indeed, though there is no specific evidence on this point, there is reason to believe that Arminius was a member of this family. The Cherusci were apparently one of those West Germanic peoples who maintained a royal clan and selected warlords from it, while effectively suppressing any one member from erecting sole tribal leadership. Again, conflicts within the tribal nobility proved to be decisive factors in determining the actual forms of Germanic rulership.\(^87\) Indeed, Arminius carefully avoided the title king, at least until after his conflict

\(^84\)Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," pp. 119, 121. In 15 AD, Arminius was a "dominant figure" among the Cherusci, "since he advocated war: for with barbarians the readier a man is to take a risk so much the more is he the man to trust, the leader to prefer when action is afoot": Tacitus, Annals, i.57, and note how he personally roused the Cherusci and others to arms (ibid., i.59).

\(^85\)Ibid., i.55,68, ii.15. Thompson, Early Germans, p. 37.

\(^86\)Tacitus, Annals, xi.16; Velleius Pat., Rom. Hist., ii.118.

\(^87\)Wenskus, Stammesbildung und Verfassung, p. 423, who also points to Tacitus' apparent equation of Cheruscan nobiles with members of the stirps regia (Annals, xi.16) as evidence that the bitter conflicts in fact took place within the royal clan. See also: Thompson, Early Germans, p. 72;
with Maroboduus, even though he exercised real power (poten-
tia) for twelve years. It may be surmised that his downfall
was caused by family members who feared the strength he was
gaining on the grounds of his renowned retinue-leadership. 88

It has been observed that Arminius took a prominent
role in extended warfare, conducted by a league of Germanic
tribes, the aim of which was not land-taking but rather
freedom from Roman occupation of the Weser-Elbe territory.
Schlesinger has properly likened such wars to earlier,
"popular" movements of larger gentes, whose motive was often
survival itself, and to their pervasive sacrality. 89 In
both cases, prisoner-sacrifices and other major rites are in
evidence. No doubt the most notorious such incident in
Arminius' campaigns concerns the fate of Varus' legions
(9 AD). Tacitus relates that captured Roman senior officers
were slain upon altars set up in groves near the battlefield;
other prisoners were hung on gallows and thrown into pits. 90
When Germanicus' army surveyed the site six years later, the

Callies, "Arminius," 417; Müllenhoff, Dt. Alt., IV, p. 186;
Timpe, Arminius-Studien, p. 15.

88Tacitus, Annals, ii.44,88. Thompson, Early Germans,
pp. 82-84; Demougeot, Formation de l'Europe, pp. 292, 294;

89Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 120.

90Tacitus, Annals i.61 and cf. Germania, xii. De
Vries, AGR, I, p. 408.
heads of prisoners could still be seen fixed on tree-trunks.\textsuperscript{91} Arminius boasted that he had erected the captured Roman standards and banners in sacred groves as votive-offerings to the gods.\textsuperscript{92} Indeed, the Cheruscan king seems to have launched his various campaigns at ceremonial gatherings. Thus, he and his fellow leaders reportedly met at a feast just prior to the attack on Varus,\textsuperscript{93} while on the eve of the battle of Idistaviso (16 AD), Arminius and his allied tribes had gathered "at the holy forest of Hercules."\textsuperscript{94}

Indeed, this sequence of battles bears the mark of a popular, "holy-war" whose impetus, when once unleashed, compelled whole-peoples and their leaders into concerted action.\textsuperscript{95} For example, the pro-Roman Cheruscan noble, Segestes, is said to have been forced to join Arminius' initial revolt by "the unanimous will of the nation." His son, Segimundus, a Roman priest at the Ubian altar (Cologne), threw off his robes and joined Arminius in the field.\textsuperscript{96}

When Germanicus invaded Cheruscan territory in 15 AD,

\textsuperscript{91}Tacitus, \textit{Annals}, i.61. Varus' ritual decapitation has already been noted; the deed was apparently performed by one of Arminius' relatives, the son of Segimerus, Segestes' brother (\textit{ibid.}, i.71).

\textsuperscript{92}\textit{Ibid.}, i.59.

\textsuperscript{93}\textit{Ibid.}, i.55 and see also \textit{ibid.}, i.65.


\textsuperscript{95}Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 120; \textit{idem.}, "Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft," p. 143.

\textsuperscript{96}Tacitus, \textit{Annals}, i.55,57.
Arminius called upon his people to resist Roman oppression, uphold their ancient traditions, and follow him to freedom. Not only the Cheruscii but also surrounding Germanic tribes and distinguished leaders enthusiastically answered his appeal. Germanicus further aggravated this explosive situation by erecting at Idistaviso a victory-tumulus inscribed with the names of the defeated tribes. Although Arminius may not at first have been the only leader in the uprising of 9 AD, his great victory over Varus and continued prominence in subsequent battles undoubtedly enabled him to be identified with the leadership of this sacral enterprise. Arminius clearly utilized traditional religious beliefs and practices to promote his cause. This sacral leadership may well account for the Cheruscian warlord's enormous popularity which, indeed, extended far beyond his death.

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97 Ibid., i.59,60. But I would not exclude this particular campaign from being a holy-war, as does Schlesinger ("Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft," p. 143 n. 16). Dudley, "The Barbarian Confederacy and the Expansion of Rome," University of Birmingham Historical Journal, V (1955), 132-33, 135.

98 Tacitus, Annals, ii.19: "The sight affected the Germans with an anguish and a fury which wounds, distress, and ruin had been powerless to evoke. Men, who a moment ago had been preparing to leave their homesteads and migrate across the Elbe, were now eager for battle and flew to arms. Commons and nobles, youth and age, suddenly assailed the Roman line of march and threw it into disorder." See also ibid., ii.7, where the Chatti reportedly tore down the funeral-mound erected to Varus in 15 AD (ibid., i.62).

99 Tacitus observes at the end of his remarkable tribute (ibid., ii.88) that Arminius "to this day is sung in tribal lays." Many scholars have seen the origins of the
later attempts to create a new and undoubtedly more autocratic
kingship were fatally distinct from this popular role.

The use of religion toward the creation of an effective confederate kingship among the early Germans is still more pronounced in the career of Julius Civilis. In the first instance, Tacitus expressly described Civilis as a member of the Batavian stirps regia, which was clearly set apart from other noble families of this tribe. Like Arminius, he was an accomplished Roman officer of Germanic auxiliaries. His revolt (69-70 AD) began as a mutiny of provincial cohorts in Lower Germany and spread rapidly to the whole Batavian tribe and its neighbors, e.g., the

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Siegfried legend in his career: Höfler, Siegfried, Arminius, und die Symbolik (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1961); de Vries, Heroic Song, pp. 200-201; Callies, "Arminius," 419. Arminius has exerted a strong hold on the German literary mind: R. Kühnemund, Arminius, Or the Rise of a National Symbol in Literature. University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, 8 (Chapel Hill, 1953).


101 Tacitus, Hist., iv.13. Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 121. The Batavi had formed part of the trans-Rhenane Chatti but were expelled amidst seditone domestica, as Tacitus puts it (Hist., iv.12). Batavian submission to Roman suzereignty (ante 12 BC) may have marked their abandonment of tribal kingship (Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 113). However, the expelled Batavi could have been the royal clan of the Chatti: Wenskus, Stammesbildung und Verfassung, p. 425.
Canninefates and Frisii. Civilis brought five additional peoples into his league by kindling the Rhineland Germans' resentment to Roman rule and later received additional support from rebelling Celtic tribes in Gaul. After a series of stunning victories along the Rhine, Civilis' fortunes were reversed before Trier and Xanten (70 AD) by Vespasian's able general, Cerialis. Finding his support dwindling, the Batavian king surrendered and was allowed to retire across the Rhine.

Once again, the constituent groups in Civilis' league were not entire gentes; they were rather splinter-groups arranged on a retinue basis. In battle, each such unit had been placed separately in order to best demonstrate its individual prowess. Civilis, however, wielded sole military command, collected reinforcement from across the Rhine, and negotiated directly with the Romans.\(^{102}\)

Civilis began his revolt by summoning the leading men and best warriors of his tribe to a feast in an ancient sacred grove. Amidst the customary nighttime revelries, the Batavian king suddenly arose and announced his plans. When the assembly had unanimously approved, Civilis bound them all

together by sacral oath and accompanying rites. In this way, Batavians and their leader were linked together in a divine pact. After his first battle with the Romans, moreover, Civilis made a personal vow and performed a dramatic ritual: he dyed his hair bright red and swore to keep it uncut until victory was achieved. Tribal emblems were removed from holy groves and displayed in combat amidst cultic war dances and battle-chants.

The Batavian king also closely associated his enterprises with the renowned prophetess Veleda who had initially foretold his success. This Bructeran seer lived removed from mortal eyes in a lofty tower, and could be approached only

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103 Tacitus, Hist., iv.14-15. "His words won great applause, and he bound them all by their national oaths and barbarous rites (barbaro ritu et patriis execrationibus): ibid., iv.15. This is probably an example of a retinue-oath, which may have included a shield-raising ceremony as in the case of Brinno, elected as dux of the allied Canninefates (ibid.). See Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 121; de Vries, AGR, I, p. 351; Hauck, "Carmina Antiqua," 8-9.

104 Tacitus, Hist., iv.61. De Vries, AGR, II, p. 149. This rite has a long tradition as a personal dedication to the war-god, which enabled Germanic kings and leaders to directly share the victory-bringing attributes of their divine patron: Höfler, Sakralkönigtum, pp. 190-205. There are significant parallels in certain initiation rites of the Wodan cult: de Vries, AGR, I, pp. 492-96, 499-504; Höfler, Kultische Geheimbünde, pp. 285-97. An elite warrior group among the Chatti wore its hair long as a distinguishing mark of valor: Tacitus, Germania, xxxi; see de Vries, "Königtum," 297-98; idem., "Sakralkönigtum," 185. Note also that in 58 AD, the Chatti had sacrificed their Hermunduric war-prisoners to Wodan (Tacitus, Annals, xiii.57). Helm, Wodan. Ausbreitung und Wanderung seines Kultes. Giessener Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie, 83 (Giessen: W. Schmitz, 1946), pp. 17-20.

105 Tacitus, Hist., iv.18,22; v.17.
Civilis sent her numerous presents and war-booty during his campaigns, including Roman prisoners and even an Imperial flag-ship captured on the Rhine. At one point, Veleda and Civilis acted together as arbitrators, while the Batavian king later seems to have taken refuge with the Bructeri just before his surrender.

These prominent religious acts in Civilis' statecraft are of two major sorts. First, one can identify a central group of martial rites which include the retinue-oath, hair ritual, and battle-ceremony. On the other hand, Civilis' alliance with Veleda, his use of sacral feasts, groves, and cult-objects constitutes another, significantly different set of rituals. It would thus appear that in addition to religious practices springing from the retinue-sphere, Civilis also appropriated rites belonging more properly to the sphere of ancient tribal kingship. The blending of these two originally distinct forms of sacrality is a characteristic feature of early Germanic Heerkönigtum. Indeed, the ideology of these new states reflects their structural

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106 Ibid., iv.61,65 and cf. idem., Germania, viii; see de Vries, AGR, I, pp. 320-21, 404. Note that "Veleda" is a public, professional title of Celtic origin (Celt. *vel" see" <OIr. fili/filed "speaker"): ibid., p. 320; Müllenhoff,Dt. Alt., IV, pp. 210-11; Schütte, Forefathers, I, p. 237.

107 Tacitus, Hist., iv.61, v.22.


109 Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," p. 122: "One may assume that the ambitious scion of a royal family, who was
formation: a martial, federate kingship forged by the retinue-leadership of royal warlords.\textsuperscript{110}

This type of Germanic kingship which first emerged among the pre-Migration West Germans appears to stand in rather sharp contrast to the kingship of Tacitus' \textit{Germania}. In particular, the Tacitean king is a tribal figure with essentially judicial and religious rather than martial duties. It would thus be tempting to envision two distinct categories of early Germanic kingship: an ancient tribal kingship and a more up-to-date warrior variety. While such a view is not entirely incorrect, it does not take into account the actual fluidity of early Germanic socio-political structures. Tacitus' \textit{Germania}-account could well depict kingship within

not unfamiliar with Roman culture, brought these evidently age-old sacral elements to effect, with the full intention of strengthening his position and, indeed, with a view to the strived-for kingship. The \textit{Gefolgschaftskrieg} was approaching the form of \textit{Volkskrieg} . . .

\textsuperscript{110}Ibid., pp. 132-33; idem., "Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft," p. 154 n. 46: "Sacral tribal kingship and \textit{Heerkönigtum} are to be distinguished. The latter often comprised members of many tribes and led to the formation of new tribes, though in part under old names. In the tribe, rex and dux would be distinguished; the Heerkönig, however, is rex and dux at the same time." For an excellent concise summary of this view, see: Bosl, "Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt (Tacitus, \textit{Germania}, c. 7)," in Frühformen der Gesellschaft, ed. Bosl, pp. 61-71. See also: Höft, "Sakralcharakter," pp. 696-99; W. Mohr, "Umwelt und Lebensform," in Germanische Altertumskunde, ed. Schneider, p. 66; de Vries, "Königtum," 290, 297; Wenskus, Stammesbildung und Verfassung, p. 411; Wolfram, "Early Medieval Kingdom," pp. 4-5; Wallace-Hadrill, \textit{Early Germanic Kingship}, pp. 6-7; R. Folz et al., \textit{De l'Antiquité au monde médiéval} (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), p. 35.
a relatively stable, pacific social context. In regions far removed from Roman or Celtic warfare, such as Scandinavia and the North Sea-Baltic areas, Germanic kingship was closely associated with fertility gods and had a marked sacrificial character.111 Yet it has been shown that elsewhere, tribal kings could indeed be warlords when the occasion so demanded, and even a victorious Heerkönig had to deal with settlement and the affairs of peace.112 Nor was Heerkönigtum exclusively West Germanic or confined to the pre-Migration age. Extended warfare and wanderings proved to be highly favorable circumstances for its growth among many prominent East Germanic peoples as well. Indeed, it will be seen that this martial, federate kingship became the dominant form of Germanic rulership in the Migration period and the early middle ages.


112 See Wallace-Hadrill, Early Germanic Kingship, pp. 13-16, though he takes this sociological argument a bit too far.
The Migrations (c. 200-500 AD)

From the third through the fifth centuries AD, successive waves of East Germanic peoples breached Rome's northern defenses and forced their way into Europe. Like the earlier East Germanic invasions of Bastarnae and Cimbri, these were large-scale migrations of whole-peoples (gentes) for survival and land acquisition. Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, and Lombards all embarked from their Scandinavian homelands on extended wanderings that eventually reached Northern Italy, Gaul, Spain, and North Africa. Indeed, so prominent was the role of kings in each of these tribal movements that the Migration period (Völkerwanderung) has long been considered a "golden age" of Germanic royalty. The various East Germanic kingships, although by no means entirely new phenomena, do exhibit certain structural and ideological similarities which warrant their study as an integral group. Literary sources, moreover, are more abundant than those of the preceding period. For in addition to Greco-Roman accounts, several valuable "national" histories also furnish important evidence of kingship and socio-political organization among the migrating East Germanic peoples.

113 For the Goths, there is Jordanes' Getica (sixth century), Isidore of Seville's Historia Gothorum Vandalorum Sueborum (seventh century), and for the Lombards the anonymous Origo gentis Langobardorum (seventh century) and Paul the Deacon's Historia Langobardorum (eighth century). Comparable chronicles for West Germanic gentes are Gregory of Tours' Historia Francorum, Fredegar's Chronicarum (sixth century), the anonymous Liber historia Francorum (seventh century), Bede's Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum.
The record of early Gothic kingship can be reconstructed from the popular traditions set forth in Jordanes' *Getica*, several significant references by Roman historians, and recent archeological findings. The Gothic homeland lay in the southeastern peninsula of Sweden (modern Götaland), adjacent to a related people, the Gauts (Geats). A number of geographically distinct sub-tribes are also known to have existed among these early Goths. Now according to Jordanes the Goths emigrated to the banks of the Vistula in three ships under the command of a certain King Berig. They prospered in this new land (Gothiscandza, "Gothic Shore") through the reigns of about five subsequent kings, and apparently incorporated several already-established East Germanic peoples. Extensive studies of pre-Migration (eighth century), and Widukind of Corvey's *Res gestae Saxonicae* (tenth century). Critical editions of all these sources will be found in the series *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, ed. G. Pertz et al., (Hannover, 1829-); good German translations are also available. On the significance of this early medieval historical genre, see: H. Grundmann, "Geschichtsschreibung im Mittelalter," in DPA, ed. Stammler, III, cols. 2229-2233; B. Lacroix, *L'Historien au moyen age* (Montréal: Institut d'Etudes Médiévales, 1971), pp. 64-68; and now Beryl Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), pp. 50-56.


settlement areas in Götaland and the Baltic coast have dated the early Gothic migration to the Vistula near 50 BC.\footnote{116}

Tacitus in his \textit{Germania} (98 AD) locates the Goths along the Baltic in Pomerania, and observes that kings have a stricter authority among them than other Germanic peoples.\footnote{117} It has been suggested that the kings who ruled "Gothiscandza" constituted the royal clan of the most prominent Gothic sub-tribe in Götaland. Whenever a migration occurred, these royal leaders commanded a force drawn from all the tribes. Berig would thus have been a federate warlord of royal birth (i.e., a \textit{Heerkönig}) who successfully founded a new Gothic realm on the Vistula.\footnote{118} The same may be said of King Filimir's role in leading his people to a second Gothic homeland north of the Black Sea (c. 150 AD).\footnote{119}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{117}{Tacitus, \textit{Germania}, xliii; see Müllenhoff's commentary, \textit{Dt. Alt.}, IV, pp. 494-96 and also Dahn, \textit{Könige}, I; 2, pp. 52-53; Hodgkin, \textit{Invaders}, I, pp. 33-35. The Goths may have been initial allies of Maroboduus, yet they helped the exiled Marcomannic noble Catualda depose him in 18 AD (Tacitus, \textit{Annals}, lxii); see Dobiás, "King Maroboduus," 157, 164.}
\end{footnotes}
By the third century, the Goths dwelling in the Pontus region and had begun to launch concentrated assaults on Rome's eastern provinces. Jordanes notes that they were then divided into two groups, "Ostrogoths" and "Visigoths," which were ruled, respectively, by the royal clans of Amali and Balthi. Rather than representing two distinct realms, these divisions most likely correspond to the ancient sub-tribes within the larger Gothic people. During the third century, renowned kings such as Ostrogotha and Cnica created powerful federate realms among the Goths by successful war-leadership. At the close of this century, however, the Gothic division had become permanent: the Visigoths had moved into Dacia, and the Ostrogoths were established in the Ukraine. Nonetheless, the Amal king Ermanaric (d. 375) forged an extensive Gothic empire in Central Europe on the even of the Hunnic invasion.

Kingship assumed significantly different forms among the two great branches of the Goths. In regard to Ostrogothic

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kingship, the account given by Jordanes of the Amals' origins is particularly instructive. During the reign of Domitian (81-96 AD), he observes, a Gothic force had raided the lower Danubian provinces and repulsed a massive Roman counterattack. Because of their great victory, the leaders (proceres) of this campaign were thereafter regarded as demi-gods (ansis); the first of these warlords, Gapt, was then the founder of the Amal line.\(^{123}\) The religious-historical significance of this passage merits further discussion but it may here be noted that the early Amals were clearly non-royal warlords distinct from the ruling line of Gothic kings. The Amals' renowned war-leadership against the Romans presumably enabled them to eclipse an older stirps regia and emerge after the great Gothic division as the most prominent Ostrogothic royal family.\(^{124}\)

Multiple rulership and dual kingship also appear among the Ostrogoths. For example, when the emperor Philip the Arabian (244-249) refused the Goths their customary subsidies, King Ostrogotha launched several attacks upon Moesia. The last of these was a large-scale, federate raid under the leadership of two noble warlords, Argaith and Guntheric.\(^{125}\)

\(^{123}\)Jordanes, *Getica*, lxxviii-lxxix.

\(^{124}\)Dahn, *Könige*, I;2, pp. 114-16. The Amals' claim to the Ostrogothic throne may not have been fully established until the early fifth century: P. Grierson, "Election and Inheritance in Early Germanic Kingship," *Cambridge Historical Journal*, VII (1941), 6-7.

Similarly, it is reported that the Ostrogoths prospered early in the fourth century under their two kings, Ariaric and Aoric, presumably joint rulers. During the period of Hunnic suzerainty, moreover, the Ostrogoths were ruled by three brothers of the Amal line, each with his own district-kingdom.

Visigothic socio-political structure is well documented from the occupation of Roman Dacia to the settlements in southern Gaul and Spain. The early Visigoths were apparently unaccustomed to unitary, overall rulership in peacetime. Rather, political direction was exercised locally by chieftains of the individual sub-tribes. Jordanes makes this point when he refers to the "princes and leaders (prīmatēs et duces) who ruled them Visigothēs in place of kings. However, in wartime the Visigothic tribes commonly united to choose a war-leader called a "Judge" (iūdex, dikastes), who possessed a higher authority than the local chieftains. Yet the Visigothic "Judge" did not wield coercive power; he could merely persuade and recommend decisions before the council.

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of leading men. Such outstanding fourth-century kings as Fritigern, Athanaric and Alaric were leaders of this kind. Their martial, retinue-lordship of confederate forces must indeed be regarded as Heerkönigtum.

Early Visigothic kings do not seem to have been chosen from any established royal clan. A certain trend toward hereditary succession of "Judges" and chieftains is apparent during the course of the fourth century but never became firmly established among the Visigoths. In fact, royal deposition and assassination was an endemic and notorious feature of the Visigothic kingdoms in Gaul and Spain.

The religious component of Gothic kingship can be discerned from a variety of literary references. In the first instance, kings and priests are closely associated in early Gothic tradition. Both priests and priestesses are attested among the Goths prior to the fifth century AD. Jordanes

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129 Ammianus Marcellinus, Rerum gestarum libri, xxvii.5.6; Themistius, Orationes, x, cited by Thompson, Visigoths, p. 45 n.1; Jordanes, Getica, cxxxi,cxlvi. For the limited powers of the Visigothic "Judge" see Thompson, Visigoths, pp. 46-49; cf. now: Wolfram, "Athanaric the Visigoth: Monarchy or Judgeship. A Study in Comparative History," Journal of Medieval History, I, (1975), 259-78.


132 Jordanes, Getica, lxv,cxxi. Note that the federate king Filimer had the authority to expell the Gothic holy women;
provides the valuable report that early Gothic kings, as well as priests, were chosen from a class of learned nobles called *pilleati*. In addition, he speaks of a legendary Gothic king who received posthumous divine honors, and of another who performed both priestly and judicial functions. Indeed, the Visigothic "Judge" Athanaric reportedly exercised some degree of religious authority. For during a wave of anti-Christian violence (369-72), he ordered certain officials (presumably priests) to place a local idol or tribal cult-emblem upon a covered wagon and wheel it around to the houses of suspected Christians. Those who would not worship the statue and make sacrifice were executed. These priestly

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and chthonic features of the earliest Gothic kingship may well be an inheritance of the Goths' Scandinavian cultural background with its sacrificial and bounty-bringing kingship. This assumption is perhaps strengthened by Vopiscus' reference to the ceremonial hart-drawn wagon of a captive Gothic king which appeared in emperor Aurelian's triumphal procession.136

Amal's sacrality, however, bears a different stamp. It has been pointed out that the first members of this Gothic royal family were regarded as semi-deities (ansis) after demonstrating a certain fortuna, and that the clan's ancestor was Gapt. That is, the Amal's claim to kingship rested upon a supernatural efficacy manifested through victory in battle. Indeed, early Germanic kings and warlords were very widely credited with such a transcendent, victory-bringing quality. As Beumann has put it, battle and victory-"luck" were the

certificates marking a true king's sacrality.\textsuperscript{137} Jordanes in fact notes that the early Goths worshipped a martial deity with prisoner-sacrifice and victory-offerings.\textsuperscript{138} It is also reported that the Ostrogothic king Totila specifically spoke of his victory-bringing royal "luck" on the eve of a major battle.\textsuperscript{139} The Amals' \textit{fortuna} should be equated with the \textit{virtus} of the earlier Tacitean \textit{dux} as one of the principal ideological means by which non-royal Germanic warlords legitimized their newly established kingships.\textsuperscript{140} For the \textit{Heerkönig}'s authority fused the sacrality of ancient tribal


\textsuperscript{138} Jordanes, Getica, xli. The god in question, however, was more likely Tiw, the ancient sky and war-god, than Wodan: de Vries, AGR, II, p. 10; Buchholz, "Perspectives," 120. See also King Radagaisus' sacral battle-vow: Isidore, Hist. Goth., xiv.


kingship (i.e., nobilitas) with the sacral virtue of the victorious warlord, just as his martial command has been seen to exhibit rites stemming from both retinue and "popular" or holy-wars.\footnote{Schlesinger, "Heerkönigtum," pp. 131-41; Bol, "Reges ex nobilitate," pp. 65-68; idem., "Staat, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft," p. 596.}

Furthermore, in Scandinavian traditions from which the Goths had emerged, Gapt (Gaut) appears as a hypostasis of the victory-bringing Odin (Wodan), while \textit{ansis} expressly refers to the Aesir, Odin's family.\footnote{For Gapt, Gaut as Odin's names, see Helm, Wodan, pp. 45-47; de Vries, AGR, II, pp. 41-42, 91-92; Turville-Petre, Myth and Religion, pp. 61-62; Dumézil, Gods of the Ancient Northmen, p. 33. On ansis as the Aesir: Helm, Wodan, pp. 50-54; Polomé, "L'Étymologie du terme germanique "ansuz" dieu souverain," "Études germaniques, VII, (1953), 36-44; de Vries, AGR, II, pp. 7-10; Kuhn, "Asen," in RGA, ed. Hoops, I, 457-58.}

In the days of the Ostrogothic kingdom, both Cassiodorus and Jordanes repeatedly herald the ancient dignity of Amal blood, and this cannot entirely be a matter of court propaganda.\footnote{Cassiodorus, Variae, iv.39, viii.5,9, ix.1, x.3; ed. Mommsen in MGH AA, Vol. XII; Jordanes, Getica, cixxiv, ccxcix, ccxxxiv.} Indeed, Höfler's studies have convincingly shown that the most renowned Amal, Theodoric, popularly attained a posthumous divine rank and was widely equated in the Germanic world with Wodan as victory-bringer and leader of the Wild Host.\footnote{Höfler, Sakralkönigtum, pp. 94-96, 350-52; idem., "Sakralcharakter," pp. 677-80. See further: Naumann,
ancestor, and were perhaps themselves regarded as incarnations of this particular god. 145

The record of kingship among other major East Germanic peoples is much the same. An early kingship with fertility and sacerdotal features was supplanted by a martial, federate royal rule which itself often maintained many ritual and ideological aspects of older tribal kingship. There are, however, some significant variations. The Vandals during the pre-Migration age were sub-divided into a number of small tribes dwelling in the Oder-Elbe region. Initial settlement occurred during the first century BC from southern Norway, Jutland, and the Danish isles. 146 Indeed, it is likely that the pre-Migration Vandals were a cult-league with its center at the sacral grove of the Naharvali. 147 Their attempts to expand toward the south during the second and third centuries AD met bitter Gothic and Roman resistance. However, upon the


146 For early Vandal tribal movements, see: Schwarz, Stammeskunde, pp. 64-69; Schütte, Forefathers, II, pp. 42-54; Demougeot, Formation de l'Europe, pp. 347-48, 370-73; Owen, Germanic People, pp. 75-77.

 withdrawal of Roman troops from the Rhine frontier, the
Vandals at last swept into the West (406).

Multiple rulership is attested among the Vandals at
an early date.\textsuperscript{148} For example, the dual kings Raos and
Raptos led a Vandal force against the Romans during the
Marcomannic Wars of the second century AD, while in the late
third century both multiple kings and warlords are reported.\textsuperscript{149}
There appears to have been at this time two royal clans, the
Hasdingi and Silingi, within the two major Vandal sub-tribes
of the same names.\textsuperscript{150} The Hasdingi were especially prominent,
no doubt due to their leadership in early Vandal expansion.
By the fourth century, moreover, this clan had begun to
establish unitary rather than multiple rule among the Vandals.
Thus, Visimar was sole king of the Hasdingi Vandals dwelling
in Hungary in the early fourth century, and it was the Hasdingi
kings Godigisel and later his son Gunderic who led the Vandals


\textsuperscript{150} See Dahn, Königge, I, pp. 183-88; Schütte, Forefathers, II, pp. 46-47; Demougeot, Formation de l'Europe, pp. 371-73.
during the so-called Great Invasion of the Western Provinces (406-409).\textsuperscript{151} After the settlement in Spain, Gunderic destroyed the Silingi (418) and thereby firmly established the Hasdingi's hold on the Vandal throne.\textsuperscript{152} Furthermore, it should be observed that the Hasdingi's unitary kingship had been achieved primarily through martial, retinue-leadership (Heerkönigtum). Geiseric's conquest of North Africa affords an outstanding example of this royal authority, although the initial invasion (429) had more properly been a large-scale East Germanic tribal migration.\textsuperscript{153}

The religious aspect of Vandal kingship is reflected in their custom of choosing multiple rulers. It has already been observed that dual kings, often from the Hasdingi clan, were prominent among the Vandals from the second century AD. Indeed, there are grounds to associate this dual kingship with the cult of the Naharvali. Tacitus reported that this Vandal tribe worshipped a pair of gods called alcis whom he likened to the Roman Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux. He then described the chief priest who presided at the sanctuary of

\textsuperscript{151} Jordanes, Getica, cxiii-cxv; Procopius, Hist., iii.3.2,22-26. Dahn, König, I, pp. 142-43.

\textsuperscript{152} Isidore, Hist. Goth., lxxiii. For later references to Hasdingi pre-eminence, see Cassiodorus, Variae, ix.1; Jordanes, Getica, cxiii. Dahn, König, I, p. 188.

these twin deities as *muliebri ornatu. Müllenhoff suggested that this phrase meant a priest with feminine hair-style, and observed that the Hasdingi were named for their long hair (Goth. *hazds, ON. haddr, OHG. hart, "hair"), as were also the twin heroes, the Haddingjar and the Hartungen of Norse and German legend. The Hasdingi clan's dual kingship, he concluded, is but further evidence that this tribe and its royal line had been the direct successors of the Naharvali "priest-kings" and the preservers of their twin cult.

Recent research certainly supports the view that there has been an integral and dynamic relationship between early Germanic dioscuric beliefs and dual kingship customs. For

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the Vandals, the term *alcis*, as well as the names of the dual kings Raos and Raptos, the warlords Ambri and Assi, and even "Vandal" itself are all closely connected with significant beliefs and rites of this dioscuric tradition. 157 Early Vandal kingship may well have been dioscuric in nature, yet it will be observed that the single outstanding function of these early kings was nonetheless war-leadership. After the Migrations, unitary royal rule had emerged among the Vandals and any previous dioscuric features are no longer seen. The Hasdingi kings' early and thorough conversion to Arianism 158 probably contributed to the suppression of that dioscurism so closely connected with their forebears' rule.

The Lombards had migrated from southern Sweden to the lower Elbe region at the close of the first century BC. 159

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158 Ante 400 AD; de Vries, *AGR*, II, pp. 407-08. But this traditional view has been challenged: Thompson, "Christianity and the Northern Barbarians," *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies*, I (1957), 14-15.

Their movements and conflicts during the following century are quite well recorded by Roman historians. Velleius, for example, praised Tiberius for having subjugated the Lombards, a people "fiercer even than German savagery." Tacitus noted that the Lombards had been members of both Maroboduus' and Arminius' confederations. Small in numbers, they were nonetheless a most formidable and warlike people. During the Marcomannic Wars, the Lombards, Marcomanni, and Ubii raided Pannonia but were forced to withdraw (166 AD). Thereafter, the Lombards disappear from Roman historiography for three hundred years. It is generally assumed, on the basis of archeological and linguistic evidence, that they continued to dwell in their lower Elbe territories until the early fifth century. Lombard traditions and legendary history recorded in early medieval chronicles are our major source for this critical intervening period.

161 Tacitus, Annals, ii.45. Dobiáš, "King Maroboduus."
163 Peter the Patrician, Frag., vi; ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1829), quoted by Hodgkin, Invaders, V, pp. 88-89.
According to Paul the Deacon, the Lombards, at first called Winnili, were led from Scandinavia by two warlords (duces), the brothers Ibor and Aio. Over-population had caused this migration, which clearly involved only a part of the people and was determined by casting lots. Another prominent figure in this expedition was the mother of Ibor and Aio, Gambara, whom Paul describes as an influential counselor. The earlier Origo gentis Langobardorum notes that Gambara and her sons "held the sovereignty over the Winnili." It is clear, however, that Gambara was in fact a tribal prophetess. When the Winnili confronted the Vandals, she reportedly appealed to Freyr, who tricked her husband Wodan into granting victory. The Winnili were then called Langobards after the long-haired disguise which they had worn at the goddess' counsel. Indeed, an early ninth century Lombard source identifies Gambara as a sibyl who declared in a divine visitation that the Winnili should go forth, not because their lands were over-populated, but rather to gain salvation.

Upon the death of Ibor and Aio, the Lombards are said to have become dissatisfied with the rule of mere duces and

165 Paul the Deacon, Hist. Langob., i.1-3.
166 Orig. gent. Langob., i.
167 Paul the Deacon, Hist. Langob., i.7-10.
168 Codex Gothanum, i; ed. Waitz, in MGH SS Rer. Langob.
chose a king for themselves "like other nations." Agelmund, a member of a particularly distinguished family, thus became the first Lombard king.\textsuperscript{169} He was succeeded by an adopted son, Lamissio, already renowned for his war-leadership. Lamissio's successor, Lethu, ruled as sole king for forty years and founded an hereditary royal line; Lething kings held the Lombard throne for seven generations.\textsuperscript{170}

The last direct Lething kings consolidated and strengthened Lombard monarchy by prudent marriage-alliances and the establishment of friendly relations with the Imperial court. Indeed, the Lombards' initial advance into Pannonia and Noricum under King Audoin (546) was conducted by Imperial permission.\textsuperscript{171} Yet it should be noted that Alboin's renowned invasion of Italy (568) involved not only the Lombards, but also Saxon, Gepids, Slavs, and others.\textsuperscript{172} After the assassinations of Alboin and his successor Cleph, no Lombard king was


\textsuperscript{172} Paul the Deacon, Hist. Langob., ii.6-9,26. Hodgkin, Invaders, V, pp. 156-57. The conquest proceeded by a similar federate war-leadership (Paul the Deacon, Hist. Langob., ii.9).
elected for ten years. Rather, the conquered territories were ruled by a loosely knit federation of thirty-six Lombard duces. These powerful rulers had established regional dynasties after the invasion, and constantly challenged the Lombard kings' attempts to unite all Lombard lands under central royal authority. However, upon the threat of foreign invasion (584), the assembled nobles chose Authari, Cleph's son, as king and ceded much of their own lands to support the restored monarchy. Authari's marriage to the niece of the last Lething king and his careful diplomacy heightened royal prestige, but it was not until the following century that Lombard kings made any substantial progress in containing the powerful local nobility.

One might contend that the brothers Ibor and Aio, who directed the Winnili-Lombard migration, were dioscuric leaders. Gambara's influential position and prophetic role is particularly significant since the mother of a dioscuric pair was often regarded as a semi-deity by virtue of a divine visitation. The names Ibor ("wild boar") and Aio ("point") could


well be epithetic honor-titles relating to the sharp boars' tusks used as sacral symbols in Germanic dioscuric cults. It has also been suggested that those land-taking expeditions conducted by Germanic dual warlords became an established socio-political tradition supported by an active corpus of dioscuric beliefs. The dual leaders of such campaigns may normally have posed as incarnations of the Divine Twins.

Indeed, the tale of Gambara's divine intercession on behalf of the Winnili has long been recognized as a significant key to the pre-Christian religious traditions of the Lombards. In the first instance, the passage has generally been taken to signify a change in tribal cult, viz., the adoption of Wodan-worship. Such central features as the long-hair disguise, and the bestowal of a new name along with victory.

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strongly support this Wodanistic interpretation. Also, the Winnili may have been a tribal splinter-group which, in the course of a forced migration from the community, had vowed itself to Wodan. The ancient Roman ver sacrum would afford the closest parallel to this practice.  

However, the critical question of the Winnili's prior worship has been much debated. Dioscuric proponents contend that Gambara's appeal was ultimately directed to the Germanic sky-god as father of the divine brothers; hence Tiwaz had been the tribal god of the Winnili. Another interpretation, based on Freyr's pivotal role in the text, has also been offered. According to this view, Gambara was a tribal priestess in the service of the bounty-bringing divine family known in the North as the Vanir. The disputed passage would thus signify the Winnili's change in worship from predominately fertility deities to the martial Aesir, Wodan's family.

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179 Wagner, "Doppelkönigtum," 232; Ward, Divine Twins, p. 50. Helm (Wodan, p. 24) and Betz ("Alt. Rel.,” col. 1571) also regard Tiwaz as the chief Winnili god, but do not press the dioscuric argument.

180 Philippson, Genealogie der Götter, pp. 16-17; Hauck, "Lebensnormen und Kultmythen," 209; Schwarz, Stammlskunde, p. 192. The name Gambara may be a title denoting "staff-bearer" in reference to the long-staff or wand of Germanic priestesses and seers: E. Schröder, "Walburg, die Sybille," ARW, XIX (1919), 199-200; Schütte, Forefathers, I, pp. 237-38; Helm, Wodan, p. 22 n. 49.
This interpretation not only has somewhat better textual support, but also represents an important parallel to the supplanting of ancient tribal kingship by an essentially Wodanistic Heerkönigtum.

Paul the Deacon's account of King Agelmund and Lamissio furnishes added support for the bounty-bringing nature of early Lombard rulership. The tale has it that a certain prostitute gave birth to seven boys and then threw them all into a fish-pond to drown. When Agelmund stopped to observe this curious scene, the infant Lamissio reached forth and grasped the royal spear. The king pronounced that Lamissio would be a great man and ordered him to be reared with all possible care.

Karl Hauck has made a brilliant analysis of this passage based on a wealth of religious-historical and linguistic evidence. He called attention, for example, to studies by R. Much which had connected the statement that Lamissio's mother was a prostitute who gave multiple birth with synonymous usages of Germanic terms for "whore" and "bitch," and with the accompanying notion of a newborn litter of pups.

181 Paul the Deacon, Hist. Langob., i.15.
182 Hauck, "Lebensnormen und Kultmythen," 206-211.
Indeed, philologists have interpreted the name Lamissio as "barker," and have observed that the Lombards appear in Anglo-Saxon saga-tradition as the Hundingas, i.e., "hound-descendants." Hauck noted that the fertility goddess Freyr was precisely equated with this animal and could well represent the unnamed mother of Lamissio in the Lombard tale. He concluded that this account constitutes part of the Winnili's original "Vanic" genealogy (origo), in which Freyr figures as principal deity and was represented by the tribal leaders.

There is some additional support for this interpretation. Thus Paul relates that the early Lombards, having encountered a hostile people in the course of their migration, let it be known that they had in their own camp dog-headed men, fierce warriors who eagerly drank human blood. It would not be overly fanciful to suggest that this strange account refers in fact to canine face-masks used in Lombard


cult-impersonations of their tribal deity. Moreover, it appears that this particular religious tradition was long maintained by Lombard noble families. Höfler, for example, has convincingly related the prominent hound symbols of the Scaligeri dynasty in late medieval Verona with Lombard tradition.

While early Lombard rulership thus exhibits a certain bounty-bringing, Vanic complexion, Wodanistic elements are more prominently associated with later Lombard kingship. In this regard, it may be noted that King Alboin, who replaced the Lething line, reportedly belonged to the family of Gausus. Again, one will be put in mind of Wodan's hypostasis as Gapt/Gaut in early Germanic royal genealogies. Moreover, Hauck has properly called attention to the Wodanistic iconography of sixth-century Lombard royal standards. A significant passage from the Life of St. Barbatus should also be mentioned in this connection. It seems that King Grimwald's


son, Romwald, duke of Benevento, and his men though nominally Christians yet worshipped a golden snake-idol and also a certain sacral tree just outside the city walls. Barbatus was able to destroy this tree during the crisis of Imperial invasion (663), but the Lombards continued to worship the snake-image in the inner recesses of the palace. Still undaunted, Barbatus induced Romwald's devout wife to steal the cult-object, which was promptly melted down and recast into a chalice. As Wodan's snake-forms and names are well known in North Germanic religious tradition, the account could well point to the Lombard ruling families' continuing attachment to this particular god a century after the initial march into Italy.

The record of Burgundian kingship provides a significant variation to the general pattern of East Germanic kingship already described. The Burgundians appear to have migrated from southern Norway to the Oder-Vistula region via the Baltic island Bornholm (Borgundarholm) during the first century BC. Pliny referred to the Burgundians in Pomerania and associated them with the Vandals, while Jordanes mentioned their activities along the lower Vistula ante 250 AD.

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192 Pliny, Nat. Hist., iv.99; Jordanes, Getica, xcvi. For early Burgundian migrations and tribal structure, see:
By the third century, the Burgundians had advanced southwest to the Main valley where they came into bitter conflict with the West Germanic Alamanni as well as Roman troops defending the Rhine frontier. Multiple kingship is very prominent among the Burgundians from the fourth century. Valentinian, for example, reportedly enlisted a number of Burgundian reges for a punitive campaign against the Alamanni in 369 AD. Moreover, a certain Burgundian regalis also appears in an important funerary inscription from Trier. The available evidence thus points to an order of independent Burgundian district-kings (Gaukonige) and perhaps sub-kings of tribal units, such as is known to have existed at this time among the neighboring Alamanni and Quadi.

Following the great Germanic invasion of 406, the Burgundians established themselves on the left bank of the Rhine, most notably at Worms, Speyer, and Coblenz. One of


195Ammianus, Hist., xviii.2.13; Script. Hist. Aug., Probus, xiv; see Thompson, Early Germans, p. 40. This early
their kings, Gundahar, aided local Roman garrisons in raising the usurper Jovinus to the purple at Mainz (412), and in the following year the Burgundians were formally installed as Imperial federates (*foederati*).  Yet this first Burgundian kingdom enjoyed only a brief existence, for King Gundahar and most members of his royal family fell in battle against the Huns (436). Survivors were resettled as federates near Geneva (443) and proved to be most valuable allies in Rome's struggles with the Alamanni and Huns. Moreover, multiple kingship had quickly re-emerged in this second Burgundian realm along the Rhone. Thus the brothers Gundioc and Chilperic were joint rulers in the mid-fourth century; on the latter's death (c. 480), Gundioc's four sons also ruled together at several different towns. Similarly, in 516 the brothers Godomar and Sigismund succeeded their father Gundobad as joint-kings of the Burgundians. Indeed, a unitary royal

Burgundian kingship may not have anteceded the fourth century:
Demougeot, *Formation de l'Europe*, p. 479; Schwarz, *Stammeskunde*, p. 76.


198 Marius Aventicensis, *Chronicon*, an. 500-524; ed. Mommsen, in MGH AA, Vo. XI. These Burgundian kings often held the Roman office of *magister militum*, while at the same time claiming descent from the earliest so-called Gibiching line:
authority only emerged among the Burgundians in the second quarter of the sixth century.

These early Burgundian rulers, however, were not only concerned with war-leadership. The fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus provides a remarkable account of their religious responsibilities:

In their country a king is called by the general name Hendinos and, according to an ancient custom, lays down his power and is deposed, if under him the fortune of war has wavered, or the earth has denied sufficient crops; just as the Egyptians commonly blame their rulers for such occurrences. On the other hand, the chief priest among the Burgundians is called Sinistus, holds his power for life, and is exposed to no such dangers as threaten the kings.

The fact that the Burgundian king could be removed as a result of crop failure as well as military defeat shows clearly that the Hendinos was rather more than a straightforward war-band leader. His bounty-bringing responsibilities are strikingly reminiscent of ancient Scandinavian tribal kingship. Indeed, Burgundian royal deposition could well represent a modified

Lex Gundobada, iii; ed. L. deSalis, in MGH LL, Vol. I;2. Note also the tradition of Burgundian joint-kingship in the Nibelungenlied. For all these points, see Guichard, Essai, pp. 268-82 passim.

Ammianus, Hist., xxviii.5.14: "Apud hos generali nomine rex appellatur Hendinos, et ritu veteri potestate deposita removetur, si sub eo fortuna titubaverit belli, vel segentum copiam negaverit terra, ut solent Aegyptii casus eius modi suis assignare rectoribus. Nam sacerdos apud Burgundios omnium maximus vocatur Sinistus, et est perpetuus, obnoxius discriminibus nullis, ut reges."
form of North Germanic king-sacrifice. Moreover, constitutional historians have seen in the chief-priest (Sinistus), who reportedly held lifetime tenure, an ancient rex sacrorum and thus the remnant of an older Burgundian tribal kingship with predominately sacrificial duties. The Hendinos, it is argued, was a more recent Heerkönig who had achieved a leading position. Ammianus does clearly state that only the Hendinos is king, but also points to his transcendent authority. This account tends to confirm the view that early Germanic Heerkönigtum had blended the bounty-bringing attributes of ancient tribal kingship with the martial, victory-bringing sacrality of war-band leadership.

Hauck has further clarified the sacral aspects of Burgundian kingship to which Ammianus tersely alluded. In the first instance, he acutely observes that the passage directly follows a description of the Burgundian kings' unsuccessful Alamannic campaign in Roman service. When Valentinian withdrew his promised support, the kings killed all their prisoners and returned to their lands. This disastrous

200 Frazer, Golden Bough, I;1, pp. 366-67; de Vries, AGR, I, p. 394; Grönbech, Culture of the Teutons, I, p. 134; Schwarz, Stammeskunde, p. 75.


expedition, Hauck contends, had demonstrated the loss of "royal luck" and would have led to deposition as Ammianus notes. The mass execution was thus a ritual prisoner-sacrifice designed to revitalize the kings' efficacious personal link with divinity. In addition, Hauck demonstrated that the nomen generale Hendinos was not merely a political designation for a Burgundian district-king. The term may be defined as "tribal father," "first-born of the family" (Gmc. *kindi, Goth. kindins), and thus points to a Burgundian royal genealogy with Hendinos as divine or semi-divine ancestor. At the same time, Hendinos could have been a sacral honor-title borne by all Burgundian kings and comparable to ansis, or Yngvi. It might finally be observed that certain thaumaturgic powers were indeed ascribed to the Burgundian king Sigismund and also Guntram, the Frankish king who incorporated Burgundy into his realm. Both were Christian kings, and the former even achieved

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sainthood, yet their healing abilities are most likely to be associated with early Burgundian sacral kingship beliefs.  

East Germanic kingship, therefore, was a multifaceted institution clearly attested both before and during the initial stages of the Migrations. Multiple kingship, often expressed by martial, federate command (Heerkönigtum), is particularly prominent. Yet as also seen in the careers of Ariovistus and Maroboduus, a unitary royal authority did tend to emerge following conquest and settlement. The religious aspect of East Germanic kingship is equally complex. On the one hand, dual rulership, especially among the early Vandals and Lombards, was possibly associated with Germanic dioscuric traditions. More importantly, there is considerable evidence that during the Migrations an emerging East Germanic Heerkönigtum had effectively supplanted tribal kingship, and had thereby blended both Wodanistic and bounty-bringing sacrality in a new royal authority. Indeed, alongside the predominately Wodanistic complexion of later Gothic and Lombard Heerkönigtum, the imprint of this chthonic tribal kingship can still be detected. Such ancient royal traditions seem to have been carried by the Hasdingi Vandal clan and were perhaps preserved as a separate institution among the Burgundians.

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The Early Middle Ages (c. 500-800 AD)

At the close of the Migration age, only two East Germanic peoples, the Lombards and Visigoths, still maintained independent realms in Western Europe. Kingdom-founding during the early middle ages was primarily to be the work of indigenous West Germanic tribes rather than large-scale migrating gentes. It has been seen that endemic inter-tribal warfare and bitter factional disputes led to the early abandonment of West Germanic tribal kingship. Nonetheless, certain individual leaders of royal and non-royal birth did attempt to forge new realms through retinue command of federate campaigns. The efforts of Ariovistus, Maroboduus, and Civilis to establish such enduring, hereditary kingdoms were for the most part unsuccessful. During the first and second centuries AD, Rome in fact consolidated its military position along the Rhine and effectively halted further Germanic expansion into the Western Provinces. Yet at the same time, momentous changes were taking place in the tribal structure of the Rhine-Elbe region. For by the time of Ammianus Marcellinus, nearly all the West Germanic tribes which Tacitus described had somewhat mysteriously disappeared. In their place stood leagues with a variety of new names - Alamanni, Saxons, Franks. These emergent West Germanic tribal structures were most likely regional regroupings of smaller pre-Migration tribes that now arose in opposition to Roman
military presence along the Rhine. It is to these early medieval Germanic peoples and their statecraft that our attention must now be directed.

The Alamannic league took shape c. 200 AD in the Main-Saale region when various dispersed tribes and splinter-groups, perhaps around a Suebic core, united on a series of plunder-campaigns. This heterogeneous band progressed slowly southward to the Imperial frontier by a series of prolonged raids. Indeed, throughout the third and fourth centuries, individual Alamannic war-bands threw themselves upon the Roman limes and ranged as far afield as Clermont, Milan, and Ravenna. As seen in the case of Arminius' operations, each component group within the Alamannic league retained its own array of kings and leading men. During the third century, Alamannic district-kings also conducted independent raids into distant lands against Romans and Celts.


These largely autonomous Alamannic kings, however, might combine forces on extended campaigns or when a particular district was threatened with invasion. On such occasions, dual kings (often brothers) seem normally to have assumed command as joint warlords even though numerous other kings and leading men accompanied them into battle. Thus, the general Alamannic disturbance which brought Julian to the Rhine (357) was reportedly led by the kings Chonodomarius and his nephew Serapio, and also included five "kings nearest in power" (potestate proximi reges), ten "princes" (regales), and numerous nobles (optimates). When Julian launched a renewed attack in the following year, the affected Alamanni united before Mayence to prevent a Roman passage of the Rhine. Macrianus and Hariobaudes, "kings and own brothers," were prominent among the total of six Alamannic kings who submitted during this campaign.

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210 Ammianus, Hist., xvi.12.23-26. At the subsequent battle of Strasburg, King Chonodomarius was accompanied by a two hundred-man retinue, all of whom surrendered with their lord (ibid., xvi.12.60).

211 Ammianus, Hist., xvii.2 passim. Note that on the eve of battle, one king held a feast for all the Alamannic reges, regales, and reguli in the area (ibid., xvii.2.13). Macrianus attained a certain prestige through war-leadership in the time of Valentinian (ibid., xxix.4.2,xxx.3.3-7). Alamannic dual leadership may perhaps be connected with similar pre-Migration practices; the warlords do not seem to have possessed any enduring or preeminent authority in peace-time: Thompson, Early Germans, pp. 14, 40.
Even after their establishment in the Neckar region (modern Alsace) during the early fifth century, the Alamanni do not seem to have had a unitary royal authority. Alamannic war-bands were still ranging into northern Italy and Noricum toward the close of this century, while a more concentrated thrust also proceeded down the Rhine into Hesse and the lands of the so-called Ripuarian Franks. Indeed, the unnamed king who fell in the battle of Tolbiac (c. 496) was not necessarily sole king of the Alamanni. Only the northwest Alamannic districts immediately fell under Frankish control; other groups received Theodoric's protection and settled in Ostrogothic Raetia. The persistent strength of Alamannic multiple kingship is further attested by the region's subsequent political position and judicial organization within the Frankish realm. For even after the Alamannic incorporation, a host of nearly independent district officials (e.g., the hunno, Lat. centenarius), apparently the "mediatised" successors of Alamannic local kings, stood beside their Frankish duke as central figures of regional administration.


213 Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., ii.30; Cassiodorus, Variae, ii.41. See Freeman, Fifth Century, pp. 295-302; Musset, Les invasions, p. 113.

Alamannic multiple kingship also represents a significant example of West Germanic Heerkönigtum. The evidence suggests that an Alamannic warlord gathered a number of retinues on a proposed plunder-campaign. Once the area had been conquered, this motley force settled down as a new people and the retinue-leader emerged as district-king of a small but enduring realm. This process no doubt repeated itself all along the frontier and resulted in a series of independent district kingdoms which were reinforced by continual raids. In this respect, it may be said that early medieval Alamannic kings succeeded where previous Heerkönige had failed.

Indeed, our principal evidence for the religious dimension of Alamannic kingship relates to the function of royal war-band leadership. The essentially Wodanistic sacrality of early Germanic retinue leadership and its extension, Heerkönigtum, has already been observed. While this particular religious association of the Germanic retinue was not doubt most intense during periods of warfare and conquests, there is no reason to believe that it was confined to the Migration Age. For example, in 365, the Roman general Jovinus surprised an Alamannic war-band whose members

that the Alamannic force which took part in the Frankish invasion of Italy (553) was led by two brothers who were district rulers: Agathias, Hist., i.6.2,ii.1.1-5. Hodgkin, Invaders, V, pp. 15-16.

were dyeing their hair red along the Moselle.216 This rite has already been encountered in Civilis' enterprise and was likely a Wodanistic cult-feature. Alamannic war-bands under royal command also performed certain sacrifices which, although not explicitly described, were probably of a martial, Wodanistic nature.217 Indeed, Alamannic Wodan-worship is specifically attested in the Life of St. Columban. When Columban was one day surveying the countryside around his newly-founded monastery at Bregenz on the Rhine (c. 610), he happened upon a group of people gathered around a large beer-cask. Upon asking them the purpose of this ceremony, they replied that they were making an offering to Wodan, their god.218 It is also worth mentioning that Wodan's name appears in the famous runic inscription of the Nordendorf helmet (Alamannic, sixth century ?), while many Alamannic disc-brooches have a distinctly Wodanistic iconography.219

However, Wodan was not the only god worshipped by the Alamanni during the early middle ages. One might recall

216 Ammianus, Hist., xxvii.2.2.

217 Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., i.34; Ammianus, Hist., xiv.10.9. There were Alamannic seers in the army which invaded Italy (Agathias, Hist., ii.6.7-9). Yet there is no evidence that Alamannic dual command had any specifically religious foundation.


that St. Gall, one of Columban's companions at Bregenz, had
destroyed a nearby temple that in fact housed three different
idols.\textsuperscript{220} Indeed, there is a significant body of evidence
which suggest that the Alamanni had been particularly devoted
to Tiwaz (Tiu/Ziu), an ancient sky and war-god who had ap­
parently been relegated to the legal sphere after the Migra­
tions.\textsuperscript{221} The special rites and oaths by which fourth-century
Alamannic kings confirmed their treaties with Rome are perhaps
to be associated with this deity.\textsuperscript{222} The fact that both martial
and protective rites are connected with the activities of
Alamannic kings suggests that Alamannic \textit{Heerkönigtum}, like
the pre-Migration and East Germanic examples, had indeed
combined two forms of sacrality belonging to the originally
distinct spheres of tribal king and warlord. But since

\textsuperscript{220}Vita S. Galli, vi; ed. Krusch, MGH SSRM, Vol. IV.
Pirmin (d. 753), founder of Reichenau, met considerable opposi­
tion in his mission to the Alamanni; see his interesting col­
lection of condemned rites, \textit{De singulis libris canonicis}
Scarapsus /Dicti Pirmini\textup{\textsuperscript{1}}, in Patr. Lat., ed. Migne, Vol.
LXXXIX, esp. cols. 1040-42. 
Laisner, \textit{Thought and Letters}, pp. 179-80; R. E. Sullivan, "The Carolingian Missionary and
Alamannic con­
version was not complete until the ninth century: A. Hauck,
Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands (9th ed., 5 vols.; Berlin:
and the Continent in the Eighth Century} (Oxford: Clarendon

\textsuperscript{221}The Alamanni are designated Cyuwari ("Ziu-worshippers")
in a ninth-century gloss; Augsburg, their chief stronghold,
was also called Ciesburg in the fifth century and may have
been a cult-center of this god: Rosenfeld, "Alamannischer
Ziu-Kult und SS. Ulrich-und Afra-Verehrung in Augsburg,"
Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, XXXVII (1955), 306-55; Betz,
"Alt. Rel.\textup{\textsuperscript{1}}," col. 1580; de Vries, AGR, II, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{222}Ammianus, \textit{Hist.}, xiv.10.16, xvii.1.13,10.7, xxx.3.5.
evidence concerning the religious role of Alamannic kings in peacetime is lacking, any conclusive statement on the nature of Alamannic royal sacrality would be overly hazardous.

Shortly before the Alamanni emerged as a distinct people along the Main, the Saxon league had arisen in the Ems-Elbe region of the North Sea coast. Again, the Saxons seem to represent a local re-grouping of several West Germanic tribes, in this case primarily members of the Ingvaonic cult-league among whom the Chauci were especially prominent. What the Alamanni had accomplished by land, the Saxons did by sea. In fact, Saxon sea-raiders were the terrors of Western Europe for three centuries. Their maritime attacks became so intense and destructive that a special network of Roman fortresses had to be erected to defend the coastal and inland waterways of the Western Provinces. Yet Saxon

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223 "Saxones," are said to inhabit the lower Cimbrian peninsula early in the first century AD (Ptolemy, Geographia, ii.2.7, cited by Schütte, Forefathers, II, p. 248), where Tacitus later locates the Chauci, "the noblest of the Germanic tribes," which had already incorporated several of their neighbors (Germania, xxxv-xxxvi; idem., Annals, xiii.55). An important victory in the Chauci's land c.175 AD was remembered in Saxon tradition (Widukind, Res gest. Sax., i.3; ed. Waitz, MGH SS, Vol. III); one can suppose the Chauci were thereafter absorbed by their smaller opponents yet probably remained the dominant people in the emerging Saxon league (Script. Hist. Aug., Did. Jul., i.7-8). For this difficult Saxon question, see in general: Schwarz, Stammeskunde, pp. 119-20; 130-32; Demougeot, Formation de l'Europe, pp. 326-28, 469-72; Schütte, Forefathers, II, pp. 248-50; B. Rappaport, "Saxones," RE, eds. Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, 2nd ser., II;1, cols. 309-27.

224 Eutropius, Breviarium, ix.21; ed. F. Galli (Florence: Sansoni, 1932); Ammianus, Hist., xxviii.2.12,5.1-7,
attempts to expand and settle overland were thwarted by the Franks. In 469, combined forces of provincial Romans and Salian Franks attacked Saxon enclaves along the Loire;²²⁵ however, the Saxons later participated in the Frankish conquest of Thuringia and received a large share of captured territory for settlement (534).²²⁶ Although the Saxons thus fell under Frankish suzerainty during the sixth century, their repeated revolts were a constant source of concern to the early Frankish kings. Indeed, the Saxon problem was only solved by Charlemagne's direct invasions and over thirty years of extraordinarily bitter warfare.²²⁷

Constitutional and legal historians have long heralded the continental Saxons as a truly non-monarchical,

²²⁵ Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., ii.18-19. Twenty thousand Saxons and their families left Thuringia to join Alboin's march into Italy (568). But discontent with a subordinate status, they fought their way back three years later: ibid., iv.42,v.15; Paul the Deacon, Hist. Langob., ii.6, iii.6-7.

²²⁶ Widukind, Res gest. Sax., i.9; Rudolf of Fulda, Translatio S. Alexandri, i; ed. Pertz, MGH SS, Vol. II.

"republican" people. Political authority, it is claimed, lay in the hands of district nobles and popular assembly just as it had elsewhere in pre-Migration times.\footnote{228} This traditional view, though substantially correct, is somewhat oversimplified and based on sources which do not antecede the eighth century.

In the first instance, it is true that there is no pre-Migration evidence of royal authority among the Chauci or any other Saxon sub-tribe. None of the Saxon sea-raids and landed expeditions of the Migration Age are said to have been led by kings, nor does native Saxon tradition speak of other than duces, principes.\footnote{229} Bede observes in the Ecclesiastical History (731) that in his day the Old Saxons had no king; rather, several local chieftains (satrapae) managed overall tribal affairs. In wartime, moreover, these leading men chose one of their own as sole warlord (dux) and rendered him total obedience for the duration of hostilities. Thereafter, all satrapae reverted to equal status.\footnote{230} Bede's constitutional description is confirmed and supplemented by an important passage from the mid ninth-century Life of St. Lebuin. The Anglo-Saxon missionary (d. 780) found that

\footnote{228}{\textit{Brunner}, Dt. Recht., I, p. 128; \textit{Stubbs}, Constitutional History, I, pp. 44-45; Müllenhoff, Dt. Alt., IV, pp. 195-96.}

\footnote{229}{\textit{Widukind}, Res gest. Sax., i.8,9,11.}

every year all Saxon satrapae, joined by twelve representatives from the three social classes in each district (nobiles, liberi, laeti), traditionally met in general assembly at Marklo on the Weser to resolve local disputes and determine larger matters of war and peace. Presumably, it was here that the ruling satrapae were chosen along with the common dux in time of war. This remarkable "national assembly," moreover, was clearly both a judicial and religious convocation. Proceedings convened with common prayers to the gods and the site was apparently surrounded by a sacral enclosure.

However, the individual careers of Old Saxon duces indicate that in practice these leaders often assumed a wider authority than that which Bede had described. Thus the fifth-century warlord Odoaker seems to have held some degree of enduring tribal authority over the Saxon enclaves along the Loire. Called dux Saxonum, he concluded an important

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treaty with Childeric I, king of the Salian Franks.\textsuperscript{233} The sixth-century Frankish overlordship did not put an end to Saxon political traditions. Indeed, Saxon duces continued to lead their own retinues under the Frankish kings. For example, a certain Aigyna, said to be of noble birth, was one of the most prominent men in the kingdoms of both Chlotar II (d. 629) and Dagobert I (d. 639).\textsuperscript{234} However, another Saxon warlord, Bertoald, led a serious local revolt against Chlotar and Dagobert (622). At the head of a federate army, he had first defeated Dagobert's expedition which had entered Saxon territory. King Chlotar rushed to the aid of his son, crossed the Weser, and decapitated Bertoald in single combat.\textsuperscript{235} Nonetheless, this Saxon warlord's unitary command and confederate leadership are particularly significant.

But the most instructive example of the authority which a Saxon dux could wield is furnished by the career of Widukind, Charlemagne's formidable opponent in the Saxon

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{233}Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., ii.19; Liber Hist. Franc., viii; ed. Krusch, MGH SSRM, Vol. II.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{234}Predegar, Chron., iv.55,78; ed. Krusch, MGH SSRM, Vol. II.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{235}Liber Hist. Franc., xli. Chlotar then killed every Saxon taller than his long-sword, which he set up as a symbol of his dominion (ibid).}
wars. Widukind reportedly was a West Saxon (Westphalian) tribal leader distinguished by noble birth and wealth.236 The date of his initial revolt is uncertain, but by 777 he refused to attend the Frankish assembly at Paderborn and took refuge in Denmark.237 Widukind likely was responsible for the great Saxon victory in the SünTEL mountains (782) in which twenty Frankish nobles, for counts, and two of Charlemagne's personal envoys were killed.238 Thereafter, Charlemagne increased his attacks until the greater part of Saxon territory had been occupied. In 785, Widukind submitted to the Frankish king in Francia and was baptised with Charlemagne as godfather.239 There is no evidence of Widukind's formal election as a tribal warlord and he was by no means the common warlord of all the Saxon people.240 Nor


238 Ibid., an. 782, p. 165. Widukind apparently formed an alliance with part of the Frisians (ibid., an. 784, p. 166). At his instigation, the Frisians drove Liudger from their land (783): Altfrid, Vita S. Liudgeri, i.18; ed. Pertz, MGH SS, Vol. II.

239 Annales reg. Franc., an. 785, pp. 166, 168; Rudolf of Fulda, Transl. S. Alex., iii.

240 See Annales reg. Franc., an. 775, 777, 778, 785, pp. 154, 156, 158, 166 for other Saxon leaders.
did the revolt abruptly end with his surrender. Yet Widukind's long and able war-leadership clearly brought him considerable prestige; like Arminius, he became personally identified with a popular resistance to external aggression. Indeed, this Saxon warlord's noble origins, retinue-leadership, and confederate command more closely resemble the political foundations of a Heerkönig than a temporary warlord.

The authority of an Old Saxon dux also had a significant religious dimension. One should consider in this regard what the Saxon chronicler Widukind of Corvey has to say about the warlord (dux) Hathagat (Hathugaut) who directed the Saxon victory over the Thuringians on the river Unstrut (531). According to Widukind, Hathugaut was a tribal leader who bore the title pater patrum by virtue of age and merit. Addressing his assembled warriors, Hathugaut grasped the tribe's sacral insignia - lion, dragon, and eagle images - and promised to lead his people to victory. After their success, the Saxons erected an eagle emblem on the town gates as well as a victory-column. Amidst battle-chants and other cultic festivities, Hathugaut was raised aloft and proclaimed to possess a divine spirit and supernatural efficacy.

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241 Widukind, Res. gest. Sax., i.11; cf. Rudolf of Fulda, Transl. S. Alex., i.

242 Widukind, Res. gest. Sax., i.12: "Pro triduum igitur dies victoriae agentes et spolia hostium dividentes exequiasque caesorum celebrantes, laudibus ducem in coelum attollunt, divinum ei animum inesse coelestemque virtutem acclamantes, qui sua constantia tantum eos egerit perficere victoriam."
The Saxon warlord's tribal authority had clearly been heightened by his military success. Indeed, Hathugaut's transcendent, victory-bringing attributes (\textit{virtus, constantia}) are in every way comparable to the Gothic warlords' \textit{fortuna}. The ceremony which Widukind reports could thus represent a sacral acclamation of the victory-bringing warlord which, in turn, was a standard feature in the Saxons' autumn festival. At this cult-ceremony, the victorious lord was commemorated as the personal representative of that deity who had temporarily inspired him. The identity of this god, moreover, is suggested by the name Hathugaut ("Battle-Gaut"), which is built on a Wodan-root. Indeed, this name, probably bestowed during the ceremony itself, may well represent a sacral honor-title similar to the Gothic \textit{ansis}, Old Swedish \textit{Yngvi}, and Burgundian \textit{Hendinos}. Furthermore, the tribal emblems which Hathugaut manipulated before battle were most likely Wodanistic cult-objects.

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{243} Schlesinger, "Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft," p. 158; Beumann, "Ideeengeschichte des Königtums," 480-81; Wolfram, "Fortuna in mittelalterlichen Stammesgeschichten," 8-9.
\item\textsuperscript{244} Hauck, "Lebensnormen und Kultmythen," 216-18; \textit{idem.}, "Geblütsheligkeit," pp. 234-35. For this divinisation of Saxon warlords at seasonal festivals, see the anonymous poem \textit{De conversione Saxonum}, MGH, \textit{Poet. lat.}, Vol. I, p. 380, quoted by Hauck, "Mittellateinische Literatur," col. 2577.
\item\textsuperscript{245} Hauck, "Lebensnormen und Kultmythen," 217; Höfler, "Abstammungstraditionen," 22-23.
\item\textsuperscript{246} J. Plassmann, "Widukind von Corvey als Quelle für die germanische Altertumskunde," \textit{PBB}, LXXV (1953), 191-228;
\end{itemize}
It should again be noted that Hathugaut was a prominent tribal leader chosen for a temporary military command. His address before the assembly of warriors suggests a previous role of cult-speaker, like the Buto who spoke at Marklo when Lebuin made his ill-advised appearance. In view of this significant combination of roles, Hauck has aptly designated Hathugaut as a kingly cult-speaker whose authority bore a "profane and sacral dual-aspect." Indeed, the cultic or priestly side of this figure's authority could point to the existence of an ancient Saxon tribal kingship. On surer grounds, one may conclude that although the Old Saxons were not accustomed to royal rule in the early middle ages, their warlords were invested with a wide-ranging political and religious authority which closely approaches that of Heerkönigtum.


247 Leb. ant., vi.

248 Hauck, Goldbrakteaten aus Sievern, pp. 44-46, 71-73, 101-103; Schwarz, Stammeskunde, p. 132. Chadwick argued that the Old Saxons had a royal tradition on the grounds of their ethnic affinity with the Angli, whose kings are known from the fourth century (Origin, pp. 51-84 passim). Note that the East Saxon (Essex) royal line in England did claim descent from the continental Saxon deity Saxneat (probably Tiwaz): Philippson, Genealogie der Götter, p. 34; de Vries, AGR, II, p. 18; Chaney, Cult of Kingship, p. 33.

The historical record of kingship in Anglo-Saxon England reaches back to the initial fifth-century conquests. The nature of this kingship and its religious dimensions can again be best determined by examining specific instances of kingdom-founding. Toward the middle of the fifth century, the southern Britons were subject to a certain Highland Welsh king, Vortigern. This border ruler, most likely a tribal chieftain of former Roman foederati, had extended his suzerainty over the Lowlands in part at least by employing Germanic war-bands from the Continent. One such group led by the brothers Hengest and Horsa landed on the isle of Thanet with three long-ships (c. 450) and entered Vortigern's service as military federates with provisions and lands in Kent. Yet prospects of further land-taking soon induced the


co-rulers to turn upon their British allies, join the Picts, and summon new bands of adventurers from overseas. The conquest of Kent proceeded slowly over three decades but was in the main completed under Hengest's son Aesc (Oisc), from whom the Kentish kings were later called Oiscingas.251

Other fifth-century English kingdoms had similar beginnings, though there were apparently no initial treaty arrangements with British rulers. Thus, some thirty years after Hengest and Horsa's landfall in Kent, Aelle and his


three sons are said to have arrived on the Sussex coast with a complement of three warships. Bede observed that Aelle was the first English king to have established a general lordship (imperium) upon all provinces south of the Humber. Indeed, not for fifty years did another achieve such a position. This long interval and the sudden obscurity which falls upon Aelle in Sussex points to a major reversal of English military fortunes. There is indeed further evidence of a significant British revival at the close of the fifth century. According to Bede, the English had at first overrun the entire island until thrust back by a certain Ambrosius Aurelianus (King Arthur?). This general counter-attack was apparently of some lasting consequence, for Gildas mentions (c. 550) the island's "present prosperity" and the "peace which, by the will of God, has been granted her in these our times." It is thus likely that Aelle


253 Bede, Hist., ii.5. The Chronicle (an. 829) calls such an overlord bretwalda ("Britain-ruler" or "wide ruler"). It designated no formal office but rather a personal military suzerainty: C. Brooke, The Saxon and Norman Kings (London: B. T. Batsford, 1962), pp. 91-93; Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, pp. 34-36; Dorothy Whitelock, Beginnings of English Society, pp. 48-50. For the important role of bretwaldas in the conversion of England, see Mayr-Harting, Coming of Christianity, pp. 64-68.

254 Bede, Hist., i.16; Gildas, De excidio, xxxv.
conducted a federate English force that swept across the island late in the fifth century. With the British offensive and victory at Badon Hill (c. 500), Aelle's military federation collapsed and the rapid English initial advance was halted for several generations. Although Aelle's overlordship was essentially a personal position, it clearly set an important model for later English supra-tribal statecraft.

West Saxon tradition celebrated the landing of Cerdic and his son Cynric with five warships toward the close of the fifth century. Within perhaps a decade this war-band and its leading clan battled northward from an initial coastal stronghold and carved out a small Saxon realm in Wiltshire and Hampshire. Yet the lasting foundations of Wessex were laid in the next generation, when Ceawlin (d. 591), one of Cerdic's descendants, extended the kingdom's borders to the Upper Thames and westward into the Cotswolds. This explosive advance, moreover, was very likely a federate enterprise similar to Aelle's earlier efforts in Sussex. Even before his death, however, military setbacks undermined and dissolved

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Ceawlin's confederacy. Cerdic's family nonetheless rose to hegemony in the southwest during the seventh century by effectively absorbing smaller Saxon peoples and dynasties.

In functional terms, therefore, a Cerdic or Hengest was primarily a retinue-lord, a renowned warrior who brought his select war-band over the seas in the hope of land-conquest and glory. Indeed, Anglo-Saxon kingdom-founding strikingly resembles the earlier development of Heerkönigtum in the Rhineland. Early English "founder kings" built dynastic realms from retinue-lordship, land-taking, and settlement. By the seventh century, these leading families had eliminated competing royal clans, whose members generally emerged as privileged landed nobility. The careers of

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Aelle and Ceawlin also demonstrate that large-scale federations led by a common over-king played a role in England comparable to the leagues of Ariovistus and Civilis. The struggle among so-called Heptarchic states after the seventh century in fact centered largely upon possession of this shifting overlordship.

Early English kingship is thus also marked by multiple rulership, very often in the form of dual kingship within individual realms. Indeed, it has been rightly said that Anglo-Saxon kingship, at least in its first centuries, was never considered rule by one man.\textsuperscript{260} The pre-Migration practice of choosing dual warlords for command of specific campaigns has already been noted. Such duces/principes were precisely the sort of leaders who most commonly appear as founder-kings in England. However, the campaigns of men like Hengest and Cerdic were not narrowly ethnic enterprises, unlike some comparable continental commands. Rather, early English warlords seem to have drawn their hosts from many peoples all along the North Sea littoral. Archeological and place-name research has confirmed this view by demonstrating the diversity of Anglo-Saxon settlement from its earliest stages.\textsuperscript{261} On the other hand, while many founders of

\textsuperscript{260}Brooke, Saxon Kings, pp. 80-81; also Blair, Roman Britain, pp. 238-42; Sayles, Medieval Foundations, pp. 128-30. For instances of multiple rulership: Chronicle, an. 519, 626E, 654E, 692E; Bede, Hist., ii.5,9, iii.22,30, iv.12,13.

Anglo-Saxon dynasties undoubtedly ranked as such adventurous retinue-leaders, a significant number were scions of ancient royal clans. For example, the founder of Mercia, Icel, was in all likelihood the great-grandson of that renowned King Offa who had ruled the united Anglian people early in the fourth century. The Mercian kings' rise over other Midland Angles may well have been aided by enduring traditions of their former exalted position on the Continent.262

One of the most important sources from which to assess the sacral content of early English kingship are the Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies. However, these records have but rarely been considered from a religious-historical perspective. Of the eight surviving pedigrees, seven commence with the god Wodan (OE. Woden).263 Bede and Nennius both refer to English royal lines descended from Wodan, while the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle repeatedly proclaims Cerdic's West


Saxon clan as Wodan-sprung. While these royal genealogies, like pedigrees in general, must not be seen as chronologically accurate accounts of early periods, they do represent a significant, fluid body of venerable oral tradition concerning early English kings. Moreover, the genealogies were


After the eighth century, many royal genealogies were extended above Wodan to common Germanic semi-legendary figures, e.g., Finn, Geat, Sceaf. Thereafter the Wessex pedigree acquired biblical members; thus the Chronicle, Asser, and William of Malmesbury trace Cerdic's ancestry through Wodan to Noah and Adam: Sisam, "Genealogies," pp. 288-98; Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 29-32.

Yet these genuine belief-traditions must be clearly distinguished from the deliberate pedigree falsifications of later scribes: Höfler, "Abstammungstraditionen," 23-24; Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 41-42.

Chambers, Beowulf, pp. 316-17; Höfler, "Abstammungstraditionen," 22-23; Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, pp. 15, 19;
apparently used to buttress hereditary succession in Heptarchic kingdoms. It has been shown, for example, that the genealogies assumed written form precisely during periods of monarchical consolidation, e.g., in Mercia under Offa (757-796), and during Edgar's reign in Wessex (959-975). Indeed, Donald Hanson has recently suggested that the king-lists were fundamental parts of a political myth which ideologically united fragmented early medieval societies. On the one hand, a reigning king's divinely descended ancestors, the Hengests, Cerdics, and Icels, had themselves instituted the current social order; conversely, the king's right to rule was validated by this proper divine ancestry. Thus the monotonous genealogical repetitions of accession entries were a kind of written ritual which, like the Christian coronation rites, both emphasized the king's vital hereditary bond with Divinity and reaffirmed the existing social order.

In any case, the Anglo-Saxon genealogies clearly indicate that early English royal clans, like those of the Continent and Scandinavia, proudly preserved and cultivated the memory of their divine ancestors and descent over many


267Hanson, Kingdom to Commonwealth, pp. 76-83.
generations. The royal genealogies were proclamations of clan distinction, affirmations of that essential quality which lifted the stirps regia out of the folk, viz., clan-holiness. Such ideas were indeed evident in the pre-Migration Age, when the special mark of tribal kingship had been nobilitas. However, Anglo-Saxon royal sacrality was more complex than that of the Tacitean tribal king. For as noted previously, Anglo-Saxon founder-kings were for the most part new men, glorified warlords who successfully led retinue-based expeditions and often confederate campaigns to conquest and eventually large-scale settlement. By surpassing their temporary commands and establishing hereditary realms, these early English leaders were both duces and reges in the older Tacitean sense. Like the continental Heerkönige, moreover, early Anglo-Saxon kings surrounded their statecraft with the sacrality inherent in both these originally distinct roles. The dual sacral content of Anglo-Saxon kingship found expression in the several types of Wodanistic rituals associated with Anglo-Saxon rulers.

In the first instance, an important group of royal rites relate directly to Wodan's martial, victory-bringing attributes, and hence to the Anglo-Saxon king's warlord

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capacity. Thus Aethelweard, a scion of the Wessex dynasty, affirmed Wodan's high rank as royal ancestor and added that sacrifice was formerly made to this god "for victory or valor (virtus)." He gives no further details, but as noted earlier, war-prisoners were commonly sacrificed to Wodan in fulfillment of a battle-vow. The massacre of British forces defending Anderida against Aelle has the appearance of just such a Wodanistic victory-offering. Again, when Penda, Mercia's mighty pagan king had defeated and killed the Christian bretwalda Oswald of Northumbria at Maserfelth (642), he ordered his opponent's body dismembered and hung aloft on stakes over the battlefield. Indeed, Oswald may be one of Bede's models of Christian royal piety, yet certain features of his career strongly suggest that the


recently converted Northumbrian king did not forget his family's special bond with Wodan. Before his victory over Cadwalla, for example, Oswald personally erected a wooden cross on an old sacral site nearby and summoned his army to beg divine protection. This incident with the "standard of the holy cross," as Bede puts it, ties in directly with the Northern association of Odin-pillars and royal rites.\(^{272}\)

Moreover, just before his death in battle, we see Oswald praying for his army rather than his enemies' souls, as might better suit such an exemplary Christian ruler. In general, the early Germanic king's role as his people's victory-bringer accords well with Bede's description of Oswald as "fighting for his country" and "most holy and victorious."\(^{273}\)

Other beliefs and practices associated with Anglo-Saxon kings represent the ancient nobilitas-sphere of kingship. This significant group relates specifically to Wodan


as "patron" god of wisdom, poetry, and harvest, i.e., to the magico-priestly side of Wodanistic Heerkönigtum. For example, it is generally agreed that Wodan appears in the OE. Runic Poem's description of this alphabet's tenth letter: "Os is the source of all language/ A pillar of wisdom and a comfort to wise men." The references to pillar and wisdom are again clearly reminiscent of the god whose self-mutilation and hanging brought him runic knowledge. It also should be noted that no less than twelve of the Wodan-sprung Northumbrian kings bore os-compound names.


276 Chaney, Cult of Kingship, p. 22; see also: H. Woolf, The Old Germanic Principles of Name-Giving (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1939), p. 23; Malone, "Royal Names in
Wodan's appearance in the Anglo-Saxon charms further underscores this deity's magical and royal associations. The Nine Herbs Charm against poison reads: "A worm came crawling, it killed nothing/ For Woden took nine glory-twigs/ He smote then the adder till it flew in nine parts."277 In the Germanic world, nine was a sacral number closely associated with gods and kings. Indeed, it appears prominently in Anglo-Saxon law as the special "king's number."278 The royal right of asylum, for example, extends nine nights in King Aethelstan's code, the same period as for an archbishop or a church. An eleventh-century law confirms this royal sanctuary and stipulates that the right could be extended beyond nine nights by the king alone.279 Moreover, a late Anglo-Saxon legal


278Chaney, "Aethelberht's Code and the King's Number"; idem., Cult of Kingship, pp. 107-09, 213-16; Turville-Petre, Myth and Religion, pp. 49-71.

treatise defines the "king's peace" as physically encompassing "three miles and three furlongs and three linear acres and nine feet and nine scaeftamunda (?) and nine barleycorns." The fertility references used here to define the king's peace as well as the specific term for this protection, handgrith, again relate to this magico-priestly and bounty-bringing sacrality of ancient tribal kingship now subsumed in Anglo-Saxon Heerkönigtum. However, the fertility dimension of Wodanistic kingship is admittedly difficult to define. Certainly enough Wodan cult-centers have been identified by English place-name research to suggest that this deity's worship had not been confined to aristocratic circles.

Royal insignia and related symbolic emblems are another major source for the religious ideology of early of pagan temple, Christian church and royal palace as sacral precincts: ibid, pp. 73-77; Gronbech, Culture of the Teutons, II, pp. 131-43 passim.


Germanic kingship. For the Anglo-Saxons, special attention must be given to the grave-goods from Sutton Hoo, a magnificent ship-burial generally regarded today as a cenotaph erected in the mid-seventh century to a member of the East Anglian royal clan, the Wuffingas. Its rich contents fall into several categories, but the most significant for this investigation is the group of ceremonial items including an iron standard and stone scepter deposited as an integral unit along the west wall of the chamber. In fact, Sutton

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Hoo has been classified as a specifically royal burial primarily on the basis of these remarkable symbolic objects.283

Before proceeding to a discussion of these regalia, it should be pointed out that the seventh-century Wuffingas and their people had not yet fully cast aside their traditional religious beliefs and practices. For example, Bede reports that King Redwald (d. 624), after having received baptism at the Kentish court, maintained altars to both Christ and the old gods to whom he offered traditional sacrifice.284 Moreover, when Redwald fell in battle, the


284 Bede, Hist., ii.15: "Nam [Redwald] rediens domum, ab uxore sua et quibusdam perversis doctoriibus seductus est . . . atque in eodem fano et altare haberet ad sacrificium Christi et arulum ad victimas daemoniarum." This implies a Christian altar was added to a pagan sanctuary where various gods were worshipped. Note that Redwald seems to have used the old religion for political ends, i.e., to emerge as bretwalda in his own right: Mayr-Harting, Coming of Christianiety, pp. 25, 65-67. Bruce-Mitford identifies this fanum and the Sutton Hoo burial ground with the Wuffingas' royal seat at Rendlesham, and points to the customary proximity of royal palace and pagan temple in the Germanic North: "Saxon Rendlesham," in Aspects, pp. 73-95; H.-E. Lidén, "From Pagan Sanctuary to Christian Church," Norwegian Archaeological
entire kingdom reverted to its ancestral gods. Although Redwald's successors included several devout Christian kings, a strong pagan element is still visible in both aristocratic and popular circles until nearly the end of the century.

The gods to whom Redwald and his clan sacrificed are never identified, but the East Anglian royal genealogy clearly proclaims Wodan as divine ancestor. Indeed, this royal family's special tie with Wodan was perhaps expressed in its traditional name, the Wuffingas, i.e., "people of the wolf," one of Wodan's more prominent animal associations.

285 Bede, Hist., ii.15; see also ibid., ii.5, iii.7,22 for further instances of apostasy which demonstrate the vital connection between royal and popular religiosity. See Kuhn, "König und Volk in der germanischen Bekehrungsgeschichte," ZDA, LXXVII (1940), 1-11; Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 156-67.

286 See, e.g., how King Sigebert was forced from monastic retirement and carried into battle beside his relative, King Ecgric, in order to "foster the morale of the fighting men" (Bede, Hist., iii.18), or King Oswy's battle-vow for victory and his initial attempts to bribe Penda with "an incalculable quantity of regalia and presents" (ibid., iii.24; Chronicle, an. 654). Chaney, Cult of Kingship, p. 100.


The Sutton Hoo standard is an iron pole over six feet in length, surmounted by a bronze hart-image standing atop an iron ring. Beneath the ring, four short arms terminate in miniature bulls' heads; about twelve inches below, similar bulls' heads form the corners of an iron grill. This is the only Anglo-Saxon standard yet discovered, though there are literary references to royal banners with various animal emblems. However, it is likely that the Sutton Hoo standard belongs to a type known to have been prominently employed by a nearly contemporary king, Edwin of Northumbria (d. 632). Bede observes that banners (vexilla) were borne before this mighty ruler in battle, and that during his remains of a small wolf-headed staff found at Sutton Hoo: Bruce-Mitford, "Sutton Hoo," pp. 699-700; Hauck, "Herrschaftszeichen," p. 51.


peacetime circuits, "that kind of standard which the Romans call tufa but the English tuuf" marked Edwin's progress. If this standard was the special insigne of an Anglo-Saxon bretwalda, it may well have been akin to the ceremonial standard deposited at Sutton Hoo.

In Germanic tradition, the hart is closely linked with kings and deities. King Hrothgar in *Beowulf* names his great new hall after the hart (Heorot < OE. heort, "hart"); hart-horns or heads may have hung upon its walls. The hart seems to have been connected most closely with the god Wodan, though there were other, perhaps older, fertility

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290 Bede, *Hist.*, ii.16; see Bruce-Mitford, "General Interpretation," pp. 11-17. While animal signa did of course appear in Imperial armies, there are no direct Roman parallels to the form and symbolism of the Sutton Hoo standard. Indeed, Roman tufae were probably first employed by Germanic auxiliaries: Chaney, *Cult of Kingship*, pp. 141-43. Also note the significant connection between standard, banners and royal tumuli, e.g., the gold and purple banner erected over Oswald's grave (Bede, *Hist.*, iii.11).


and dioscuric associations. It might be recalled that stag-hunting long continued to be a special occupation of medieval kings. Indeed, some very curious hunting incidents involving harts and later medieval rulers have pronounced ritual overtones.

The Sutton Hoo scepter is essentially a two-foot long whetstone rod which narrows at either end to red-painted lobed knobs, each of which is topped by shallow bronze cups. Just below both knobs are four anthropoidal faces wearing various styles of beards and torcs. Considering this object's elaborate decoration, involved symbolism, and apparent lack of practical use, it is generally regarded as a ceremonial

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294Described in Gelling and Hilda Davidson, Rites and Symbols, pp. 174-75; see also E. K. Chambers, Mediaeval Stage, I, pp. 130-42, 256-63 passim; Dick, Wachstümlichen Heil, pp. 404-19. These medieval festivals could as well be survivals of ancient fertility cults. Horned animals appear on North Germanic rock-carvings and bracteates from prehistoric times to the sixth century AD.
scepter of the Wuffing clan. It may here be observed that the common form of medieval scepter, modeled on the short Roman sceptrum, only appeared in the West after the ninth century. On the other hand, the early Germanic scepter seems to have been either the spear of the long-staff. As noted previously, the royal long-staff tradition can be linked with early Germanic seers and priests, while the spear was Wodan's special weapon.

Interpretation of the Sutton Hoo scepter's symbolism has centered on the remarkable series of faces and their particular iconography. Hauck, for example, pointed to the significant role that long-beards and torcs such as appear on this scepter have played in myths and cults of Wodan. The Anglo-Saxon scepter, he concluded, is thus a cultic

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295 Bruce-Mitford, "Sutton Hoo," pp. 698-99; Wilson, Anglo-Saxons, pp. 45-46; for illus. see Green, Sutton Hoo, plate ix. Several smaller whetstones with faces have been found in Celtic zones; the royal graves of Old Uppsala yielded some functional examples: ibid., p. 69; Bruce-Mitford, "General Interpretation," p. 7. The visual effect of the Sutton Hoo scepter now surmounted by hart and ring is awesome indeed (ibid., plate 1). Bruce-Mitford notes that the terminal cup would fit perfectly on the king's knee (ibid., p. 6).

296 Schramm, Herrschaftszeichen, II, pp. 493-501; Berges and Gauert, "Eiserne Standarte," pp. 263-66; de Vries, AGR, II, pp. 49, 60, 374; Gelling and Hilda Davidson, Rites and Symbols, pp. 147-49. Early medieval coronation ordinæ mention only the short-type scepter but the Benedictionals do sometimes depict the long-staff scepter (bacalus). The long-staff may be a later variant of the spear: Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 145-47. For illus. of such staffs with human and animal faces, see Berges and Gauert, "Eiserne Standarte," pp. 266-67; Todd, Barbarians, p. 26.
"ancestor-staff" of the Wodan-sprung Wuffing line and its faces represent the royal forebears. More recently, an interesting attempt was made to identify the Sutton Hoo scepter with Thor-worship. The major difficulty with this argument is that Thor (OE. Thunor) apparently rose to prominence during the Viking Age, and even then was not regarded as a specifically sovereign deity. Sutton Hoo belongs to a seventh-century milieu and the ceremonial items most likely to an even earlier period. The well-documented ancestral Wodan-cult within the East Anglian Wuffing clan remains very strong evidence for a Wodanistic symbolic interpretation of the Sutton Hoo whetstone scepter.

Finally, the Sutton Hoo helmet also bears significant scenes and symbols which reflect the complex nature of Anglo-Saxon royal sacrality. Well over a century old at its

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298 S. L. Cohen, "The Sutton Hoo Whetstone," Speculum, XLI (1966), 466-70. Cohen points to the incident from Thor-mythology wherein the god battles the giant Hrungrir, whose whetstone missile lodges in Thor's head; see de Vries, AGR, II, pp. 133-37; Hilda Davidson, Gods and Myths, pp. 41, 79; Branston, Lost Gods of England, p. 122. He also suggests that the scepter's red lobes could represent Thor's red hair, and that the four-faces motif is reminiscent of the Thor-idol, destroyed by King Olaf, which was daily offered four loaves of bread (i.e., for four mouths?).
deposit, this helmet was clearly a ceremonial item, a carefully preserved heirloom of the Wuffing clan. The most important features for our purposes are its prominent animal imagery and the band of cultic panel-scenes circling the base of the head-piece.

In the first instance, bronze boar-heads surmount each of the helmet's eye-sockets, just about the cheek-guards. The only other Anglo-Saxon helmet yet discovered, the Benty Grange helmet, is crested by a magnificent free-standing boar. The Sutton Hoo cenotaph in fact contained

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Bruce-Mitford and Marilyn Luscombe, "The Benty Grange Helmet," in Aspects, pp. 223-49; R. M. Chambers, Beowulf, pp. 358-60; Beck, Ebersignum, pp. 14-15. Germanic crested helmets are known from Early Halstatt times, and are reported as early as the second century BC among the Cimbri: "Their horsemen, fifteen thousand strong, rode out in splendid style, with helmets made to resemble the maws of frightful wild beasts or the heads of strange animals which, with their towering crest of feathers, made their wearers appear taller than they really were." Plutarch, Marius, xxxv. See further: S. Piggott, Ancient Europe (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 169, 195, 239; Klindt-Jensen, Denmark Before the Vikings, pp. 74-75; A. Alföldi, "Cornuti," Dumbarton Oaks Papers, No. 13 (1959), pp. 175-76.
a total of ten boar motifs. There is significant evidence that boar insignia were credited with apotropaic powers by the early Germans. Tacitus, for instance, noted that the North Sea Aesti wore votive boar-emblems as protection in battle.\textsuperscript{301} The Beowulf poem contains several important references to helmets protected by the boar. Thus as the Geats approach Heorot, "Boar-heads glittered on glistening helmets/ Above the cheek-guards gleaming with gold/ Bright and fire-hardened, the boar held watch/ Over the column of marching men."\textsuperscript{302} Beowulf himself wears a boar-helm in his battle with Grendel's mother: "A gleaming helmet

Early Germanic helmets were costly and scarce items probably reserved to duces and reges as signs of rank. Some were imported from the south and modified, like the cavalry helmet with eye-mask from the rich Thorsberg sacrificial deposit in Schleswig. The conical Spangenhelm type with its Iranian affinities became common after the fourth century AD, especially in Alamannic areas: V. Kellermann, Germanische Altertumskunde. Grundlagen der Germanistik, I (Berlin: E. Schmidt Verlag, 1966), pp. 111-12; Jankuhn, "Herrschaftszeichen," pp. 105-11; Todd, Barbarians, pp. 102, 110-111; Thompson, Early Germans, pp. 711-13.

\textsuperscript{301}Tacitus, Germania, xlv: "

\textsuperscript{302}Beowulf, ll. 303-306: "Eorforlic scionon/ ofer hleorber(g)an gehrozen golde/ fah ond fyrheard- ferwearde heold/ guthmod grimmon."
guarded his head . . . / Skillfully fashioned, beset with the boar/ That no blade of battle might bite it through."303
Indeed, it is likely that early medieval boar-helmets evolved stylistically and historically from cultic boar-masks used in Germanic tribal festivals. Though relegated to stylized, set positions, such boar-signa continued to impart diving protection upon their wearers.304


The Grave 14 Vendel helmet has boar figures above the eye-guards and a stylized boar above the nose; a warrior wearing a tusked helmet with legless boar-crest also appears on its panel-scene. The famous Grave 1 helmet-plate depicts a Wodanistic rider with gaping animal-helmet, surmounted by what appears to be a tusked boar: Wilson, Vikings, p. 50; Klingender, Animals, pp. 122, 124. OE. grima, "visor" (beadgrima, "helmet" Beowulf, 1. 2257) means also "mask," and note the Wodanistic associations of the term: van der Merwe Scholtz, Kenning, p. 79; Stenton, "Anglo-Saxon Heathenism," pp. 295-96; Hatto, "Boar-Helms," 159; Chaney, Cult of Kingship, p. 37; Margaret Gelling, "Place-Names," 13-14. The Sutton Hoo helmet's mask form is very pronounced.
In North Germanic religious tradition, the boar was sacred to a succession of fertility (Vanic) deities, e.g., the Aesti's matrem deum, Nerthus, Freyr and Frey. It has been pointed out that the Swedish royal clan, the Ynglinger, claimed descent from Frey and was credited with this deity's bounty-bringing powers. Swedish kings are reported to take oath and even to divine upon the Yule boar's head and bristles, and to regard their ancestral boar-helmets as the most valued royal treasure. Yet it would be unwarranted to contend that all such boar-signa were tied to the worship of Frey and the Vanir, since Wodan has several, albeit minor, boar attributes as well. Nonetheless, one may reasonably conclude that as the sacral boar image guarded its wearer, so the royal boar-helmet, a dramatic identifying emblem,

305 Freyr and Frey are said to ride upon their special boars named Hildisvini ("Battle-swine") and Gullinbursti ("Gold-bristles"). At the great Midwinter (Yule) festivals of ancient Sweden, the largest boar (sonargoltr) was sacrificed to these deities for a prosperous year. Freyr also has a boar-name (Syr) and can grant her worshippers boar form. See, in general: Grimm, TM, I, pp. 50-52, II, p. 666; de Vries, AGR, I, p. 367, II, pp. 307-11; Hilda Davidson, Gods and Myths, pp. 98-99; Gelling and Hilda Davidson, Rites and Symbols, pp. 164-66. For Frey and Freyr-worship in Anglo-Saxon England, see: Philippson, Ger. Heid., pp. 132-35; E. Ekwall, "Some Notes on English Place-Names Containing Names of Heathen Deities," Englische Studien, LXX (1935-1936), 57-59; Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 50-51; (with extreme caution): Branston, Lost Gods of England, pp. 138-55. On early medieval boar-sacrifice among the Germans, see Beck, Ebersignum, pp. 56-65.

306 For example, King Athils owned the helmets "Battle-boar" and "War-swine." Heidrek and his retinue took oath upon the sonargoltr; the rite was also used in divinisation: Beck, Ebersignum, pp. 183-95 passim; Chaney, Cult of Kingship, pp. 124-25.

307 Saxo Grammaticus notes the boar's head as an emblem of Wodan: Oliver and F. York Powell, trans., The Nine Books
signified the king's role of battle-protector. Indeed, the boar's ties to Freyr and Wodan-worship express just that combination of bounty-bringing and martial or protective attributes encompassed by early Germanic sacral kingship beliefs.

The Sutton Hoo helmet's panel-scenes are also significant indices of East Anglian royal sacrality. Two frontal panels depict twin dancing warriors brandishing pairs of spears and swords. Each of these warriors wears a helmet which is crested by large, curved horns with birds-head terminals. These as well as similar figures from the Swedish helmet-plates (Välsgarde; Old Uppsala) and the Torslunda helmet-dies, are evidently engaged in the Sword-Dance, a ritual which appears very prominently in early

of the Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus (2 vols.; London: Norroena Society, 1905), I, p. xii. Odin has the boar-name Thror; his men feast nightly on the ever-replenishing flesh of the boar Saehrimnir: de Vries, AGR, II, pp. 7, 76, 379; Gelling and Hilda Davidson, Rites and Symbols, p. 165. Germanic boar-signa thus conveyed a totality of fertility and martial attributes. It is not a matter of an initial fertility association expanding to include warrior attributes, nor should we think in terms of the boar's natural qualities, i.e., its reputation for fertility and ferocity. Beck, Ebersignum, pp. 1-3, 30-31, 68-69.

Germanic battlefield ceremonies and the initiation rites of Wodanistic warrior cult-societies (Männerbünde).309 The Torslunda-die scene, for example, portrays a horn-helmeted dancer, nearly identical to those of the Sutton Hoo helmet, confronting a large, wolf-masked figure. This scene likely represents initiates or members of the Männerbund wearing masks, pelts, and engaged in sword-dance as they impersonated and re-created various episodes of their divine patron's


The so-called "Finglesham Man" buckle discovered only recently in Kent may afford further evidence of such Wodanistic rites in Anglo-Saxon England: Hilda Davidson, "The Significance of the Man in the Horned Helmet," Antiquity, XXXIX (1965), 23-27. OE. battle-metaphors such as "sword-play," "at the plays of swords," (Beowulf, 11.1040, 1168) should also be seen in this cultic context: Hauck, "Herrschaftszeichen," p. 45; Wrenn, "Sutton Hoo and Beowulf," p. 320.
mythology. Another Sutton Hoo helmet-panel depicts a spear-wielding, mounted warrior trampling over his mail-clad opponent, who plunges a long-sword into the approaching horse's breast. Above the rider's shoulder, a small identical figure grasps and guides the warrior's spear-shaft. This miniature figure has been plausibly identified as Wodan himself, who grants battle-victory to his vowed men and then dispatches them after a fixed term of life.

The iconography of the Sutton Hoo ceremonial objects thus reflects the several dimensions of early Germanic royal sacrality. Their predominately Wodanistic symbolism is a significant expression of East Anglian Wodan-descent. Indeed, the religious symbolism of the Sutton Hoo regalia, like the pagan rites associated with early Anglo-Saxon kings, refers to the two major sides of Wodan-worship. The Sutton Hoo objects are also striking evidence of the interaction between early Germanic religious and political ideology.

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The complex religious dimension of pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon kingship is not unlike that of early Frankish kingship. However, the example of the Franks presents significant variations to the outline of early Germanic Heerkönigtum and its sacrality. The Franks were a confederation of small West Germanic tribes which had banded together c. 200 AD along the lower Rhine. It is possible that the Frankish federation was successor to the Istvaonic cult-league, as most Frankish sub-tribes were former members of this pre-Migration religious group. The Sicambri seem to have been especially prominent. The newly formed confederacy, like those of the Alamanni and Saxons to the south and north respectively, wasted little time in launching bold land and sea raids upon the Western Provinces. By the close of the third century, the Franks were divided into two general geographic groups: the so-called Ripuarians of the middle-Rhine around Cologne, and the lower-Rhineland Franks and masked impersonations continued in aristocratic circles into the High Middle Ages: Hauck, "Genealogie und Gestalt des staufischen Ludus," 13-20.

occupying abandoned Roman land in the Betuwe region (modern Holland) as imperial dedititii. During the fourth century, the Salian tribe apparently assumed a leading role among the latter Frankish group. 313

Constantius Chiorus and then Constantine led several successful expeditions against the Salians, and in 358 Julian again confirmed their settlement as dedititii in Toxandria. While the Salians remained in relative peace for nearly a century thereafter, their Ripuarian brethren repeatedly pillaged commercial towns of the middle Rhine during the early fifth century. With the political disruptions set in motion by the Hunnic invasion, however, Salian Franks again began concentrated raids southward to the Somme, and ultimately destroyed the last shadows of Roman authority in Gaul (486). 314

The record of Frankish kingship in fact antedates the Völkerwanderung, for several of the tribes that later formed

313 Thus significantly shifting the league's structure from that of a "federate-state" (Staatenbund) to one politically dominated by a single tribe (Bundestaat): Planitz-Eckhardt, Dt. Recht., p. 44; Mildenberger, Kulturgeschichte, p. 86; Musset, Les invasions, p. 120. It is likely that the Salians gathered considerable prestige by mixing with the Sicambri, a people long renowned for resistance to Rome. See Grand, L'Origine des Francs, pp. 32-34; Schwarz, Stammeskunde, p; 148, and infra n. 315.

the Frankish league were ruled by kings in the pre-Migration Age. For example, in 8 BC, Augustus formally received the submission of the Sicambrian King Maelo. The Bructeri were also reportedly compelled to accept a Roman-supported king after the dissolution of Civilis' league. These early Frankish tribes thereafter provided the Empire with auxiliary units led by their own kings. Even after the emergence of the Frankish league, such treaty-bound Frankish troops supported the plans of many an ambitious Roman general to seize independent authority in the West. Emperor Maximian, on a punitive campaign against the usurper Carausius and his Germanic allies, brought the Frankish King Gennobaudes and his people under Roman suzerainty (287/288).


Franks who raided Gaul were harshly punished. Constantine, for example, pursued a Frankish force into Batavia; its joint-kings Ascarius and Merogaisus were dragged to the circus at Trier, tortured, and thrown to the wild beasts (306). Again in 310, Constantine decimated a federate Frankish army commanded by multiple warlords and decreed a similar fate for the wretched captives.

Despite such severities, the influx of Frankish troops into Imperial service that began in the Dominate and Tetrarchy increased during Constantine's reign, as individual Franks assumed leading military and administrative posts. Indeed, these Frankish leaders often combined the position of tribal king with that of tribune, Master of the Soldiers (magister militum), and even consul. Ammianus Marcellinus


refers rather contemptuously to this growing Frankish influence; indeed, toward the close of the fourth century, many Frankish commanders had attained consular rank and played decisive roles in Late Roman history. Thus the Frank Bauto rose to the consulship during Gratian's reign, and Richomer bore a similar title in the East under Theodosius I (384); the Frank Merobaudes was three times consul (377, 383, 387). Moreover, the consul Arbogast, Richomer's nephew, had sufficient prestige to openly defy Valentinian II. Supported by his devoutly loyal troops, Arbogast indeed disposed of the young emperor and raised a Gallic rhetorician, Eugenius, to the purple (392). These Franks in Roman service represent a curious but significant chapter in the history of early Frankish kingship. Though only a minority among Frankish chieftains, they vigorously defended Romanitas through war-band leadership. Their

Merovingians in Its Relationship to the 'Orbis Terrarum Romanus' During the Fifth and Sixth Centuries AD. Geist und Werk der Zeiten, No. 25 (Bern: R. Lang, 1971), pp. 31-32, 55-60, 115-16.

321 Ammianus, Hist., xv.5.11.


careers strikingly demonstrate the mutual penetration of Roman and Germanic cultures in the early medieval Rhineland.

Multiple rulership was very widespread among the early Franks. During the third and fourth centuries, Frankish joint warlords may have been chosen only on the eve of a specific campaign. The dual rulers Ascaric and Merogaisus have already been mentioned. Julian is said to have negotiated with a number of upper-Rhineland (Ripuarian) Frankish kings in his recovery of Cologne (355/356). Moreover, Gregory of Tours knew of the three regales Genobaudes, Marcomer, and Sunno who had led the federate Frankish invasion of Germania II in 388. Indeed, there is some indication that the enmity engendered by divided loyalties within Frankish leading clans had been a significant factor in this campaign.

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The Salian Franks, meanwhile, had threatened Toxandria c. 350 until they were repulsed by Julian (358). Among the participants in the subsequent peace accord were a Salian tribal king and a tribal legation. It may be surmised that early Salian kings, like their Ripuarian counterparts, had also acted as warlords in this campaign. Toward the middle of the fifth century, the Salians launched renewed attacks to the south. Their raiding parties were commanded by retinue-leaders drawn from the Merovingian royal clan. One such leader, King Clodio, seems to have been especially prominent. Aetius and his general Majorian routed Clodio's camp at "Vicus Helena" (c. 448) but did not halt the Salian advance. Gregory of Tours relates the tradition that Clodio had captured Cambrai and taken the


territory up to the Somme. At the same time, other members of Clodio's family were setting themselves up as district-kings in Belgica Secunda. For example, Merovech I (d. 457) was established in the Gallo-Roman stronghold of Tournai. There is some evidence that this Salian king had won his position in a dispute with an older brother by making a pact with Aetius and fighting beside the renowned Roman general at the battle which halted Attila's advance into the West. Other Merovingian kings were apparently well established at Tongres and in the Neckar region at this time. However, it was Merovech's son and successor

329 Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., ii.9. The Liber Historiae Francorum, v, asserts that Clodio captured Tournai; but he may not have held it very long. It seems likely that Clodio in fact led the renewed Salian attacks of 455: Sidonius Apollinaris, Poems and Letters; Carm. vii, 372-73. See Schmidt, "Anfängen," 308; F. Vercauteren, Etude sur les civitates de la Belgique Seconde (Brussels: Palais des Academies, 1934), pp. 208-10, 236-37.


at Tournai, Childeric I (d. 481), who established the enduring foundations of Merovingian royal authority. From one of many Frankish district-kings, Childeric came to exercise authority over non-Frankish regions far removed from his own small realm. His early battles along the Loire protected Gallo-Roman communities and effectively solidified his own position as the leading Frankish king in Gaul. His tolerant attitude toward the influential Gallic Church is also notable.


Childeric's career had clearly presaged the future course of Merovingian success by the example of a Heerkönig whose aggressive war-band leadership could forge an expanding suzerainty over multi-ethnic populations. Childeric's son, Clovis I (d. 511), accelerated this process of royal consolidation. This most famous Merovingian king in effect established a unitary kingship among the Franks by first murdering his relatives and then conducting a series of bold military campaigns against neighboring Germanic kingdoms in Gaul. Before Clovis' reign, the Frankish king seems to have had only limited authority, even as war-band leader. Thereafter, he emerged as an autocratic ruler with virtually no restraints on his actions. The leading men who surrounded Merovingian kings at their ambulatory courts did not represent a nobility of birth but rather a "service nobility" which

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owed its existence entirely to the king's whim. These striking changes in the structure and authority of Frankish kingship after Clovis to some extent reflect the fused Gallo-Roman and Germanic society emerging in the early medieval West. However, it will also be seen that this new Frankish Heerkönigtum retained traditions of pre-Migration Salian tribal kingship.

In order to assess the religious dimension of pre-Christian Merovingian kingship, reference must be made to a wide range of historical, archeological, and legendary material. It should first be noted that there are regrettably few precise details of pagan Frankish beliefs and practices. Gregory of Tours and the Frankish chroniclers for the most part remain silent on this point, thought they doubtless could have related some specific information. However, one must not thereby assume that the pagan Franks were somehow less religious than other early medieval Germanic peoples. On the contrary, the bishop of Tours comments on the intensity of their religious sentiment:

Now this people seems to have always been addicted to heathen worship, and they did not know God, but made themselves images of the woods and waters, of birds and animals, and of the other elements as well. They were accustomed to worship these as God and to offer sacrifice to them.\(^{336}\)

Conversion of Frankish settlement areas proved a difficult and prolonged task. For that matter, Merovingian Christianity itself exhibited more than a few curious pagan features.\(^{337}\)

The fact that Clovis on becoming king fervently followed his ancestral religion is too often overlooked. Nor was he alone in these convictions. Indeed, Clovis' final decision to admit the Christian deity to his pantheon proved quite unacceptable to many of his leading men.\(^{338}\)


\(^{338}\)Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., ii.27,31; Lib. Hist. Franc., x; Hincmar, Vita Remigii, xxx; ed. Krusch, MGH
generations later, the Frankish army led by King Theudebert into Italy (539) openly performed traditional pagan rites:

The Franks began to sacrifice the women and children of the Goths whom they found at hand and to throw their bodies into the river [Po] as "first-fruits" of the war. For these barbarians though they have become Christians preserve the greater part of their ancient religion; for they still make human sacrifices and other sacrifices of an unholy nature and it is in connection with these that they make their prophecies. 339

It has been observed that Frankish kings, even in the pre-Migration Age, often assumed the role of war-band leader. Frankish land-taking raids no doubt stimulated this martial side of royal authority which, indeed, became the basis of Clovis' Heerkönigtum. Early Merovingian kingship may thereby have acquired a predominately Wodanistic complexion. No doubt such circumstances were favorable for the worship of this god, especially if Frankish colonization primarily involved Männerbünde led by vowed royal warlords. 340


This view, though not without some merit, falls wide of the mark. For it will be seen that the rituals and traditions maintained by Merovingian kings from pre-Christian times were essentially of a non-martial, tribal nature and thus indicative of a bounty-bringing royal sacrality.

In the first instance, there is the renowned Merovingian oxcart circumambulation reported by Einhard in his Life of Charlemagne. According to Einhard, the Franks customarily chose their kings from the gens Merovingicorum, until Childeric III was deposed by his own mayor, Pepin the Short (751). But in point of fact, proclaims Einhard, the old royal line had long been devoid of "vital strength" and possessed only "the empty title of king." Yet if the Austrasian mayors held real political power (potentia) in the Frankish realm, the Merovingians retained an auctoritas expressed in certain ceremonial functions. Thus, describing the daily activities of the last Merovingians, Einhard notes:

Wherever he /The king/ had to go, he went country-fashion, in a cart drawn by a yoke of oxen with a ploughman driving them. That is how he went to the palace and how he went to the General Assembly of his people, which took place yearly for the good of the kingdom; and in this same way he returned home.

Admittedly, there is a degree of satire involved in Einhard's account: so degraded had the Merovingians become that they

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341 Einhard, V. Kar. Imp., i.

342 Ibid.: "Quocumque eundemerat, carpento ibat, quod bubus iunctis et bubulco rustico more agente trahebatur. Sic
had even adopted peasant modes of travel. Despite Pirenne's arguments, however, the practice itself can hardly be discounted as a jest. Rather, one should recall that ritual wagons and their circuits were closely associated with early Germanic fertility cults and deities. Nerthus' sacral cart comes immediately to mind. Reference has already been made to the Tacitean king's participation in tribal auguries involving sacral chariots, as well as to the ceremonial chariots of Gothic kings and the cart-drawn statue which Athanaric ordered wheeled across his realm. The Merovingian oxcart peregrination will be best interpreted as the ceremonial vestige of a traditional rite which expressed the bounty-bringing aspect of Germanic royal sacrality.

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king's progress to foster well-being through the land is a closely related practice with significant religio-political dimensions. On the one hand, the early medieval royal circuit constituted a legal act which demonstrated that the kingdom itself was the king's personal property and gave the opportunity to secure homage by oaths of allegiance. However, it must also be observed that early Germanic as well as Irish kings apparently made a circuit as part of their inauguration rites. Medieval royal circumambulations should thus also be seen as direct successors of earlier royal progresses designed to promote crop fertility and general well-being.

The Merovingians were known as "the long-haired kings" (reges criniti) after their lengthy, flowing locks. This custom appears to reach back to the very earliest period of

\[\text{Grimm, Dt. Recht., I, p. 329: "The first business of a new king was to ride around his kingdom to thereby assume formal possession of it, like the acquisition of an estate."}
\[\text{Conrad, Dt. Recht., I, p. 17: "The king makes a progress like the fertility-dispensing deity [Nerthus], not only to show and consolidate his power, but also to bring fertility and blessings to the land."}
\[\text{de Vries, AGR, I, pp. 471-72. The Ynglinger followed a prescribed route, the Eriksgata, that was linked with mythological traditions of sacral kingship: Grimm, TM, I, pp. 360-61; de Vries, AGR, I, p. 473;}

Merovingian kingship. By the sixth century, it had become a recognized emblem of Merovingian kings and remained as such until their deposition. The sixth-century Byzantine historian Agathias observed:

> For it is the practice of the Frankish kings never to have their hair cut. It is never cut from childhood onwards and each individual lock hangs right down over the shoulders, since the front ones are parted on the forehead and hang down on either side... they treat it with all kinds of soap and comb it very carefully. Custom has reserved this practice for royalty as a sort of distinctive badge and prerogative. Subjects have their hair cut all round, and are strictly forbidden to grow it any longer.

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349 Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., viii.10; Einhard, V. Kar. Imp., i.

350 Agathias, Hist., i.3.4; see Cameron, "How Did the Merovingian Kings Wear Their Hair?" Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire, XLIII (1965), 1203-16.
The legal status of this custom is vividly demonstrated by the fact that a shorn or tonsured Merovingian king summarily forfeited his right to rule. There can be little doubt that this royal hair custom symbolized the dynasty's hereditary throne-right.351

In general, the early Germans believed that the hair was a focal point of human power, an external manifestation of the "soul." Consequently, hair-cutting was ordinarily surrounded by elaborate precautionary ceremonies.352 However, the hair of those individuals on whom the communal welfare was felt to depend could simply not be cut at all and became a mark of their full sacrality. In this sense, the long hair of Germanic kings had initially been a taboo imposed to conserve the beneficent royal power for the good of the community.353 As a visual expression of bounty-bringing

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351Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., ii.41, iii.18, x.15; Fredegar, Chron., iv.38,82. Kern concluded that "the reges criniti wore their ornamental hair not as a sign of an office conferred upon them by the people, but as proof of hereditary personal dignity and virtue . . . the hair symbol passed current as a true and lawful sign of eligibility for the throne." Kingship and Law, pp. 15-16. Also: Mitteis, Die deutsche Königswahl (2nd ed.; Munich: M. Rohrer, 1944), pp. 28-33; Conrad, Dt. Recht., I, pp. 16, 94.


353Frazer, Golden Bough, III, pp. 258-59; Grönbech, Culture of the Teutons, II, pp. 120-28; Bächtold-Stäubli,
sacrality, the Merovingians' hair custom finds a significant parallel in the long-hair and probable priestly role of the Hasdingi Vandal royal clan. On the other hand, long-hair also had a role in the initiation rites of Germanic warrior societies (Männerbünde) and in the dedicatory vows of warlords. For example, the Chatti warrior let his hair and beard grow long upon reaching manhood; the locks, "vowed and pledged to valor," were shaved only when he had killed his first enemy. Similarly, the Suebi and their leaders are said to have worn a distinctive hair-style to frighten their opponents in battle. These early Germanic hair customs apparently symbolized the warrior's entrance and membership in a Männerbund. As seen in the case of Civilis, Germanic kings and warlords often let their hair or beards grow long as a sign of a solemn oath taken for victory. The vowed chieftain thereby placed himself directly under his divine patron's power. Thus the Merovingian long-hair traditions,


though most likely stemming from the sphere of bounty-bringing tribal kingship, could also have been reinforced by similar martial rites enacted during the establishment of Merovingian Heerkönigtum. Yet in sixth-century Gaul, the old corpus of beliefs surrounding this royal custom were no longer cultivated, at least not on public, state levels of society. The Merovingians' long-hair practices had by then largely degenerated into an old-fashioned custom which was reserved for royal rank. 356

Merovingian royal descent-traditions represent a very significant expression of this clan's sacrality. In the first instance, there is the tale of King Merovech's unusual birth reported by the seventh-century chronicler Fredegar:

> It is said that Clodio and his wife were resting one summer on the seashore. At midday, the woman waded into the sea and a beast somewhat like Neptune or the Minotaur overcame her. When forthwith she had conceived *aut a bistea aut a viro*, she bore a son named Merovech from whom the kings of the Franks are called Merohingi. 357

This account of Merovech's extraordinary parentage had likely been drawn from a larger corpus of Frankish saga dating back


357 Fredegar, *Chron.*, iii.9: "Fertur, super litore maris aestatis tempore Chlodeo cum uxor resecdens, meridiae uxor ad mare labandum vadens, bistea Neptuni Quinotauri *sc. Minotauri* similis eam apdetissit. Cumque in continuo *aut a bistea aut a viro fuisse concepta, peperit filium nomen Meroveum, per quo regis Francorum post vocantur Merohingii."
at least to the Migration Age. The passage has been much debated, but Hauck's religious-historical interpretation is the most satisfactory. According to Hauck, the tale derives from a repertoire of rituals which early Merovingian kings had once performed in periodic popular festivals. Reading the underscored aut . . . aut as "both . . . as" rather than "either . . . or," he argues that Merovech is here described as having been conceived by King Clodio and by the creature, that is, by a half-man, half-bull being. The episode reflects a cultic "temporary divinization" wherein the king was infused with the tribal deity's procreative powers. Just who this god may have been is unclear, but Hauck rightly suggests a Frankish deity closely analogous to the bounty-bringing Frey and Ing, perhaps the enigmatic Frō known only from place-name and linguistic evidence. The distinguished Germanist F. R. Schröder has recently lent support to this view by suggesting a new etymology of


Merovech as "the one consecrated to the divine bull." (Mēro < IE. *mērus, "cow/bull" + wech; Goth. weihs, OHG. wih, "vowed/sacred").360

The tale of Merovech's birth also bears features of a Sacred Marriage (hieros gamos). As seen in the more familiar ancient Near Eastern examples, this public conubium was generally performed by the sacral king or chief priest, who represented the tribal deity, and the queen or designated surrogate representing fecund earth. The ritual ensured renewed prosperity and was a central feature in seasonal festivals.361 The Merovingian queen's bathing could reflect a ritual ablution following the ceremony, while the indicated time of "seduction" points to a


Midsummer festival when the Sacred Marriage was in fact usually performed.\textsuperscript{362}

Indeed, the sexual licenses of Germanic kings, which early medieval historians regarded as moral depravity, more likely were survivals of this former bounty-bringing tradition. The story that Childeric had been banished because he shamelessly began to seduce Frankish girls might in fact have such a ritual foundation. For that matter, the reges criniti were notoriously polygamous through the entire course of their long rule.\textsuperscript{363} It should be noted in this connection that the early Scandinavian kings kept large numbers of wives in many different villages. The kings' regular conjugal visits were apparently seen as communal fructifying rituals.\textsuperscript{364} An interesting variation of these royal practices was the Old Irish "Wedding-Feast of Kingship" at which the newly inaugurated king mated with a sacred white mare. Gerald of Wales described a twelfth-century survival of this archaic rite in Ulster. After the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{362} Hauck, "Lebensnormen und Kultmythen," 200-201. He summarizes: "In the Merovingian origo the god (whom we shall call Frö) appears corporeally as a sea-bull and assumes a form with King Clodio at the instant of the union between king and queen which, by this divine essence-participation, can become a Sacred Marriage and periodic cult-act." (ibid., p. 215).
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\textsuperscript{363} Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., ii.12; cf. Lib. Hist. Franc., vi, where the incident is preceded by the comment that at that time "the Franks were pagans and fanatics." For a similar episode, see Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., ii.42. Müllenhoff, Dt. Alt. IV, p. 302; Buchner, "Merowingische Königstum," p. 146; Wallace-Hadrill, Long-Haired Kings, pp. 161, 203-04.
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\textsuperscript{364} de Vries, AGR, II, p. 192; Gelling and Hilda Davidson, Rites and Symbols, p. 162.
\end{quote}
union had been publicly performed, the mare was sacrificed and a sacral meal made from its flesh. The king then bathed in the broth and drank it as well.365 It would appear that the mare here represented the territorial goddess; indeed, there are numerous literary allusions to the Irish king as spouse of his land, and the bride as Sovereignty.366

Another Merovingian tradition of bounty-bringing sacrality should be mentioned. According to the ninth-century Byzantine historian Theophanes,367 Merovingian kings were called "hairy-backed" (cristati), because they all had boar-like bristles down their spines. The same idea also surfaces in the medieval German epics.368 On the one hand, Dumezil has shown that the king or culture-hero in Indo-European tradition often manifests his sacrality through


366Krappe, "Sovereignty of Erin"; Alwyn and Brinley Rees, Celtic Heritage; MacCana, Celtic Mythology, pp. 120-21; Dumézil, Destiny of a King, pp. 83-94.


368Grimm, TM, I, p. 391, IV, 1395.
distinctive physical marks.\textsuperscript{369} But again, this specific Merovingian tradition more likely has a cultic foundation. It has already been observed that the boar was sacred to Frey, and that this or a closely analogous god may well have been the Merovingians' divine ancestor. Early Merovingian kings could thus very appropriately have honored their founding god in cult by performing boar-impersonations.\textsuperscript{370}

If there were ever any Merovingian king-lists that proclaimed divine descent, they have not survived. The Frankish royal genealogies extant are all of late provenance and based securely on Gregory of Tours.\textsuperscript{371} However, there is evidence that Merovingian descent-traditions were indeed preserved in a pedigree or \textit{origo} long current among the Franks and their dynasty. For example, Clovis, disputing the merits of Christianity with his devout wife, proudly remarked that all living creatures and the riches of the earth

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had been created and produced at the command of his gods. This affirmation of his own deities' procreative powers could be a reference to the sea-beast chapter in a Merovingian divine genealogy. 372 A less obscure reference to this divine descent appears in the famous letter from bishop Avitus to Clovis on the subject of the royal conversion. Avitus first congratulates the king for renouncing belief in the divinity of his ancestors and being content instead with his personal nobilitas alone. By his change of faith, the bishop asserts, Clovis has founded a new line whose Christian sacrality will beneficially replace the Merovingians' ancestral Heil, for "this soft clothing [Baptismal robes] will give more force to your arms: whatever Fortune has given up to now, this sanctity shall bestow." 373 It would appear that as preparation for his baptism, Clovis renounced the active participation of his divine ancestors in his genealogy and abandoned their
cultic worship. Of course, this public "de-mythization" did not necessarily eradicate the sacral forbears' names from the royal pedigree or from concurrent popular traditions celebrating Merovingian divine descent. Indeed, the rituals and customs which the Merovingians maintained demonstrate that the reges criniti long retained their sacrality in the eyes of the people. King Guntramm (d. 593), for example, was clearly accredited with thaumaturgic powers, while the infant king Chlotar II was carried like a talisman into battle to protect the army. Moreover, the measures which Pepin took to legitimize his authority upon the deposition of Childeric III are final striking testimony to these enduring popular beliefs in Merovingian royal sacrality. For the Arnulfing mayor's decision to turn to the Roman pontiff for consecration and anointing as King of the Franks was largely a desperate attempt to secure an alternative religious sanction necessary to supplant the Merovingians' sacral throne-right.


Archeological evidence further illuminates the religious dimension of early Merovingian kingship. Thus, the excavation of Childeric's grave yielded (in addition to the long-haired signet ring already described) a remarkable bull's-head image covered with solid gold. Its reverse clasps and large central cavity would indicate a design for ceremonial mounting. This bull image must necessarily put one in mind of the Merovingian kings' descent traditions. It can reasonably be considered a clan totem symbolizing the Merovingian divine ancestor's bull-hypostasis. Moreover, the bull, while generally associated with Germanic fertility cults, was apparently an early symbol of Frankish Heerkönigtum and represented this statecraft's fusion of bounty-bringing and martial sacrality. This suggestion may be confirmed by the presence of both bull and boar motifs among the grave-goods of Queen Arnegunde, wife of Chlotar I.


Childeric's body had also been covered with a purple mantle adorned with several hundred small, golden bees or cicidas. These are of rather obscure significance but could well refer to Germanic cosmogonic mythology.

It will have been observed that the symbolism of these various royal grave-goods is largely indicative of a non-martial, bounty-bringing sacrality. The Merovingian ox-cart progresses and sea-bull traditions are of a similar nature. On the other hand, royal long-hair customs and boar-traditions also have a martial background. It appears, then, that the religious dimension of Merovingian kingship contained a dual sacrality derived from the spheres of both ancient tribal kingship and the war-band. Indeed, we have seen that Merovingian rulership reached back to early Sicambrian tribal kingship and only assumed the configuration of Heerkönigtum.

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with the post-Migration exploits of royal warlords. The Merovingians' religious customs and traditions strongly suggest that this bounty-bringing sacrality of ancient tribal kingship remained the ideological core of Merovingian royal authority. This may well account for the tenacious support which the *reges criniti* received from Frankish peasant-cultivators long after their military and coercive political power had declined.

Religious beliefs and practices were therefore intimately involved in early Germanic kingdom-founding and statecraft. These vital interconnections appear in our earliest historical records of the Germanic peoples and are further attested in the constitutional sketches of Caesar and Tacitus. The pre-Migration Germanic king was a prestigious tribal figure invested with sacerdotal and judicial authority but not coercive power. The religious or sacral dimension of his authority appears to have been essentially of a bounty-bringing, sacrificial nature distinct from the martial sacrality of temporary warlords. Early Germanic kings were distinguished by their birth; royal clans set apart from other noble families are attested at an early date. Yet from pre-Migration times, both royal and non-royal leaders attempted to establish new realms by martial, federate

command. Their supra-tribal statecraft effectively united the originally distinct functions and the corresponding religious dimensions of both tribal king and warlord. Indeed, Germanic Heerkönigtum emerged as the principal form of royal statecraft during the Migrations and early middle ages among both East and West Germanic groups. Royal rites, descent-traditions, and symbolic regalia all expressed the more complex dual sacrality of this rulership. In general, when a kingdom had been founded upon non-royal retinue command, the resulting religious dimension of royal authority retained a predominately martial or Wodanistic complexion. The few royal clans whose rule did extend back to pre-Migration times frequently maintained the essentially bounty-bringing religious traditions of tribal kingship. Having examined the major historical expressions of Germanic kingship, attention may now be given more directly to early Germanic sacral kingship ideology.
CHAPTER III:

GERMANIC SACRAL KINGSHIP IDEOLOGY: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Our historical survey has shown that religious beliefs and practices were deeply woven into the fabric of Germanic kingdom-founding. However, this sacral dimension of royal authority as expressed in ritual, iconography, and dynastic tradition was also seen to be substantially complex and fluid. For there were several historical types of Germanic kingship, and various ideological expressions of royal sacrality. It thus may be of value to review these correspondences between Germanic kingship forms and their religious foundations in order to identify the major tenets or dogmas of Germanic sacral kingship beliefs.

In the first instance, it must be admitted that no evidence of a Frazerian sacrificial kingship has been found among the continental Germanic peoples. The Divine King of The Golden Bough, we recall, was in effect a communal talisman regarded as the possessor of an all-encompassing power over natural forces. These archaic rulers supposedly would be periodically killed so that their beneficent sacrality might remain within the folk community. Any evidence of such king-slaying or related rites among the early Germans is confined principally to the Scandinavian (North Germanic) cultural zone and its autochthonous tribal kingship. Nordic
rulership has not been given primary attention in this study, but passing reference has been made to the pertinent evidence that these kings were sacrificed if the crops failed and could on occasion receive divine honors after death. In regard to kindred East Germanic peoples, the similar case of the Burgundian king's deposition following tribal disasters has been discussed. Yet even these possible instances of Germanic king-slaying do not at the same time necessarily speak for a full-fledged royal divinization such as Frazer described. The responsibility of early Scandinavian kings for ensuring peace and plenty was undoubtedly a major expression of their sacral status, but need not impel us to conclude that these rulers were themselves regarded as incarnate gods.

Tribal kingship is attested among the continental West Germans from early times, though there are indications that it was already becoming something of a rarity by the Augustan Age. Pre-Migration tribal kings shared important cultic duties with local priests and held a largely honorific rather than coercive authority. This narrowly ethnic ruler may well have had additional martial functions but it is the religious aspect of his authority which appears most prominently in our sources. It has been seen that early West Germanic kingship was distinguished primarily by nobility of birth founded upon the special holiness believed to reside in the royal clan. Indeed, many rites and customs associated
with later Germanic kings, such as the healing touch, progresses, and possible theriomorphic impersonations, have their ideological source in this chthonic/vegetative sacrality of ancient tribal kingship. West Germanic tribal kingship rarely survived the Migrations, but in some cases, e.g., the Mercian and Frankish royal clans, it did significantly reappear as the kernel of early medieval kingdoms.

The multi-faceted religious dimensions of these new confederate realms was closely related to their structural formation. We have seen that the retinue-lord who commanded a federate force to conquest, land-taking and settlement had frequently been of non-royal birth. The record of early Anglo-Saxon and Alamannic kingship affords many examples of warlords who erected small but enduring realms by such supra-tribal statecraft. In order to legitimize his royal authority, the Heerkönig often utilized rites appropriated from the sphere of ancient tribal kingship and its bounty-bringing sacrality. Nonetheless, the primary religious dimension of this statecraft lay in the martial sacrality of retinue leadership. For example, an aspiring lord often vowed himself to a particular war-god for victory and thereby placed his enterprise directly under the patron deity's aegis. Or his retinue would sometimes have been a warrior cult-society already dedicated as a unit to the martial god. A single, outstanding military success could also demonstrate the warlord's victory-bringing sacrality which, indeed, proved
a sufficient substitute for the hereditary, clan-sacrality of tribal kings. Pre-Migration Heerkönige such as Civilis and Arminius, early Amal and Lombard kings, and even Old Saxon warlords all achieved royal status or strengthened their martial authority through such an outstanding battle-victory. The ideological foundation of early Germanic Heerkönigtum thus encompassed both the martial sacrality of the retinue-lord and the bounty-bringing sacrality of the tribal king.

This complex sacral dimension of continental Germanic kingship contained several main ideological tenets. In the first place, one encounters the widespread belief in the divine descent of royal clans. This concept of hereditary or ancestral sacrality had been the ideological mainstay of ancient tribal kingship and the source of royal nobilitas. In fact, even federate warlords of non-royal birth frequently made such descent claims to legitimize their newly founded royal authority and establish hereditary lines. A host of early medieval royal genealogies thus proclaimed the ruling family's divine descent, as e.g., the Wodan-sprung Amal and Anglo-Saxon royal clans. This cardinal tenet of Germanic sacral kingship belief appears not only in the king-lists but also in dynastic traditions committed to writing by early medieval chroniclers. However, these valuable references to pagan ancestry contained in ecclesiastical sources are often obscure until placed within their proper context of early Germanic religious tradition. Two examples of this significant genre have been discussed which point to the early Lombard
and Merovingian kings' descent from the fertility deities Freyr and Frey. Indeed, we have seen that the identification of a royal clan's divine forebear can illuminate the essential sacrality which that particular dynasty maintained.

What does this idea of divine descent tell us of the relationship between early Germanic kings and Divinity? First, one may reasonably surmise that members of a family regarded as god-sprung would be believed to share at least some part of their ancestor's divine nature. It is unlikely, however, that such individuals were either fully or permanently identified with the founder-god. Nonetheless, his divine ancestry might still endow a king with certain of his forebear's attributes, such as fertility and victory-bringing powers. This belief could well have been expressed in the sacral honor-titles and even personal names borne by members of royal lines. On the whole, these Germanic divine-descent beliefs are significant declarations of an hereditary, ascribed sacrality rooted in the royal clan's blood kinship with an ancestral deity.

An individual who thus had a share in Divinity by virtue of his descent would be an ideal cultic intermediary between his people and the gods. Indeed, this idea of royal mediation represents the second main ideological tenet of Germanic sacral kingship belief. Yet this does not mean that continental Germanic kings were priests. Only among Scandinavian and related East Germanic peoples do kings appear to have normally discharged sacerdotal functions. For
example, we have discussed likely correlations between royal palace and pagan temple in the North, the possibility that the Hasdingi Vandals had been priest-kings of dioscuric deities, and the Burgundian Sinistus a former tribal king with priestly duties.

Continental Germanic tribal kings and later Heerkönige may not have been priests in this Nordic sense, yet their particular kind of divine mediation was equally vital and dynamic. It consisted in the king's central role at seasonal festivals that re-enacted the tribe's sacred history in order to preserve the necessary favorable relationship with Divinity. The early Germanic year was marked by a series of such celebrations which included communal sacrifice, sacral meals, and cult-drama. These pagan high days are explicitly attested among the early medieval Saxons, Anglo-Saxons, and Franks; the religious gatherings of pre-Migration cult-leagues, e.g., the Semnones and Nerthus-folk, are earlier analogies. Such activities not only renewed divine blessings but also established tribal norms and ethnic identity. We have seen that tribal and royal pedigrees (origines) were often traced back to the same divine ancestor. Who, then, could better play the role of this founding deity than his lineal descendant? By impersonating the divine ancestor, the king stood as a vital link between god and man; he both represented his people before the Divine and, in turn, mediated the life-giving blessings flowing to the tribe from the Divine. This
particular royal role in tribal ceremony has been inferred from a religious-historical interpretation of surviving royal rituals and customs. The symbolic iconography of medieval regalia and other royal grave-goods strongly supports this view of the early Germanic king's ceremonial role.

The particular kind of royal mediation here proposed discloses a further dimension of Germanic royal sacrality. It has been suggested that the Germanic king was believed to have a share in the Divine essence by virtue of his god-sprung heritage. This semi-divine quality, though no doubt overshadowed in everyday affairs by the king's patently human nature, broke forth precisely during central moments of tribal festival. Indeed, these ceremonies were designed to recreate in a real and present sense what the ancestor had done in remote, mythic time. On such solemn occasions, the king was momentarily infused with the full divine essence of the ancestral deity he represented. The Gothic and Old Saxon warlords' deification at communal victory-celebrations are notable parallels of such temporary divinization. But even here, we shall not be justified in speaking of a permanent royal incarnation.

It also has been noted that the Germanic popular assembly, which elected the king, was itself a religious as well as judicial convocation. It customarily convened at a sacral precinct which may in fact have been identical with that of the tribe's periodic festivals. The Assembly was considered a sacral institution under divine tutelage, and
its decisions were regarded as declarations of this divine will. Thing-election thus bestowed a further sanctity upon the king and strengthened his hereditary sacrality. Consequently, "popular" election did not in any way diminish or undermine the sacral status of early Germanic kings.

The ideological tenets of Germanic sacral kingship belief may in conclusion be compared with those of the Christian theocratic concept of kingship. According to this Church-sponsored theory, the medieval monarch received his right to rule via direct transmission of Divine Grace at consecration. This conferment of sacral power transformed the king into a personal representative, indeed, an adoptive son of God. Furthermore, anointing with holy chrism bestowed a semi-priestly character to royal authority. Yet the principal tenet of the theocratic theory was the idea of kingship as office: the "Lord's Anointed" held a divinely ordained magistracy carrying carefully prescribed duties and responsibilities. This Christian theory of kingship by the grace of God is not incompatible with the Germanic concept of kingship by virtue of divine descent. The active underlying principle is the same in both, namely, the transmission of holiness to the king from an other-worldly divine source. Germanic royal sacrality did not derive from personal magical abilities but was rather a religious quality transferred through the generations and finding its origin in an ancestral deity. Similarly, royal bounty and victory-bringing powers
were manifestations of the divine forebear's corresponding attributes. Again, the theocratic notion of priestly kingship has its counterpart in the pagan Germanic king's mediating role in tribal ceremony. Indeed, as the Christian earthly king became increasingly assimilated to the King of Heaven in liturgical practice, so too could the early Germanic king embody his divine ancestor on ceremonial occasions. Both Germanic and Christian royal sacrality were essentially transcendent gifts from the Divine.
APPENDIX A

The more influential earlier studies of sacral kingship (ante 1950) are cited here by general historical area and without critical comment:


APPENDIX B

This selection includes the more valuable recent contributions to traditional fields of sacral kingship research:


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