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F. J. LOS

The Franks



**A Critical Study in
Christianisation
and Imperialism**

THE FRANKS

A Critical Study in Christianisation and Imperialism

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by F. J. Los, M.A., Ph.D.

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He wrote the following *books*:

- "Karel de Frank, de Groote?" (Amsterdam, 1940);
English translation "The Franks" herewith;
- "De Germanen" (Amsterdam, 1941);
- "Rusland tussen Azië en Europa" (Amsterdam, 1943);
- "De Volken van het Oude Testament" (Oostburg, 1965);
- "Land-en Volkenkunde der Oudheid" (Oostburg, 1965);
- "Oost-Europa in Voor-en Vroeghistorische Tijd" (1966);
- "Die Ura Linda Handschriften als Geschichtsquelle" (1972);
- "Het Oera Linda Boek, Een Geschiedbron?" (1973);

The latest 5 books are still for sale with the Printing and Publishing Company W.J. PIETERS, Voorstraat 5, Groede (Zld.), Netherlands. (near Oostburg)

Frans J. Los suddenly died on 21st July, 1974, in Oostburg, where he lived many years with his wife in his own cottage. He had many friends and was a beloved popular man of science, an expert on Pre- and Early-History of the European peoples.

"Cattle die, kinsmen die,

"You yourself will die,

"One thing I know,

"Will ever die,

"The Fairname of each one dead.

"Havamal" (Edda)

171899

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FOREWORD TO THE ORIGINAL DUTCH EDITION

One could fill part of a book dealing with the shortcomings of modern history-writing. While this branch of learning fulfils its prime function, namely the compilation and description of the facts, in a mostly satisfying and often even admirable way, it usually falls short of the target in the other field of its activity: in the highlighting and interpreting of the facts. The individualism and materialism of the age which lies behind us have made men see the historical happenings and persons in a different light than we see them today, but there are other causes underlying the blurring of the historical image.

Hereto belongs the frequently observed striving to make the historical image as presentable as possible in the eyes of the contemporary powers who, in the last analysis, preside over the weal and woe of the poor historian. This striving, of which the writer himself is not always necessarily aware and which emanates from human weakness, can never do justice to History as a science. After all, science is nothing but *a seeking after Truth*, and the question as to whether the results of that search are acceptable to the powers that be, is quite immaterial.

Nothing severs more our historical image from that which has till now held sway than the awareness that *Race cannot be dispensed with as an explanatory factor*. Whereas the deeper driving-springs of world-events are normally sought in "circumstances" of a mostly material kind, thus subject to change, it is *the immutable and the abiding*, such as character, heredity, and genetic race-bound factors which are invariably overlooked. What most historians here betray is a total lack of biological insight which makes incomplete the picture drawn by them of historical development. In the unsatisfying nature of the given "explanation" lies presumably the main reason why the science of History, which is so utterly vital to our world-outlook, has fallen into discredit among many of our fellow-timesmen.

If the bid shall be made in this book to gain a more correct insight into that period of History, namely that lying between Antiquity and the Middle Ages, which finds its culmination and crowning in the reign of Charles the Frank — who by many is still called the "Great" — the reader should constantly bear in mind that our aim is not so much a *description* of History as the paving of the way towards a new historical *contemplation*. It is in the very nature of this plan that we do not crave completeness — indeed much is omitted that has no direct bearing on the main issue — and yet we have tried to bridge any gaps as far as possible, so as not to impair the cohesion of the whole.

One other thing cannot go unheeded. This work is not the fruit of an independent study of sources, but rests upon the careful perusal and mutual comparison of a number of works and recent publications which are based on the sources and to which is referred in the notes at the end of the book. The

writer is well aware that he is a go-between rather than the unearther of something new. Although he is indebted to others for information, yet he has striven never to accept anything uncritically, but to sift the employed material as far as possible, observing thereby a strict impartiality. He has sought to do justice both to the upholders and to the opponents of the racial standpoint, but has been mindful, nonetheless, of the words with which a German scholar¹ has sketched the difficulties besetting an unprejudiced study of the period in question: "We wish to arrive at an opinion about Charles in keeping with the Truth. That is, in view of the sources which, without exception, stand under suspicion of a biased patronage, a difficult task . . . The sources from that time, of which not a single one stems from a Saxon or neutral quarter, have been long since exploited, but are known to few in detail".

Originally it was thought to give this book the title "Charles the Frank"*. But it seemed unfeasible to shed sufficient light on the figure of this Frankish king without first sketching the historical development which preceded his reign and shaped the conditions under which his entry on to the boards of history was to take place. Thus arose, of its own accord, a more comprehensive work wherein a closer examination was made, not only of the foregoing history of the Franks, but of the conversion of the Teutons. An overall survey of the preceding development is to be found in the first three chapters which, together form the introduction to the appraisal of the main figure.

May this book help to clear the path for a Germanic view of history, taking the place of that universalistic and cosmopolitan one, with which we have hitherto been fed but which has at no time met with our approval.

So far the preface for the original Dutch edition of this book which was written in the village of Castricum, province of North Holland, in Harvest-month 1940.

*Note: The figure, who throughout the Anglo-Saxon world is known as Charlemagne or Charles the Great, is called here simply "Charles". The Dutch original has "Karl".

PREFACE FOR THE ENGLISH EDITION

When the plan of this book was crystallising in the mind of its author, a revival of Nordic-Germanic self-awareness seemed to be dawning. The centre of this movement was in Germany, but although it found an echo among the minor Germanic peoples of the European continent, it was hemmed in its spreading by unfavourable circumstances. The political antagonism between the leading Nordic-Germanic nations made it at that time improbable right from the start, that it would ever meet with a response from our Anglosaxon brotherfolks over the seas.

A world-catastrophe has passed since, and political circumstances are thoroughly changed. A war which has exhausted the forces and greatly reduced the power of the leading Germanic nations of Europe, has brought this continent onto the verge of destruction, while it has deprived the Nordic race of its dominant position all over the world. As a consequence of this internecine and devastating war — that was in the full sense of the word mainly a war between brother-folks — half Europe is at present occupied by an alien and half-Asiatic power, while the Nordic race, threatened by hostile forces from without and within, is everywhere thrown on the defensive.

To withstand the enormously increased power of Asiatic communism, seconded as it is by the “rising tide of colour” — to use an expression of a well known and far-seeing American author — most Western nations have united in a great alliance, to avert, if possible, their subjugation which would result in the total eclipse of Western culture. What makes the politics of these nations uncertain and unsuccessful however, is *the blindness of their leading politicians to the significance of Race* which makes them ignore in their doings the predominant Nordic and Germanic character of their peoples.

Greater still is the danger which threatens the Western peoples from within. This danger originates from the fact that these same politicians are, for a considerable part, aliens in respect of the soul of the Western culture, in which they cannot share, while nearly all of them are hating the Nordic race, the main producer and bearer of this culture. Striving to dilute and obliterate this race by a wholesale and thoroughgoing mongrelisation, they adhere to the obsolete ideal of “democracy” which originated in the antiquated equality idea.

As a result of the prevailing ideology, the Nordic element has lost its leadership of the Germanic nations, while at the same time and as a direct consequence thereof a phenomenon has become apparent which has justly been dubbed by another American writer, who ended tragically, as *Culture distortion*. Our Western culture is seriously ill and is degenerating in a terrifying manner, having come under the custody of men who are inwardly indifferent or even hostile to it, and whose mental and moral attitude differs too much from that of its creators.

Culture distortion is however of olden date. As will be expounded in this book, it existed already from the sixth century onwards in the kingdom of the Franks and ever since that time the Nordic race has been struggling against tendencies in that direction. Although at present the situation is in this respect more serious than ever, there are, especially in the Anglosaxon countries, signs of an awakening of Nordic self-awareness and this revival of the race-soul, which is no longer confined to the homeland of the Germanic peoples, is our only hope for the future. If the English edition of this book could contribute a little to this Nordic renaissance, the writer would think it to be the best reward for his troubles.

To conclude with, he has to express his thanks to his friend, Mr. Jan Kruls in Amsterdam, who took the initiative in the translation of this book and sponsored its English edition. No less is he obliged to Mr. John P. Wardle in Düsseldorf, who effectuated the difficult task of translation in a short time, nonetheless in an excellent manner.*

Oostburg, Holland, Haymoon 1968.

The Author.

*Note: The translator, as an expert in Germanic languages, had the intention to use many real Anglosaxon words instead of words of French origin, which came later into the English language.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MIGRATION OF GERMANIC PEOPLES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

There can be shown no other happening in history which has so altered the appearance of our continent and which has so deeply influenced the further run of its history than the Germanic folk-wandering that helped to bring about the fall of the Roman Empire. A world-empire which enfathomed almost all the then known world, which had defied the hundreds of years, and had bewrayed in the course of its being such a dour lifestrength that the greater number of its indwellers believed it deathless, crumbled in, and folkdoms who had been hitherto spurned as barbarians founded upon the barrow of its wreckage their new empires, laying thereby the cornerstone for a wholly new unfolding.

Not only in its meaning but also in its tragedy the Folk-wandering can hardly be matched by any other betiding. Whole peoples go under, others are torn asunder, and others undergo frightful losses. Entire landships are laid waste, towns smashed to rubble and treasures of the mind destroyed. But the greatest tragedy lies in the lot of the conquerors themselves, of those folkdoms who attained to power, the founders of the new states who, mostly after years of roaming, succeed at last in winning new and abiding dwelling-places. Vandals and Alans, Visigoths and Suevians, Burgundians and Langobards — they all become sooner or later romanised. Besides the language, they take over the forms of worship and the many wonts and ways of thinking from the native population, forfeiting thereby their Germanic mould, and out of conquerors are made the conquered. If on the one hand they are the savers of Romanic culture and civilisation, for it is thanks to them that a cultural life remained possible amid a populace that was mongrelised through and through, they become on the other hand lost as peoples to Teutondom, whether by dint of romanisation or whether — as with the Ustragoths — by dint of the barbaric warfaring of their foes.

While the Folk-wandering had bestowed on the Teutons the role of overlords over the whole of Western Europe, it had however laid the path for the spiritual and cultural underyoking of the Teutons under Roman mind, and heralded in a cultural thralldom which was to last for centuries and which even today has not yet been shaken off. The most the Folk-wandering achieved was to pave the way for the ending of the opposition which had held sway throughout the life of the Roman Empire during which the Teutons had been its most fearful withstanders. In order to see this opposition in the correct light it is needful to dwell in more detail upon the nature of the Empire, its people and its culture, as well as upon being and makeup of the contemporary Teutons.

In our lands the Roman Empire enjoys a reputation which it in no way deserves when likened to olden Rome itself. It is not here feasible to set

aright the many misconceptions about the Imperium — we must be content with a concise survey.

In an almost unbroken series of wars the Romans had unified all peoples on the Mediterranean seaboard into one mighty empire whose Northern borders followed along the Rhine and the Danube. The founding of this empire carried on a process which had already begun some centuries before in the East where older empires had been, and which entailed a progressive mingling and mutual pervasion of all folkdoms, races, beliefs and cultures alive within the Imperium. So all folkly and racial boundaries became more and more blurred and all cultural and religious differences quelled. Whereas in the provinces the racial mixing was strongly furthered by the setting-up of numerous Roman colonies whose indwellers mingled at length with the native populations, it was the slave-trade in Italy itself, plied on a grand scale, that led to the inflow of alien racial types — foremostly Syrians and other orientals. Add to this the burdensome fact that in the manifold wars, but above all in the persistent and most bloody civil-wars that had repeatedly befallen Rome in the lap of her history, always the best and doughtiest part of her people had been wiped out on a vast scale,² while the rest was afflicted to a far lesser degree. The outcome of this unfolding was that the whole empire was befolked by a most sorely bastardised and degenerate populace whereinto the Romans themselves had mainly melted. The well known writer H. S. Chamberlain dubs this population with the typifying term: 'chaos of the peoples'. Correcter still is the term 'race-chaos' which we are bold to use after the example of another German writer.³

The race-chaos sought a spiritual level and owned to a way of government and "culture" befitting its character. For where antitheses and struggle hinder the going, where national awareness dwindles with the breaking-down of frontiers, and where in the wake of an unbridled race-mixing the original folk-character is blotted out, there too must moral and cultural rot make their entry, and a true tilling or culture becomes just as impossible as a political freedom free from the degeneration of anarchy. Thus it cannot surprise us that in the colourless mass, which became to an ever-growing extent the kenmark of race-chaos, it was the *herd-man* who set the fashion, lacking as that society was in any strong and harmonious natures. Through state authority and with the help of "bread and circus", or held in check by brute force, the cultural life of the mass was governed partly by a crude materialism and partly by rank superstition. The moral level on which they stood is well illustrated by the fact that through the breakdown of family life — once the root of Rome's strength! — which was accompanied by a frightening rise in the number of unwedded persons and an equally frightening fall in the birthrate, the depopulation had set in so far that whole land-stretches lay barren, while it became more and more needful to fill the armies with alien mercenaries — mainly Teutons.⁴

Commander-in-chief of this armed power and likewise head of the mighty machinery of government that in a purely mechanical way held the state together was an emperor, whom his subjects revered as a god and whose despotic authority was of Asiatic roots. It is true that since Caracalla had bestowed civic rights on all burgherships (212 A.D.) within the Empire all free citizens were equal before the law, but as the historian Wolf⁵ rightly remarked, it was not an equality in freedom but in thralldom. Moreover, it was a judicial recognition of the fact that all earlier differences between the ruling state-folk and the rest of the population had been completely erased.

In the wake of the ever increasing race-integration the bond of blood and culture⁶ had broken asunder. The culture of the Imperium, a hotchpotch of

all the cultures which had erst bloomed in the Mediterranean region, was outlived and fossilised. Unable to shape an indwelling or culture of its own, this corrupt populace clung to the spiritual riches which former generations had bequeathed without however sharing in them inwardly. And whilst it sunned in the tinsel of a skindeep and purely outward civilisation, it was still able, thanks to a highly developed and unmatched technical skill, to uphold its status for centuries, even in the sight of foes who outstripped them in inborn strength and giftedness.

The sharpest antithesis to be removed by race-chaos was that existing between Christianity and the Roman spirit. As long as the spirit of olden Rome was still unharmed, it had staved off Christianity with all its might and main — indeed the best and most national-minded emperors sought to subdue the new doctrine by persecution. Rightly they saw in the new religion welling in from the East a peril for state and society. For a teaching which put the equality of all men to the forefront, as did Christianity, was a deadly threat to a state and community which was — as in any healthy life-sphere — based on inequality. Further to this, the proneness of the Christians to world-flight and asceticism led them to spurn and forswear all that had made the Roman nation great. On that score alone they were deemed foes of mankind.

Yet the worst thing of all was that the Christians were forming a state within the state. Whereas on the one hand the Roman state, in keeping with the organised godfearingness towards the caesar, had taken on since the 2nd Century more and more the aspect of a church, at whose head stood the caesar in his office of high priest (*pontifex maximus*), on the other hand the Christian church, which tended increasingly to regulate the purely material relationships between its members and to smooth out their mutual quarrels, wended more and more away from the State. So two forces faced one another locked in a life-or-death struggle, each contesting the terrain of the other, a strife which could seemingly end only in the complete annihilation of one or the other.

And yet it ended in a compromise, because the victory which Christendom gained when it won equal footing with the heathen faith under Constantine (323-336), to be lifted thereafter into the status of a state religion, was but seemingly complete. This very victory was won not only on the strength of a church hierarchy emulating the Roman state government, but because it was also the Emperor himself who secured it. In setting himself up as head of the Church Constantine lent it a monarchical character to which it has answered ever since. It is of even greater significance that the Christian Church inherited too the spirit of its former gainsake, striving towards that very idea of world domination which it had hitherto combated. From imperial Rome the Church took over its imperial mould.

In the religious sphere the victory of Christendom was facilitated in a similar way. Instead of offering resistance, Christianity contributed in its own way to the blending of the religions which had begun some hundreds of years before Christ's birth. Its triumphal ride was made possible by embodying into its ceremonies and rites many elements of heathen beliefs which it met with on its faring — such as the Persian Mithras cult and the Egyptian Isis cult which also aspired to world power.

The Church greatly simplified the transformation for the masses by letting their heathen concepts and customs stand, albeit under other names. In this way hero-worship⁸ and polytheism lived on in the veneration of the saints, while Mary and the Christ-child took the place of the Egyptian goddess Isis and her son Horus who were venerated everywhere in the Empire.⁹ The

heathen offering dwelt on in the "Mass", and the cult of holy relics was for those men only a continuing of the veneration of the dead as seen in pagan oldendom, again under new names. The overgrowth of heathen ideas and wonts on primeval Christianity reached such proportions that the Church — as Wolf put it — threatened to become a black-magic institution. Nothing swayed the Christianity of that time more strongly than the ascetic ideal¹⁰ which saw in world-flight the highest virtue and in the "killing of the flesh" the path to bliss. This ideal too was loaned from Oriental thinking (namely the Egyptian Serapis cult), but practised now on a scale hitherto unwitnessed in the world. This gave rise to monasticism, and it is tokenful that, shortly after its inception in Egypt with the building of the first monastery,¹¹ the whole of the Empire in the East was strewn with these institutions. Apart from the fact that the ascetic ideal helped to forge a sharp division between the clerus and the laity, it set its stamp upon that which has come to be known as Christian morality.

Thus Christianity transposed in every way the ideas which arose from the race-chaos by which it had been produced, and which it now fostered. In the paradox of these ideas — world-flight alongside the striving for world-mastery, the glorification of poverty alongside crude materialism, the preaching of neighbourly love and "peace on earth" alongside the bloody extermination of unbelievers and heretics — we see in Christianity the spiritual offspring of a mongrelised population. At the same time it had taken in so many pagan components that the teaching of its founder had become completely shrouded. The main thing for us is that Christianity,¹² sprung as it had from race-chaos, assumed the tenets of this chaos and became its waymaker. How closely akin the two were can be seen from the remark of the German writer Tirala:

"I would point out that a pessimistically-minded Christianity harmonised with a kind of race-chaos as seen around the Mediterranean in the first thousand years of our timereckoning. For these people, who stemmed from the blood-chaos of an unbridled bastardisation, it was quite logical to choose a religion which seeks refuge in a flight away from life, and in a supernatural grace, for sensuality and erotic love must be deemed by them a sin. I believe that it really would have been a sin if these men had procreated themselves! But upon a healthy breed, such a pessimistic and therefore life-alienating religion must act as a deadly bane."

* * * * *

If we now look at the Teutons of that time as against the hybrid and degenerate populace of a moribund world, we behold straightaway their superiority in the field of mind and ethics. The most striking proof of their greatness is seen in the fact that the Roman Empire in the last centuries of its existence found no other means of warding off the ever attacking German clans than the taking-up of Teutons into their service, the merging of the same into their legions or their colonising as landfolk with wives and children in the border territories. In the end, it reached the stage where Teutons were commanding legions and governing as regents parts of the Imperium. The best-known example of this was the Vandal Stilicho, who for years wielded the reins of government as steadholder for Empror Honorius, and who, with the help of legions withdrawn from the frontiers, twice beat off Alaric (403) and freed Italy from those Teutons, who had invaded it. Stilicho, who possessed great talents, was yet to be murdered (408) in a most underhand way by the puny souls who envied him. He and other Teutons, who loomed

into the fore at that time, rise as heathens head and shoulders above their Romano-Christian surroundings, and that not only in their gifts but also in their girth of character and ethical strength.

In their new environment these Teutons undoubtedly found much that clashed with their nature and which must have seemed unacceptable to them. In the world of politics, imperial absolutism and the mechanical concept of statehood, as cornerstone of the Imperium, must have gone against the grain when they arrived there with their inborn sense of freedom and their home-made organic concept of statecraft. Just as little could they reconcile themselves to the moral and social conditions there prevalent. So we see Antoninus Pius (138-161), the first emperor who was in all likelihood a full-blooded Teuton, putting an end to the sadistic treatment of slaves. (The Teutons treated their slaves well!). It speaks for his genuine Teutonic tolerance in religious things that those who on religious grounds were unable to pay homage to the Emperor as a god were allowed to desist. And his forerunner Hadrian, an emperor who had certainly much Teutonic blood in him and who, in defiance of the centuries-old Roman custom, cultivated a beard (on the throne!), put an end to the dreadful muddle in the field of justice.

On the religious side the contrast was, if possible, even greater. Asceticism and world-flight were alien to the Teutons, and the antithesis between matter and spirit, Nature and God, which underlay these ideas, quite unknown to them. Besides, belief in wonders and wizardry took at the most a subsidiary place in their mindworld, while their harmonious trend of soul and their nature-bound thinking left them little room for thoughts about "salvation". The elements of "southern" paganism which were embedded in Christianity were for these "northern"¹³ heathenfolk just as indigestible as the Judaic cabbalism which had sprouted to such a rich maturity in theology. Lastly, the Jewish god-concept imbibed by Christianity was quite different again from their own idea. Notwithstanding all these antitheses, of which they must have been at least partly aware, the defeat of the Teutons on the spiritual plane was foreseeable and their succumbing to the engirding Romanic spirit, i.e. to the powers of race-chaos, was in the long run inevitable. However outlived the Roman culture may have been, it did, thanks to the rich knowledge and fairness which it purveyed, and thanks foremostly to the might of its age-old tradition, enjoy at all times a formidable reputation. Against the Germanic culture which was still in the teething stage, its standing was quite unassailable. In the sphere of religion the overmight of Christendom was no less great. It rested not merely on a firm ecclesiastical organisation, but owned withal a wealth of writing, and could defend its theses with a polished dialectic borrowed mainly from the Greek philosophers. Above all, Christianity differed from the Germanic belief in that its thoughts and concepts were gathered up into a theological framework whose grandeur could not fail in time to impress the Teutons. So here, as in many other walks of life, the unorganised falters and fails in the face of the organised. Teutondom cast off the systemless in favour of the system.

Remarkable is the fact that the inpouring Germanic folkdoms, with only a few exceptions, did not at first assume the later official form of Christianity but the so-called Arianism, a teaching which shelves away from the orthodox dogma on several important points, and which thus to a certain extent can be held to be a forerunner of the later Protestantism. So these folkdoms came into a position of confessional opposition to the surrounding Roman peoples and this retarded the cultural melting and mingling of the rulers and the ruled. But this was only an episode. In time the conversion of those folkdoms to

Catholicism was unavoidable, and round about the year 600 the matter was finally settled. Yet by their long resistance which had lasted nigh-on two hundred years these Teutons had proved irrefutably that the powers which sought to romanise them were deepdown alien to them. Thus it was not theological quibbling which made them cling to Arianism but the awareness of their own nature. The Arian belief forestalled for a long time the bastardisation of the Teutons. But in the end they yielded to the overmight.

Conquerors as they were in the military and political field, they were not only beaten but wholly subdued by the powers of race-chaos on the religious plane. In this connection it is noteworthy that precisely then, when the Roman Empire seemed to be going under for good, the groundwork was laid for its coming revival.¹⁴ While Alaric was conquering Rome (410) and Vandal, Alan and Suevian warriors were spreading out over France and Spain to North Africa, so that the Roman Empire seemed to be vanishing from the earth, bishop Augustine of Hippo wrote his famous book: "The God-state" (*De Civitate Dei*). Therein he sets the organised church, which is administered by the bishops, against the earthly "world-state" which he dubs the work of the devil. Whereas the "God-state" inherits mastery of the world, the "world-state" wins worth and weightiness only insofar as it leads the heretics back into the Church's fold, that being its highest obligation. In contrast to the almighty Church, Augustine sees in the state a mere executive organ acting in the service of the church. The universal character of Christianity is nowhere better glimpsed than in this work, whose ideas were destined to dominate for centuries the unfolding of Western Europe up to our present day, and whose author was this North African half-breed. The new Imperium, for which Augustine had laid the theoretical foundation, was drafted into being by Leo I (440-461), the first bishop of Rome who can rightly be termed "pope". The high reputation which he enjoyed throughout Italy, the weight of personality which he brought to bear on other bishops, and the political influence which he wielded, heralded in that monarchical standing which his aftercomers were to bestow upon the head of the "God-state".

The kings of the Germanic Franks have contributed more than many of the Popes to the realisation of Augustine's policy. Thanks to them, the Germanic heartland, which had so successfully withstood the old Empire, was integrated into the new. Thereby the cornerstone was laid for the enforced collaboration of the three elements from whose intermelting the basic history of our Middle Ages was to emerge: Teutondom, Romanic culture and Christendom. The history of the Franks is therefore of special importance.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FRANKS AND THE FRANKISH KINGDOM

The folkdom of the Franks, that is, of the "free", was first named in Roman sources of the year 238. It arose when shortly before the middle of the third century the sundry Germanic tribes, which had settled along the right bank of the Lower Rhine and in the Rhine delta, formed under pressure from the Roman weapon-might an abiding union. This bondfellowship or alliance in which were linked the tribes of the Batavians, Ampsivarians, Sugambrians, Ubians, Chattuarrians, Chamavians, Bructrians and Chattians was in fact already in the making at the time of the rising under Claudius Civilis (70 A.D.) which had welded the Lower Rhenish clans into a first unity.

Admittedly this union had been riven apart again by the defeat which it had sustained, but it had at least built the basis for a durable teaming-up against the traditional foe, a union which was to come about at a later date.

The Romans held the Franks to be untrustworthy. But, as a heathenday writer¹⁵ justly remarked, it behoves one to remember that the custom of treacherous attacks during the course of peace negotiations was widely kept — a custom which Caesar had introduced into Roman warmaking. Against the "barbarians" every means was deemed justified, and they strove not only after their foe's defeat but after his total annihilation. This is evinced most clearly in the war of extermination which Emperor Constantine (323-336) — the first Christian emperor — waged against the Franks. The unwary were waylaid in their own hamlets, their kings Askarik and Gaiso¹⁶ gruesomely martyred, their womenfolk killed and their children sold as thralls. For weeks on end the Roman rabble cheered in the circus at Treves where dozens of Frankish noblemen were torn to bits "until their weight of numbers had wearied the savage beasts". Under Emperor Julian, who had become pagan again, the methods remained the same. Under the leadership of professional criminals, gangs of killers were sent out against the Franks (358), overrunning their farmsteads at night and setting them afire. The heads of the slain were then delivered to the Roman steadholder in Trier¹⁷ in exchange for the agreed-upon bloodmoney. No wonder that under such circumstances the Franks broke again and again the "peace-treaties" (read: terms of subjugation), laying waste for example in the year 355 the main Roman stronghold on the Rhine, Cologne. For this "breach of faith" the civilised Romans set up the same howl of indignation that we are accustomed to hearing in our day.

One might expect that a folkdom, which had been for centuries the victim of such war-methods, would itself degenerate. Also we should not be surprised to learn that the racial make-up of the folk, by dint of their continued contact with the "Romans" (= race-chaos, see foregoing chapter), might have become mongrelled in like manner. But neither of these two possibilities hold true. On the contrary, in their purity of Germanic folkhood as in their eugenically inspired strength and giftedness, the Franks brilliantly bear comparison with other Germanic peoples. Neither hate nor rancour

could hinder Roman writers from showing again and again their admiration for the heroic mould and strength of this folk, which, thanks to its child-wealth, was able to fill the gaps left by the fallen with such wonderful alacrity. Even a Christian writer¹⁸ was bound to recognise the moral superiority of the heathen Franks in contrast to the Christian Romans. Admiration fell especially upon those Franks who had reached high positions in Roman service. The dying-off of talent and character in the late Roman Empire made it easy for Teutons, who had gone into Roman service, to climb rapidly in rank. Among the Franks of this category we are struck at once by the figure of the mighty Arbogast who was appointed first minister in the Western Kingdom by Emperor Theodosius. Arbogast went on to depose the rightful emperor and was for some years (390-394) complete master over that part of the Imperium. On the strength of their unselfishness and honesty, their good sense and their zeal, he and other outstanding Franks are praised unanimously by Roman writers.

The sheer Germanic nature of the Franks is seen in the light of their dealings as a people. Firstly we witness their bold and often genial style of warfare which they share with all folkdoms of mainly Nordic stock. When the later Emperor Julian in the winter of 356, and in his office as general, spread his troops out over the towns of Eastern Gaul in order to ease the feeding problem, the Franks crossed over the frozen Rhine, Moselle and Marne in nightly marches, looming up suddenly outside Sens (*Agedincum Senonum*), in which town Julian had set up headquarters with but a small force of troops. For 60 days they penned in the Roman commander and were within an ace of taking him prisoner in the middle of Gaul. So we are not amazed to hear that a folk so skilled in war was able to cast a web of espionage and reconnaissance along its border, so thwarting many a Roman stratagem.

Truly Germanic is also their gift of initiative which had long since made them good seafarers.¹⁹ How far their knowledge of sailing had advanced can be seen from a tale a Roman writer tells of an "unbelievably daring sea-voyage" which they pulled off in the year 276. A Frankish tribe dwelling at the mouth of the Rhine had been overwhelmed by the Romans and had to furnish Rome with many soldiers. After their time of training they were colonised along the Sea of Marmara. Driven by a yearning for their fatherland, they stole one fine day Roman ships lying in the haven, and set sail. Having plundered along the shores of Asia Minor and Greece, they grasped at the chance of storming Carthage and Syracuse. Laden with booty they fared on through the Straits of Gibraltar, reaching again via Spain, the Biscay and the Channel their fatherland.

Yet this raid was by no means an isolated example. Towards the end of the 3rd Century the Frankish seamight becomes a danger for the Romans, and their fleets dominate for a time the North Sea and even the Channel. When the Roman Channel-fleet mutinied in the year 286 and its commander Carausius had himself proclaimed emperor, he straightaway availed himself of the help of the Frankish and Saxon fleets and, with their aid, went to Britain. In the years that followed, this island became the base for daring sea-voyages into all the seas then known. Frankish warfolk camped in London (*Londinium*), and trading in the coastal towns brought with it such an affluence that — to quote a Roman author — "culture and wealth bloomed in Britain rather than on the Roman continent". Luft asserts quite rightly that such sea-trips show a knowledge of seafaring which could only have been gleaned over many generations. The technique of shipbuilding and seagoing was of a very high order among the Franks, as it was among the Goths, for the stage of the tree-boat had been passed through by the Teutons hundreds

of years before the beginning of our timereckoning. In seamanship the Franks can well be regarded as the forerunners of the later Dutchmen, their offspring.

The unspoiled Germanic nature of the Franks comes out most clearly in their highly developed sense of honour. Honour was for them — as for all Teutons — the deepest drivingspring of their deeds. Not only cowardice in the face of the enemy and the return unscathed from the field of battle after the leader had fallen was dishonourable, but also the very fact of defeat. Only revenge or conquest could give the warrior back his honour. For this reason the Franks struck at their hardest straight after a setback. "They suffer more through shame than through death itself," says a Roman writer and goes on to tell how giant Frankish warriors, too proud to let themselves be torn up by wild beasts under the eyes of the Roman mob, kill each other first.²⁰

Just like the other West Teutons, the Franks differ from the East Teuton folkdoms in their method of advance. Not in a single mighty onslaught, as e.g. the Ostro- and Visigoths and the Vandals, did they win new livingroom at the expense of the Roman Empire, but in a slow and stepwise pushing-back of its frontiers, a long process which had begun long before the start of the actual Folkwandering. The essential kenmark of this process is that conquest always went hand-in-hand with settlement, while the territorial contact with the Germanic broodland endured throughout.

The continual pressure which the Franks exerted on the Roman borders from the end of the 3rd Century onwards was undoubtedly caused for the greater part by a very steep rise in birthrate, resulting again and again in overpopulation. So the tribes thrust forth, now requesting and getting leave from the Roman governors to settle as yeomen in the frontier marches which were for the most part abandoned, and now smashing through the border defence-works which had been put up against them. Thus the Rhine had already been crossed at the beginning of the Folk-migrations.²¹ When, with the invasions of the Vandals, Alans and Suevians the Roman overlordship in Gaul was practically ended, the Franks resumed their drive southwards and eastwards, only this time somewhat faster. Gradually they pressed on further until the Somme in the West and the Treves region in the East — Treves was conquered in 475 for good — were reached. Once more the abandoned regions were colonised by them, so that, with the exception of the townships and poorer areas wherein remnants of the Romano-Gallic population still abided, they had become fully germanised. Neither in the Salian²² Franks, who inhabited the West of present-day Belgium and of whom the earlier Batavians can be regarded as the kernel-folk, nor in the Ripuarian²³ Franks who befolked the present-day Rhineland, being grouped around the Ubians as kernel-folk, can there have been any racial mongrelisation worth speaking of, although this threat was impending. For the time being, their Nordic blood and Germanic folkhood were unimpaired.

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Under Chlodwig²⁴ (Clovis, 481-511), the founder of the Great Frankish Kingdom, this policy of a slow spreading was abandoned in favour of a grandiosely pursued policy of conquest which, it is true, brought fame and honour to its planner, but had deadly consequences for the Germanic character of his people. In this respect two mutually linked events rang in a radical change: Chlodwig's overcoming of Central Gaul (486) and his conversion to Christianity (496). It is therefore needful to treat of these happenings more thoroughly.

As one of the provincial monarchs of the Salian (Western) Franks,

Chlodwig dwelt at first in Doornik (Tournai) where his father Childeric (457-481) and his grandfather Merovech²⁵ (448-457) had reigned before him. From his small but practically pure Teutonic heartland he overran in the year 486 the kingdom of Syagrius²⁶ which lingered in Central Gaul as a remnant of the Roman Empire. At a swoop he widened thus his might over the extensive landship between the Somme and the Loire. Two things are here of prime importance! Firstly, the conquered earth was too large to make possible an expulsion of the native population and a sharing-out of the land among the Frankish conquerors. Chlodwig was content to parcel out to his followers state-lands and acreage from which the leaseholders had fled, leaving the rest of the territory in the hands of its owners. The upshot of this was that in the newly acquired land the ruling-class of the Franks formed only a minority. And at the same time as Chlodwig moved his abode to Soissons (*Suessionum*), he forsook his heathen Germanic surroundings to found himself again in a Romano-Christian one.

Although this dipping into the race-chaos of the defunct Roman Empire was certainly not without meaning for Chlodwig, it was not the main cause of his conversion. Even less was it the outcome of a vow which he is said to have made in the course of a battle²⁷ which he was waging against the Allemans (496). Also the influence which his Roman-Christian wife, the Burgundian princess Chlotilda, wielded upon him, is at least greatly exaggerated. On the other hand, it is of decisive significance that Chlodwig, in his secret negotiations with the Roman bishops which preceded his "conversion", had been promised the powerful support of the Church in his planned attacks on the Arianistic Burgundian and Visigothic kingdoms. This could happen however only on condition that he induce his folk to follow him in his conversion to the Roman church. His betrayal, at first secret and then open, of the belief of his forefathers was the price to be paid for securing the help and co-operation of the Roman priesthood in the new wars of conquest which he had in mind against the brother-folkdoms of the Franks. For its part, the Church aimed to use him in the fight against the hated Arians.

And indeed, Chlodwig was backed most effectively by the Church in the war following against the Burgundians (500) and afterwards in the conquest of the Visigothic Aquitania (506), where he widened his kingdom as far as the Garonne. We can sense the coming treason of the Burgundian and Visigothic Roman Catholic bishops by the presence of many of them at his baptism (496) which was greeted throughout Roman Christendom with the utmost joy. In the wars to follow, which were regarded by the Church as a sort of crusade, as it was against the heretic Arians, many bishops together with their parishes openly went over on to the side of Chlodwig. We should here bear in mind that the mixed population of these kingdoms was Roman Catholic, whereas the Arian belief was embraced only by the thin layer of the Burgundian and Visigothic ruling classes. So it cannot surprise us that in Poitiers, Saintes, Bourges and other towns the people, led by the bishops, opened the gates at the coming of the Frankish warbands and raided the Gothic garrisons, while the Catholic Gallo-Romans carried on espionage for the Frankish leaders. The co-operation which Chlodwig received in this way from the population furthered to no mean extent the success of his conquest plans — in fact, his victory was a foregone conclusion.

So it was mainly the support of the Roman priesthood which enabled Chlodwig to build his Great Frankish Kingdom. As will be gone into more closely in this chapter, the Romanic spirit held sway in the new kingdom from the very beginning, despite the Germanic nature of its founders and

the Germanic hallmark which it was to bear for centuries in its outward build and organisation. Nothing helped more strongly their victory than the fact that the Franks were converted to Roman Christianity just at that moment when, at its entry into the region of race-chaos, the danger for the mongrelisation of their breed and the loss of their folkly integrity was at its direst. With Chlodwig's baptism into the Roman Church broke down in his kingdom right from the start that barrier which up till then had cloven off in the Arian Burgundian and Visigothic kingdoms the ruling class from the mass of the subject Romano-Gallic population. The equality before the law of both parts of the population, now linked in common belief, did admittedly for the time being strengthen outwardly the Frankish kingdom, but led on the other hand inevitably to a melting. Indeed, it formed a deadly threat to the Germanic folk-character of the Franks. It was fatal for them that, at a time when their folkhood and national awareness were being undermined and jeopardised from all sides, this peril should be veiled by a doctrine which placed the equality of all men to the fore. On top of this, the links with the Germanic broodland were becoming weaker and weaker by the accomplished conquest. Paris, the new residence, was well fitted to making Chlodwig forget the land of his birth. Far from their fatherland, living amidst a people of alien blood, he and his followers lost sight of their roots.

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The predominance of the Romanic spirit in the new kingdom is clearly seen in the way in which the "conversion" of the Franks expressed itself. Is it not tokenful that Chlodwig, who was tolerant as a heathen, showed a great lack of tolerance as a Christian. For all the resistance which his conversion aroused among the nobility, a resistance so strong that a number of his noblemen forsook him and went over into the service of Ragnachar, another Frankish prince in the region of Sambre and Maas, he gave his priests leave to exterminate heathendom within his kingdom and supported them by presenting them with tracts of land. Whereas the conversion took place relatively smoothly among the courtiers and high state officials, it met with fierce opposition among the Frankish landfolk, particularly in the mainly Germanic North.

As long as the state did nothing to assist the monks and priests, their preaching was totally fruitless, so that at the death of Chlodwig (511) the conversion had made little headway. Under the rule of his sons begins then the ruthless reaving of all Germanic halidoms by fanatical Christian priests under military protection, while the work of conversion was resumed with renewed fervour. The extent of the force employed can be gathered from the decisions made at the 2nd synod of Orleans (535) which forbade the baptised under pain of severe punishment any contact with their heathen folk-brothers. All things minding of the Germanic Age such as the pledge of troth of young couples under the village linden, the oath of weaponfellows at the hallowed well or the May-dancing of the youth were reckoned as devilish misdeeds. In part, these forcible measures met with an inverted success, for, according to a report made at an ensuing synod, it was sadly confirmed that a great number of Christians had gone back to the belief of their fathers.

Under the "pious" Childebert I (558) a royal edict quells the religious freedom which still officially holds, and the Germanic belief together with its upholders are banned. It is openly admitted in this edict that the gift of persuasion among the bishops and the Christian creed itself are powerless to ensure the realisation of the Church's goal, and thus the State goes into action

with all its might. All tokens and halidoms have to be destroyed within the kingdom; whoever hinders the priests in this shall be tried at the King's pleasure. Furthermore, all heathen songs, holidays and choruses are forbidden. For infringement of these laws the unfree shall be punished with 100 strokes, and freemen are to be detained "so that whoever will not listen to wholesome words shall be brought back on to the path of salvation by bodily pain".²⁸ In this way, although the State banned the heathen troth from public life and forbade its upholding, it could not prevent all kinds of wonts and customs from surviving in stillness and even seeping in such guise into the Christian Church. The resistance offered by the Teutons to the enforced alien teaching can be measured by the fact that still in the year 624 – more than a hundred years after the death of Chlodwig – almost the whole of the land-population around Amiens, Noyon and in the whole of Flanders was heathen. According to Luft, it can even be assumed that in Neustria – the Western side of the kingdom with a foremostly Romanic population – heathendom did not vanish until the year 650, while in Austrasia²⁹ – the Eastern and mainly Germanic province – it lasted for centuries.

The first and most important consequence of this christening by force was a frightening moral depravity which barely finds a like in history. This depravity was also noted by Christian historians (church-historians), but explained away by them as a leftover of heathen barbarity. It is certain that this moral rampaging only overtook the Franks after their conversion, a phenomenon which can be witnessed too among other Germanic people who came in like manner to Christianity – as in Norway. Moreover, it cannot escape notice that the soulrot began in the royal house and in the nobility, i.e. among those who first accepted Christianity. It spread in the already converted Neustria much earlier than in Austrasia where heathendom lingered. All goes to show that the conversion itself was the cause of the depravity.

We need not be startled by this when we consider that all moral values that formed the rock-bottom of Germanic fellowship – but which cannot be treated of here – such as Truth, were turned upside down. A religion which was made for the men in race-chaos and which gained therein its unique and temporal shape, was forced suddenly upon a totally different kind of man. All that had been in Teuton eyes good and holy became deemed the work of the devil. Their breed-awareness was undermined and their folkhood torn asunder. Furthermore, the ethics of the new spiritual powerholders stood by Germanic standards on a low plane. This becomes clear when we learn how bishop Gregory of Tours,³⁰ one of the most forthcoming men of his time, made light of the crimes which Chlodwig wrought after his conversion to Christianity. Straightaway after describing how the converted Frankish king murdered all his kinsmen and got rid of the other Frankish regional kings, this chronicling bishop writes, "Day after day Chlodwig, who walked with a pure heart before God and did good in the eyes of the Lord, was rewarded by the casting-down of his foes and the widening of his kingdom".

Instead of a Germanic ethic grounded in an inborn sense of honour, which had given former generations of Franks the strength to choose a noble death sooner than a life in shame, the Church invented a reward-morality which rested in a low love of self, calling anything good which brought the self profit. No wonder that – as both concepts were at root utterly antithetical to one another – the Christianised Franks lost their foothold and fell prey to an inner insecurity which stood in starkest contrast to the selftrustingness of their forbears. This loss of inner assurance rears up not only in Chlodwig but also in the next generations which, with few exceptions,

were illgotten and criminal. It has been described by a reliable historian³¹ thus:

“The family history of the Merovingians forms a wellnigh unbroken chain of shameful deeds and misdemeanours: unbridled emotions of all kinds, measureless hatred, unfettered sensuality, boundless lust for revenge and might were given full rein in deeds of violence, in sexual wantonness, in breach of troth and in treason, briefly in all kinds of gruesome doings. Luckily but seldom again has world-history had to draw such a heinous and heartrendingly grim picture of moral decay. By way of explanation one should point to the effect which the contact with decadent Roman vice must wield on men of unbroken natural strength. It is generally agreed that the depravity is almost wholly confined to the upper classes.³² These circles of Roman society³³ were weak in good and weak in evil. But with the Germanic strength-men of unbroken passion their failings were magnified into frightful proportions. In addition to this, the Teutons had lost their birthbestowed religion, and the new religion to which they as yet only outwardly confessed, was already decadent. In the latter religion the “rightful belief” in fixed formulae stood much higher than a true morality. Therefore, in spite of the outward respect which the clergy enjoyed, it was unable to yield a firm moral foundation. Orthodoxy and rich endowments to the Church served to veil over all shortcomings.”

Although the consequences, which the close contact with the effete Roman civilisation, the life amid the race-chaos of Gaul and the stepover to Christianity must have had for the Franks, were rightly outlined by the writer of the above lines, he has overlooked the fact that the decay and demoralisation of their folkdom can be tracked back to another cause. While Christianity brought with it such marks of decay as can be observed in other Germanic peoples, there took place, especially in the South, a jostling with race-chaos whereby the Frankish blood itself became bastardised. It is the fellowship of these two factors, both tending in the same direction and re-inforcing each other, that must have caused the rot to set in so deeply. The Christianity of that time, as the religious expression of a hybrid populace, fitted to it and shaped by it, accorded with the subject Gallo-Roman people, but served by its ideology to mongrelise the Franks. It should also be noted that the dividing wall of Arianism, the erstwhile religion of the Teutons ruling in Southern Europe, had been wanting here from the beginning. Therein lay the significance which that form of Christianity held for the fostering of the Germanic breed. It is also of much weight that Arianism allowed in its ceremonies the use of the native tongue instead of the Latin, so outlandish to Teutonic ears. Finally, Arianism was, in its teaching, not so far removed from the Germanic world of mind, although this was not the main reason why it attracted the Teutons. For they had not the slightest interest in dialectic hairsplitting, argument and dogmatic quibbles.

But it is the status of womanhood which shows us how far the two causes ran abreast one another. As keeper of the hallowed hearth, of honour and of all things handed down, Woman enjoyed in Teutondom since times of yore the highest standing. In Woman the heathen Teutons saw a spark of the godlike, then again something mysterious. The influence which Woman wielded went often so far as to playing a far-reaching role in politics. Thus, the soothsayer Valeda acted at the time of the rising under Claudius Civilis as counsellor of her people. From being under the Teutons a life-companion of equal worth, Christian Roman influence now drags her down to the level of a handmaid, the property of a man, her master! Typical of the attitude of Christendom towards the woman is the argument which broke out among the gathered bishops at the Synod of Macon (585), where the question was

earnestly disputed as to whether "one can conceive of woman as a human being".

The greater number of women, who are known to us from the lifetale of the later Merovingians, fall in no wise short of their menfolk when it comes to dissoluteness and crime. In the figure of the Neustrian queen Fredegunda, a monster in female shape such as history has seldom witnessed, this moral foulness reaches its peak. It is remarkable that the few women, who in purity rise high above their surroundings, are not of Frankish, but yet of pure Germanic origin. The highest seat of honour belongs here to Brunhilda, daughter of a Visigothic king on the throne of Austrasia who defended the honour and might of her strain with unstemmable strength and stalwart toughness until base treachery drove her to her doom at the hands of a wicked enemy. For a long time likened to her worthless opponent, Fredegunda,³⁴ and most unjustly, her honour was finally redeemed by a heathenday historian.³⁵ She was a Christian, but the Germanic code of honour was her yardstick in a life so rich in setbacks and disappointments.

If the lowering of womanhood can be regarded as a facet of the "culture" of which the Franks now partook, the said culture is no less marked by the belief in demons and wonders which the Church strove to instil into its members. Not only does demonism play an overwhelming part in the life of the Christianised Franks, but was also, in emulation of their spiritual leaders including even Gregory of Tours, placed on a par with the divine, identified therewith. Through this confusion, the idea of the everlasting struggle between the powers of good and evil, which was part of the Germanic world-outlook, became gradually outdimmed. Thus, in the name of the Lord were committed the foulest crimes, and that with a clean conscience because God had been made their accomplice. The saints, too, took on demonic features all too often in the imagination of these men. Gregory of Tours³⁶ tells of a deacon, to whom one night the saint Nicetius appeared, striking the deacon so hard "on his neck with his clenched fist" that the poor man had to go about his duties on the next day with "with a swollen neck and in great pain". One or two further facts will show how far this belief in wonders went.

When the Goths in Saragossa were being beleaguered by the Franks and their position was critical, they bore the smock of St. Vincent over the walls and ran after it in garb of penance, muttering prayers and chanting psalms. This helped, for the Franks, being no less superstitious, then gave up the siege, overawed as they were by the holy relic. The behaviour of Chilperic, the grandson of Chlodwig and Fredegunda's husband, shows that one could ill forgo the help of relics, even in the committing of misdeeds. This prince had reached a contract on the partition of the empire with his brothers wherein it was specified, among other things, that none of the princes was allowed to enter communally-owned Paris without leave from the co-signatees; whoever should dare to do this would be cursed. Chilperic broke the contract and entered Paris shortly before Easter. But so as to escape the curse, he had the relics of many saints borne before him as he entered, as if to make them co-responsible, thus turning a bad deed into a good one.

The Church brought no culture, but made the people ignorant, superstitious and servile in order to cement its power; it is as if in that century they were all too brisk in the destroying of the Germanic culture still existing. Furthermore, their servants were of an extremely low grade. The spiritual and moral level of the Roman priesthood, which at that time consisted mostly of Romans, is described by Luft as follows:

"Carousing, drinking, insatiable greed for wealth and sensual pleasure, stupid belief in wonders, cruelty rising to sadism, these were the bedfellows

of the priesthood. Erelong it became usual for the big people in the Empire to employ priests for the wreaking of their crimes: for the priests had access everywhere. Fredegunda, the wicked queen, frequently sent out priests as killers”.

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Lastly let us take a look at the organisation of the Great Frankish state! Regarding the internal upbuild of this state it is highly significant that no longer were only the freeborn Teutons eligible for military service but all freeborn without exception — in contrast to other Germanic states on former Roman territory. If its military strength was thereby augmented, the folkly substance of the Frankish nation was irrevocably doomed. Whereas in the Ostrogothic and Vandal empires the Teutonic nation formed a kind of warrior-caste which mingled little with the native population, fostering rather the awareness of its own breed and nature, the military democratising in the Frankish kingdom was one of the causes of the wane in folk-awareness among the once ruling folkdom and of its bodily and spiritual fall into race-chaos.

Less harmful, though un-Germanic in essence, was the strengthening of kingly authority. The self-administration of the regions, which formerly elected their own princes, came to an end. Henceforward the regions (Ger. *Gaue*) were to be governed by landgraves whom the King nominated. Even though this change was needful sooner or later, enhancing the strength which the State could unfold outwardly, the spirit by which this development was moved was not Germanic — indeed it bore too clearly the stamp of Roman origin. The freeborn yeoman, who had once been the King's countryman, now became his underling, and the officialdom, which now crept slowly over the folkbody, replaced the nobility of old.

From Rome was inherited the system of big landownership once predominant in Gaul, and which now in the landships conquered by Chlodwig had passed from Roman into Teuton hands. Needless to say, the greatest landowner was the Church, which 100 years after Chlodwig's death and thanks to the rich endowments made by princes and athelings, had come into possession of more than a third of the soil of France. Thanks to this widespread landownership, the Church was able to develop, alongside the established nobility, its own church aristocracy. In a short space of time both parties became a danger to the royal power, while the steadily increasing number of great farming estates, the tilling of which was entrusted to serfs (“*coloni*”), formed an additional threat to the selfstanding of the Frankish yeoman.

Ungermanic is also the foreign politics of the later Merovingians in which cunning, cruelty and faithlessness strike the dominant note. Under the sons of Chlodwig the aggressive politics was carried on further for a time, so that the Frankish kingdom remained a menace to its neighbours. The first victims were the Thuringians, who at Seithingi (Burgscheidungen) on the Unstrut in the year 531 suffered a crushing defeat³⁷ at the hands of Chlodwig's sons Theoderic and Lothar I together with allied Saxons. Their king, Hermanfried, is lured under promise of personal safety to Zülpich, and there, as he was taking a stroll with Theoderic, flung from the town walls to his death. After this it was the turn of the Burgundians whose kingdom was overthrown for good in the year 534. Their king, Sigismund, after his captivity, was drowned in a deep well together with wife and children.

Vile was also the behaviour which these Frankish kings exercised towards Witichis, king of the Ostrogoths who, sorely harried by the East Roman

general Belisarius, ceded them Provence and Raetia in exchange for help (536). Theodebert, who had followed after his father Theoderic, crossed the Alps with an army alright, but instead of bringing the Goths help, he began to conquer the land for himself, warring against both parties. The sequel to all these undertakings was that, besides the Thuringians, also the Allemans³⁸ who, inasfar as they lived in Raetia had sought the aegis of Theoderic the Great after their defeat at the hands of Chlodwig, and lastly also the Bavarians had to recognise the overmight of the Frankish Kingdom. Since it was always Teutons who fell victim to the "*Frankish vileness*", as history terms it for the first time, this first onslaught against the Germanic heartland points to the direction which the foreign politics of the Frankish Kingdom was henceforth to assume. Under Charles the Frank this politics finds its natural consummation.

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*So the Frankish Kingdom, that was destined to outlive all other Germanic empires founded on Roman earth, inherited the bequest of the Roman Empire and gave birth to forces which were to typify the Middle Ages.*³⁹ As can be seen in the military equalisation of all the freeborn, this kingdom possessed in fact from the outset the same universal character which had pervaded the Roman Imperium. In the wake of the immense widening of the territory, the folk-thing (i.e. the folk-gathering or -moot) of all free Franks, fell more and more into disuse, and so the privileged position of the dominant state-folk was undermined. With this the allworld character came out more and more starkly, while at the same time the might of the King could be widened on a grand scale on the Roman model. In this respect it should be borne in mind that the Frankish king trod in the legal steps of the Roman emperors, so bearing right from the beginning the mark of absolutism. So on these grounds too, the Frankish Kingdom is essentially ungermanic! Chlodwig, the creator of this folk-alienated state, is thus not to be regarded as a protagonist but as a traitor to the Germanic race.

His appearance had for the Teutons two important consequences which must here be briefly outlined. While on the one hand Chlodwig, by his conquests, laid open the noble folkdom of the Franks to the same dangers which brought about, without exception, the downfall of all Germanic folkdoms in the South, on the other hand he laid the groundwork for a power which through its mixed origins and universal character became a peril to all the Germanic peoples, even in the heartland. Whilst in the overrun regions the Franks, as a thin layer of the population, were speedily romanised, the kingdom which they built could, thanks to the support of the Romanic masses, unfold a mighty outward strength. Thus on the one side we see the Franks, who had settled in the mainly Romanic parts of Gaul, going under as a folkdom, whereas the Frankish kingdom under Chlodwig became a peril for its neighbours. Under his sons we see this peril pierce right into the heart of Germany. The loss of their own Germanic nature in the Frankish Kingdom was bound up with the abiding threat it embodied for the freedom and independence of the other Germanic peoples, and the policy of the Frankish kings seems doomed to quell the Germanic nature in the other Germanic tribes, having quelled it beyond recall in their own.

In the face of this politics so perilous for their own people, the line of conduct followed in a broader sense by Chlodwig's forerunners appears in a more favourable light. While Chlodwig blew new life into the effete Romanic world by his conquests, and in so doing became the factual founder of the

later France, of a state which was destined in the lap of her history to take in a foremostly Romanic character and to forfeit little by little its Germanic features, his forbears enlarged lastingly the Germanic heartland by their gradual penetration into Roman territory which — as we have already seen — went along with the colonisation of the conquered land. It is thanks to them that Flanders, our Southern Dutch provinces and the German Rhineland on the left banks of the Rhine have gained a predominantly Germanic character and a folkhood wherein the Nordic race is forthstanding. The comparative racial purity of the Franks here settled in an exclusive unity is best shown by the fact that nowhere in these landstretches did the ungermanic politics of the Frankish state succeed in fully destroying the Germanic mould. Not only was the Germanic tongue fostered there, but also the very Germanic nature, despite the violence wrought upon them, was in its essence upheld. In the Dutch of the Southern Netherlands as well as in the German Rhinelanders lives on that spirit of a part of the Franks which was spared for all time a complete bastardisation. In the case of the Northern Dutch, the Germanic blood of those Franks was strengthened by that of other Teutonic tribes such as Saxons and Frisians.

If the praise — seen from a folkish Teutonic standpoint — unjustly bestowed on Chlodwig by our historians who lack all insight into the meaning of race, should go rather to Chlodwig's predecessors, so the quiet admiration — from the same standpoint — of these historians for the early Carolingians is nonetheless justified. In the following chapter we shall see how much this family has furthered the annihilation of the Germanic being.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CAROLINGIANS (ARNULFINGS) AND THEIR POLITICS

In a Franconia for ever weakening under bloodridden party-strife and moral sickness, the leadership passes over in the run of the seventh century out of the hands of the Merovingians into those of a new strain. This strain which is named the Carolingian after its most famous representative, but which ought rather to be called the Arnulfingian after its oldest known kinfather, takes the reins of government, on which Chlodwig's descendants were fast losing their grip, firmly into its hands again. It reshapes the political oneness of the Kingdom, which is earnestly threatened by the everlasting partitionings, and wellnigh forwrought by dint of recurring civil wars and party wrangles. If the Carolingians, seen from the standpoint of Frankish interests, earn the praise lavishly bestowed on them by the historians, it is our task to examine what significance this dynasty can claim for itself when given a deeming from the Germanic angle. Before we set out on our survey, one hint needs to be given the reader. In order to effect a deeper treatment of those questions which are, to our mind, of paramount importance, it seemed needful to deal with the purely political history and the history of the conversion separately. Above all, a short review of the nature and make of the Carolingians had to come first in order to make quite clear what is to follow. Lastly, as in the foregoing chapters, there could be no claim to completeness, because it is not so much the facts themselves as the interpretation of the facts which is the issue at stake.

By way of bringing the context clearly again before the mental eye of the reader, we would refer to the comparative summaries at the back of this book which should help him to find his way through the difficult ground dealt with in the foregoing and following chapters.

1. THE CAROLINGIAN DYNASTY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE FRANKISH KINGDOM

The levelling-down character of the Frankish state, as is well evinced in the dimming-out of folkly and racial barriers, is most clearly shown in the dwindling of the old Frankish hereditary nobility which became completely eclipsed in the time of the conquests with their concomitant christianisation. This waning cannot surprise us. And yet it is clear that a government which is prepared to pursue its imperialistic policy at the price of the loss of its own folk-character, cannot possibly find a backing among the noblest and best part of its people in which the folk-character crystallises as its truest expression. As we know only too well from our own age, such a government is automatically forced to cast out the best from its leading circles and to replace them by folk-alien elements, whilst, in order to ensure the longevity of its politics, it must have every interest in annihilating them, as far as possible, as a class.

No wonder then that among the so-called "*antrustiones*",⁴⁰ which formed the retinue of a Frankish king and which by a threefold wergeld were screened off sharply from the mass of the people, appeared in addition to freemen also serfs and vassals, and apart from the Teutons also Romans.⁴¹ Together with the big landowners, among whom were many Romans and with whom they were partly identified, since the members of the royal retinue naturally took first place when it came to the distribution of estate, these "*antrustiones*" made up the basic material out of which sprang under the later Merovingians a so-called "*dienstadel*" (serving nobility). While the landgraves, who were the foremost royal officials in the provinces, nearly always hailed from one of these categories, the overwhelming majority of the bishops arose more especially from the class of Roman landowners who, before the Frankish conquest, mainly dominated the economic and social life of Gaul, and who, even after the on tread of the Teutons, remained influential. Hence came forth a serving nobility of such impure stock as not to merit in any wise the term "nobility" (*adel*) in the Germanic sense. And as this arose at a time when — namely in the higher circles — no value was placed any more on pure breeding, when kings took preferably serving-maids to wife, when an untethered race-mixing took place, when race was of no account, and indeed useless as applied to the goal which was being striven after, so it can be assumed that this serving nobility sank further and further into mongrelhood in the course of its development. These facts are of the utmost weight in the examination of the Carolingian strain which issued from this nobility and initially furnished its leaders.

Although the lineage on the spear side was presumably of Teutonic origin, there are no grounds at all for thinking that it escaped the general bastardisation to which the nobility as a whole fell prey. The only valid argument for the confirmation of the Germanic nature of the Carolingians rests upon the assertion that Arnulf, bishop of Metz (d. 641) and the oldest known male forbear of the Carolingians, is referred to in the sources as a Frank ("*francus*") of noble birth.⁴² What was at the time of writing understood by "noble birth" should be clear from the above thesis. In the Frankish kingdom obtained rather the principle of *legal identity*,⁴³ i.e. everyone was classed according to the law under which he was born: the Alleman after the Allemanic, the Visigoth after the Visigothic, the Roman and Roman Catholic priests after the Roman, and thus the designation "*francus*" is valid as far as it goes. But on the other hand, this legal identity is no proof at all of the *Germanic origin* of Arnulf's kindred! In the two centuries which had flown since the moment of the Frankish thrust into Gaul (406), this strain can doubtlessly have taken in so much alien blood that its Germanic character may well have become lost. The site of the Carolingian domains in the landship between Metz and Verdun and in the Eifel, hence in regions where the alien race-elements overweighed or were at least in strong evidence, makes a far-reaching mongrelisation of their blood-line more than likely. For the confirmation of the Germanic character of Arnulfings can one just as little call upon the Germanic names of their ladies as upon their "noble" birth. Certainty as to the race of these women — and that is the crux of the matter — can be gleaned neither from the one nor the other.

At variance with the Germanic being is also the shameful deed⁴⁴ with which the Carolingians make their entry into History. As leaders of the rebel serving-nobility of Austrasia, Arnulf of Metz and Pepin the Elder — the oldest known kinfather of the Carolingians on the distaff side — secure the help of the wicked-hearted Lothar of Neustria, the son of Chilperic and Fredegunda, against the aged queen Brunhilda who was acting as regent for

her young great-grandson. In sight of the foe, they exhort the army of Brunhilda to mutiny, thus playing her over into the hands of her arch-enemy who puts her to death in an inhuman way. Undoubtedly this is a way of dealing of which a thoroughbred Teuton would never have been capable. Nor is there to be found in the further behaviour of the Carolingians any trace worth mentioning of the Germanic concepts – honour and faithfulness: in its stead is seen a cold calculatingness which is typical of all their deeds.

The influence of the environment cannot here be disregarded. It has been rightly said⁴⁵ that the Carolingians, in spite of their Germanic descent, could not remain what they had been after having ventured into the West. Gaul, with its mixed population and culture, had a strong effect upon them. In addition to this: when once they had forsaken the earth of their Germanic folkdom, they were unable any more to feel themselves tied to any surroundings. The further they pressed on westwards away from their Frankish home, the more their Germanic being became lost, and, as the contact with the subject population left more and more to be desired, their politics grew into a technique and a school of power-strife. "Their thoughts and deeds become, as they have to be framed in two tongues and overset from the one into the other, sharply ground, very self-aware, but also – as they move in an alien sphere which had to be acquired, used and ruled – too standoffish, too self-conscious, calculating and onesidedly ratiōn" (Zaunert). Here we see born that rational spirit which was to become the kenmark of the later France. Zaunert goes on to remark, very rightly, that the French people owe their intellectual élan, their virtuosity in the field of logic and their diplomatic routine and bravour largely to the romanised Frankish conquerors. From a Germanic point of view, there can be no objection to the French claiming the Carolingians as their own, and classing the Pepins, Carlomans and Karls as *their* national figures.

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The victory of Lothar II over queen Brunhilda, which enabled him to unite for a short time (613-628) the whole of the Frankish kingdom under his sceptre, was in sooth a victory of the serving-nobility who had come to power. This can be seen clearly in the resolutions which Lothar was forced to draft in Paris the following year. In these resolutions which formed really a kind of constitutional law, the king gave his word to nominate his landgraves only from the ranks of the landowners⁴⁶ who had settled in the occupied region, while with respect to the bishops it was laid down that they should henceforth be elected under canonical law by clergy and people, to which the king be pleased to lend his approval. While by the first provision the status of the landgraves became more independent and the hereditary rights of their office already foreshadowed, the latter provision for the bishops had thereafter the effect of bringing many bishoprics into the hereditary owning of certain families. It is now quite evident that the new aristocracy – profiting from the strife and civil wars which sprouted up again and again after each partition of the kingdom – had succeeded in gradually overriding the royal authority. The breakaway from the Frankish statehood came from those very Romanic elements which had at first consolidated the authority of the kingship. The opinion that it was Germanic elements par excellence which now enacted a re-organisation of the kingdom⁴⁷ is quite wrong.

This re-organisation did not take place without formidable blows. At the demand of Arnulf and Pepin the Elder, Lothar handed the government of Austrasia over to his son, Dagobert (622-638), who nominated Pepin as his

"majordomus", an office which originally entailed only the running of the royal household, but to whom in the further course of events, and thanks to the personal talents of Pepin and his descendants who pushed the decadent Merovingians, the "rois fainéants", almost completely into the background, fell the ruling of the kingdom. Dagobert, who despite his dissolute life must be recorded as the last deedstrong Merovingian, withstood their policy. After only a few years he banned Pepin from his court (629), Arnulf having previously withdrawn to a monastery. A heavy defeat at the hands of the Slavs forced him, it is true, to give more heed to the Austrasian serving-nobility, and once more a majordomus was nominated for Austrasia. The new majordomus, Ansegisel, seems to have been an insignificant man who was only just able to hold his own. As the son of Arnulf and husband to one of Pepin's daughters, he is thus the second kinfather of the Carolingian dynasty and, as such, deserves mention.

So the fight for power swings to and fro for years without any one of the parties being able to win a conclusive victory. The house-mayors of the three provinces Neustria, Austrasia and Aquitania appear now as representatives of the kingship, now as tools of the serving-nobility, until Pepin of Heristal, a son of Ansegisel, sets himself up, after the battle of Tertri (near St. Quentin 687) and with the help of armed might and murder, as majordomus over the whole kingdom. The restitution of imperial unity which he brought about was the first great achievement with which his family distinguished itself in the service of the Frankish kingdom.

The happenings of the years to follow show that, from the Germanic standpoint, there is no reason at all for venerating this Carolingian. It was first of all the free and still heathen Teutons who were to feel the renewed brunt of the Frankish weaponmight. In 689 Pepin defeated the Frisian king Radbod at Dorestad (= Duurstede) and compelled him to yield the whole of West Frisia from Sincfal⁴⁸ to Flie. In so doing, he struck a pulverising blow at a pure Teutonic nation which had but recently unfolded strength enough to surge out via Utrecht into Frankish land, and which otherwise might well have become the core of an earthtrue (*autochthonous*) and selfstanding Low German state.

Pepin made further onslaughts exclusively upon the Teutons, namely upon the Allemans, who in that time of confusion had yet contrived to keep their independence, but who now were again forced to acknowledge the Frankish overmight. The position of genuine kinghood which he had already attained is seen not only in the title "Duke and Prince of the Franks" which he had donned, but also in the method by which he chose his successors. Shortly before his death (714) he nominated his little grandson as his successor and bade his wife, Plectrudis, act as regent. In so doing, he passed over another grown-up son of his whom he had sired by another wife, Chalpaida, in a wedlock which was illegal under ecclesiastical law.⁴⁹ This son, Charles (later called Martel), was imprisoned by Plectrudis, for safety's sake, after her husband's death. This manner of handling the succession, which came about under her influence, gave rise to new internal party-strife and confusion which made the Frankish kingdom rock in its foundations.

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Whilst in Neustria and Burgundy, Raginfried had set himself up as house-mayor, Duke Eudo of Aquitania⁵⁰ had linked forces with him, the Saxons had thrust into the border regions and Radbod had taken his chance of re-conquering West Frisia, Charles Martel succeeded in escaping from prison,

and then gathered followers. Near Cologne he delivered his first battle against Radbod, who had sailed up the Rhine to unite there with the Neustrians, and suffered defeat. In the years to follow, he was able to vanquish his internal foes and bring them under his yoke. When Radbod died in 719, Martel forced his weak and less stoutly anti-Christian successor, Aldgisil II, to surrender West Frisia once more and to open up his kingdom again to Christian missioning. Likewise the Saxons were punished by a plundering campaign to the Weser for their attack on Frankish territory. Just in the nick of time did Martel manage to restore internal rest and order in the kingdom and to secure his Northern frontiers, for in the next year the Arabs struck out from Spain into Southern France.

Although he did not fully recognise the extent of the Islamic threat in the early stages, Charles, by his victory at Poitiers (732) is nonetheless the saviour of the Frankish kingdom, and thus of Western Christianity. Seen from a Frankish and Christian viewpoint, this was the second great achievement wrought by his kindred. For us, who behold this undoubtedly great figure from a Teutonic vantage, it would seem on the other hand that – in emulation of his father – Charles put to use his acquired military overweight in order to strike a new and heavy blow at the free-abiding Teutondom.

In two gruesome campaigns in which the land was laid waste “until completely annihilated”⁵¹ he brought that part of Frisia which was still free under his thong. The victory which he gained by the Boornzee in the neighbourhood of Leeuwarden (734), where duke Boppo (or Poppo) fell heroically in defence of freedom and of his folkdom’s ancient belief,⁵² enabled him to stretch out the borders of his kingdom as far as the Lauwers. The way in which the underyoking of the Frisians went hand-in-hand with the conversion will be dealt with later. It will be seen that this Carolingian, too, was alien and foe to the Germanic spirit. But, among the members of his sib, he is superficially the one figure which strikes one as being the most Teutonic.

Charles, whose nickname “Martel” (= the Hammer) stems from the merciless way in which he smashed many local tyrants who had risen out of the confusion prevalent in Gaul, held with a firm hand the bigger men of his kingdom in their place. Whilst the Carolingians had arisen as leaders of the Austrasian serving-nobility, it was in their own interests that they acted now as shielders of the royal right. Remarkable is also the independent bearing which Charles showed towards the Church. Heedless of the clerical indignation, he confiscated church properties, dividing them out in fief among his mounted knights as a reward for their extra expenses. He also bestowed abbeys and bishoprics upon the laity. By dint of these practices the Church later cursed his memory and wished him the torments of Hell, but this doesn’t alter the fact that they made good use of his services in their work of conversion during his lifetime.

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The universal character of the Frankish kingdom comes to light most clearly whenever the kingdom is shaken by a switch in government with its attendant quarrels, for then its national components rebel and bid to break away. For example, this is seen after the death of Charles Martel and even more distinctly after the death of Pepin of Heristal. Whenever his two sons, Carloman (741-747) and Pepin the Younger, later called “the Short” (741-768) aim to take over government, they fall into a wrangle with their illegitimate stepbrother Grifo, who, having inherited a small region in

Northern France from his father, was robbed by them in spite of his stout resistance. The Bavarians and Allemans in the East, as well as Aquitania in the South, leap at this chance to shake off the Frankish overmight.

Without a doubt, it was the Germanic blood of the first-named tribes, who were supported by the Saxons and Slavs, that made them averse to the thoroughly romanised Franks. The Allemans, who, thanks to their unsullied Nordic race, had upheld the Teutonic nature at its purest, withstood the clerical politics of that kingdom. The apostasy of nearly the whole of Romanic Aquitania springs from causes of a like kind. The national resistance mustered here under duke Waifar against the Frankish power must be regarded as being tied up with the overwhelmingly Romanic character of that region,⁵³ with its population made up almost entirely of Romans and Basques.⁵⁴ Hence, whereas the Romanic elements of culture, which struck the dominant note in the Frankish kingdom, were repellent to the mainly Germanic parts of the kingdom, it was on the other hand the Germanic elements of culture, possessed at all times by the universal kingdom, which formed the stone of contention for the southern part of the realm with its foremostly Romanic population. It is also quite clear that if this uprising, which embraced wellnigh all national minorities, had succeeded, the breakaway of all nationhoods would inevitably have taken place a century before History has willed it, while the subjugation of the Teutonic heartland would have been forestalled.

The soul of this rebellion, so fateful for the Frankish kingdom, seems to have been the Swabian duke Dietbald, who played the same role in South Germany as Widukind was to play later in the North.⁵⁵ Having become duke of the Allemans in 730, he led an insurrection in Swabian Alsatia, whereupon Carloman and Pepin, in the year to follow, drove into that land and laid it waste. As it can be assumed with certainty, it was Dietbald's plan to hinder at the eleventh hour the enforced conversion of his still wholly heathen folkdom to Roman Catholicism which was inevitably bound up with the knuckling under to Frankish authority, and to rescue at the same time the freedom and unity of his people. But it would seem to be the Pope who instigated the Bavarian uprising, although the wedding which the Bavarian duke Odilo had celebrated against the will of the Frankish rulers with their sister Hiltrud, who had fled to him, was the immediate cause for the open strife.⁵⁶ This temporary deviation from the pro-Frankish course which papal politics since Chlodwig had been pleased to follow may be taken to be the answer to the independent attitude which Charles Martel had struck up towards the Church. Had not Charles in the previous year (740) turned down peremptorily the offer which Gregory III had made to him, that of the Roman consulship (authority over Rome), in exchange for help against the Langobards? Whether or no, it is a fact that in the battle by the Lech (743), where the Bavarians together with allied Saxons, Allemans and Slavs were beaten by the Frankish dukes, a papal nuntius was also taken prisoner, being mocked by the Franks as a "traitor".

While Odilo made peace in the following year and contented himself with a dependent status until his death in 748, the Allemans continued the war and overran Alsatia whilst Carloman and Pepin were fighting the Saxons. In spite of five bloody campaigns which were waged against them in the following years, they could not be overthrown. Their greater stubbornness which distinguished them from the Bavarians can be explained by their unsullied blood⁵⁷ just as well as by their trust in the old religion. To the end of breaking their resistance once and for all, Carloman resorted lastly to a most frightful means. Grimly wroth on account of his continual setbacks (*cum magno furore*), he forgathered in the year 746 his entire warmight and

drove anew into Swabia. The sources leave unclear what followed. It seems that Carloman, under the pretext of peace-talks, lured the Allemann leaders to a meeting which took place at Cannstatt,⁵⁸ an old Swabian thingfield (assembly field). At all events, both warbands faced each other as under truce, the Allemans being most likely unarmed, when suddenly Carloman ordered a treacherous onslaught on his gainsake's army. In the dreadful bloodbath which ensued, many thousands (*multa milia*) of Allemans, among them their leaders, were wickedly murdered. Perhaps it was the rueing of his dastard deed which made Carloman give up the reins of government in the following year to enter a monastery. The shameful deed by which he had broken the back of a free folkdom could, in keeping with the Christian thought of that time, be expiated by self-abasement and penance. But to the Germanic mind, this deed was honourless for ever!

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After he had flung the Allemans into subjection, Carloman wreaked a gruesome punishment. It was of an abiding and inestimable significance that he set about robbing the nobility and many free yeomen of their landed property in order to deprive the leading families of the basis for their livelihood. Indeed, it was the wiping-out of the nobility which caused an untrammelled quietness to fold over many generations in Swabia, a quietness more like that of the grave. In a decisive phase of its being, the Frankish state had triumphed over its opposing forces. The overthrow of Swabia, a land which for long had been the bulwark of Teutonic resistance, opened the way for a further penetration of Frankish might into Germany, and was thus of great betokening. No less momentous were the consequences which loss of its national selfstanding had brought upon the land itself. While the consequences which the introduction of Christianity betided for Swabia shall be spoken of in the second part of this chapter, the far-reaching changes that followed the annexation⁵⁹ into the Frankish realm can be mentioned briefly in passing.

Firstly, the inception of the Frankish division into counties (749) betokened the end of the old folk-freedom. In place of the sundry forms of self-administration, to which the Swabians, as a Teutonic folk, were wonted of old, a strongly centralised system of rule, at whose head a count palatinate was placed and who was nominated by the Frankish king, could not compensate for the loss of their chieftain. The Law was no longer wielded in the name of the Folk but in the name of the King. Alien law set foot in the land, and its introduction meant that the folkland or common-land was declared to be royal estate. The gigantic crown-domain which had been formed out of the many confiscated landholdings was greatly widened thereby; large parts of the domain were later presented to churches and monasteries. For the earlier owners of these lands it was a slender comfort that they, or their offspring, were now to till as tenants that very earth which had erst been their property⁶⁰ — "odal" or "allodial". So began the serfdom of the landfolk in keeping with the Roman agrarian law which regarded land as a tradeable ware — or as moveable goods, the Germanic "feod". More and more land slipped out of the hands of the free yeomen into those of the Church and the feudal lords. Serfdom was nigh. This development was now hastened, because the ingress of the alien law changed the voluntary services of the farmers towards the nobility into a compulsory and onesided one. The manors take on soon the character of tyrants' strongholds. The ungermanic *latifundia*, or big landed properties, which, as an heritage of the dying Roman Empire, had become perpetuated in the extensive lands of the Church and in

the crown domains within Swabia, mark in a striking way the death of the Germanic yeoman's freedom.

A clear proof of the strength with which Aquitania, too, sought to realise its national independence lies in the fact that Pepin the Short was only able to overthrow this large region, against whose dukes his father had contended for years, after he, with the taking of Narbonne (759), had driven the Arabs out of the whole of Gaul. Even so, he had to undertake no less than eight campaigns (760-768) under great exertion, ere the resistance finally broke down. The incorporation of Aquitania is already described by contemporary historians (Paulus Diaconus and Einhard) as Pepin's most meritorious deed. It has been quite rightly pointed out by Dahn that the subduement of this half-autonomous region made possible the birth of the later France. There can be no more talk of serving any specific Teutonic interests than with the Carolingian politics in general. It is also typical of the ungermanic nature of this battle that Waifar, the last duke of Aquitania, after having been relentlessly pursued by Pepin, was finally murdered by his own followers, as it is said, at the behest and instigation of the latter-named. Neither here, it seems, could the Frankish state overcome national oppositions without bribery and murder. Moreover, the fact that the Bavarian duke Tassilo turned this war to his behoof by breaking the oath of allegiance which he swore under compulsion (754), and so winning back his independence, proves to the hilt that this universal state was only able to bridle its component nationhoods with the greatest difficulty and mainly by violence.

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The Church, which was reorganised during the reigns of Carloman and Pepin the Short, becomes more and more the means of binding together the centrifugal parts of the kingdom. Although this reorganisation came about at the behest and under the unceasing surveillance of the Frankish princes, it was nevertheless engineered under close co-operation with the Pope. We observe how the councils, under the presidency of Boniface as his ambassador, were held, first, in Austrasia and Neustria and then throughout the kingdom,⁶¹ and how here too one universal power joined hands with and supported the other. Yet the Frankish church remained a state church, and even if there can be no talk of a judicial acknowledgement of the papal authority, this does not prevent the moral weight of the Pope, to whose power of decision dogmatic arguments were referred, and to whom the Frankish bishops under Boniface already swore obedience, from becoming noticeably strengthened. That such a reorganisation — seen also from the Church's point of view — was no unneedful luxury can be confirmed by looking at the conditions which Boniface found in the Frankish church and which he describes with the following words in his first letter to Pope Zacharias:⁶²

"To a great extent, the bishoprics are being given into the hands of laymen, adulterous priests, publicans and sinners, who enjoy the benefices. There are deacons who have lived since their youth in debauchery and adultery. Some have had four or five concubines; quite a number of priests have carried on this way of life and yet become bishops. Other bishops are, it is true, not adulterers or whoremasters, but drunkards and gamblers; they fight in the armies and shed with their own hands the blood of men, Christian and heathen alike."

We read further that the priests were so harshly disciplined by their bishops that sexual intercourse with a woman was punished by imprisonment

and whipping, but that all these penal measures failed to wipe out the malpractices. But did not the deeper cause of this moral rot lie on the one hand in the forced acceptance of an alien morality, and, on the other hand, in the character of a bastard citizenry? The fact that Carloman or Pepin, so touchingly of one mind with Boniface, already sought to bring in celibacy, shows what ungermanic ideas inspired their deeds.

The reformation of the Frankish church — seen from the Frankish point of view — must be recorded as the third great achievement of the Carolingians. Seen from the same angle, Pepin was also right in bringing to an end the pseudo-kingship of the Merovingians and in having himself proclaimed king (751). All the same, it barely speaks for a Germanic self-assurance that Pepin had first to obtain the expressed blessing of the Pope before taking this step, while he embellished his raising to kingship by the Old Testament ceremony of the anointment which was carried out by Boniface. In all likelihood, he had promised the Pope beforehand to embark on an armed entry into Italy where the Langobard kings, by their repeated attempts to unite the whole land into one state, clashed irreconcilably with the papal claim to worldly might. This inroad, which took place a few years later (754) and which laid the groundwork for the Ecclesiastical State — an event destined to be of vast significance for the future — bears still greater witness to the narrow bond of interests which gradually grew up between the Frankish kingship and papism. No less succinctly does this pooling of interests find its expression in the downtreading and attendant conversion of the hitherto free and heathen Teutons. This we shall now consider.

2. THE CHRISTIAN MISSION AMONG THE WEST TEUTONS

It is clear that no strong missionary activity could spring forth from a Christianity so outward and lukewarm as that of the Franks in the first two centuries after Chlodwig's conversion. In the initial stages, the missionary work among the Germanic tribes to the West of the Rhine was done not by Frankish but by Irish gospels. Thus in order to gather a good understanding of the history of the conversion, it is needful to dwell briefly on the nature of Irish Christianity and on the features distinguishing it from Roman Catholicism.

Ireland was converted to Christianity shortly before England, by dint of the invasion of the Angles and Saxons (449), had given up a half-Christianity in favour of heathendom again. This was all the more remarkable, as the conversion had reached the "green isle" from England itself. The christianisation of Ireland was the work of a certain Patricius (St. Patrick), a romanised Briton. On account of its isolation, the church took on some special features in Ireland; it became a monastic church with the monasteries forming its centre and the abbots acting simultaneously as bishops, or being at any rate considered as their superiors.⁶³ From the very outset it bore a militant character. From Ireland came the conversion of Scotland, foremostly through Columba (the Elder), who founded the celebrated monastery of Iona (565), and ere long the missionaries appeared on the Continent, where they found an extensive field for their work in the Frankish kingdom. In emulation of Christ and his twelve disciples, they fared through the land usually with a dozen followers (monks!) and began their missioning work preferably between the 30th and 33rd year of their lives. The fact that these wayfaring gospels regarded themselves at the same time as bishops, while the abbots of the monasteries which they had founded on Frankish earth would not recognise the episcopal authority of the Frankish bishops, had to lead to a

conflict sooner or later against the church hierarchy. The resistance which they were presently to experience from the ranks of the worldly clergy stems mainly from the feeling of danger which the latter had in face of the ascetic striving of these Irish churchmen.

Quite incorrect is the idea that the Irish Church was wholly independent of Rome and, in its teaching, akin to the later Protestantism.⁶⁴ This view is not in keeping with facts of historical development. If the Irish Church did not expressly acknowledge the primacy of the Pope, this can only have been because it had arisen at a time when primacy had only slowly begun to take shape, and to which shaping it could hardly contribute, Ireland having been almost wholly cut off from Rome over a period of nearly two hundred years. This long time of isolation accounts for any comparatively insignificant differences, which tended to cleave apart the Roman and Irish churches in their teaching and customs; the different settling of the dates for Eastertide, the other form of the Mass, the variance in dress and tonsure of the clerics and the aforementioned forelove for travelling ministers and monasteries.

All this had little effect on the core of Irish Christianity, which like Rome, laid great weight on the Afterlife, and on preparing for the coming kingdom of God — supposed to be near at hand — by wallowing in grief, penance, withholdingness and good works. The only substantial difference between the two churches is that the Irish not only preached these things but also practised them. When we learn, however, that a complete negation of self was demanded in Irish monasteries, that the monks had no other obligation than that of blind obedience, that the smallest misdemeanours — such as speaking at table, forgetting to cross oneself before or after meals, the touching of the chalice at Communion with the teeth — were punished with bodily chastisement, and that even the owning of a private opinion was deemed a sin, it becomes clear to us how foe Irish Christendom was to the Germanic nature. Here the Good becomes Evil when it comes from one's own heart, since: only that which is commanded is of worth in the sight of God.⁶⁵ Thus it is fully incorrect to place Irish Christianity on a par with the later Albigensians, Waldensians, Beguines and Hussites as well as other sects.⁶⁶ It possessed no such thing as a "fargoing freedom of conscience", neither did it seek to spread its dogma exclusively by preaching — that is to say, without force.

Although Timerding seeks to give the impression that the conversion of the later German tribes had on the whole been brought about peaceably and mainly thanks to spiritual forces,⁶⁷ yet he has to admit that, throughout the whole of this first period, the Christian mission constantly found its point of setting-out and of support on Frankish earth, and concedes that the missionaries stood more or less under the aegis of the Frankish rulers and to some extent even acted under their orders. Whereas the Irish gossellers were utterly lacking in any political goal, they stood nevertheless to some degree in the service of a political idea, without having however the slightest awareness thereof. As the Frankish state, by dint of the weakness and incompetence of its kings and through the internal upheavals sprouting from the repeated divisions, was for the time being powerless to throw all forces needful for the fulfilling of this idea into the balance, the Christian envoys had to rely mainly on their own devices. Over and beyond this, they received no backing of any kind from a church hierarchy which — as from the very beginnings of the Roman church — strove after purely worldly as well as religious and after political as well as spiritual ends. Even if the monks give little tongue in their preaching to the use of force, it is not for lack of will but for lack of power. The absence of political side-goals among the preachers

accounts for the fact that their evangelism did not arouse the same measure of resistance as did the later conversion work of the Anglo-Saxons.

Columba (the Younger), the first Irish missionary to set foot in the Frankish kingdom (c. 583), devoted himself at first not to the missioning of heathens, but preached among the Christians against the immorality and worldliness which reigned everywhere, and called for penitence and self-negation. For ten years the monastery of Luxueil (*Luxovium*) founded by him in the southern Vosges was the centre of his activity. Only after he had clashed with the Frankish bishops, whose authority he would not acknowledge, and with the Austrasian royal house, whom he in his fanaticism had chidden too sharply, and had been imprisoned for a time (c. 612), did he betake himself to the still heathen Allemans. Together with his fellow-countryman Gallus, founder of the later so famous monastery of St. Gallen, he ministered for three years in the region of Lake Constance. The author of his biography tells how his wayfellow burned the heathen halidoms and cast their idols into the lake, whereupon in their anger these heathens drove the christianisers off their territory.⁶⁸ Although legends of saints are by no means a trustworthy well of historical information, it can hardly be assumed that this story is invented, because the writer of this lifetale would sooner have portrayed his saint in a favourable than in an unfavourable light. So we are furnished here with the first proof for the assertion that the Irish preachers were not chary of using violence.

From that which is known of the life of Pirmin, another Irish missionary, who preached in the time of Charles Martel in the land of the Allemans and founded many monasteries, can be seen how far Frankish politics used the Irish missionaries for their own ends. His first monastery, erected on the Lake Constance island of Reichenau in 724, was regarded right from the beginning as a spiritual outpost of the Frankish overlordship and was built at the instigation of Allemanic noblemen who sympathised with the Franks.⁶⁹ No wonder that, when three years later (727) war broke out between the Allemans and Charles Martel, Pirmin had to flee from his monastery. It is noteworthy, however, that Abbot Etto (Eddo or Heddo), who had been named his successor was driven out some years later (732) for the same reasons by the Allemanic duke and exiled to Uri. The head of the Reichenau abbey was seemingly looked upon as a partisan of the Frankish rulers, and thus it was by no means surprising that Etto could only return after Charles had driven out the Allemanic duke (732). Nominated by his worldly master as bishop of Strassburg (734), he founded in his bishopric, which embraced the present-day Baden, a great number of monasteries. Presumably he co-operated there with Pirmin who founded further monasteries in Alsatia.

All goes to show that the activity of these first Christian preachers was confined to the outer boundaries of the Allemanic region which was governed for the greater part by the Franks,⁷⁰ as against Swabia, the heartland, which had been able to foster its independence and which from time to time will have made attempts to win back the border region. Here the missionaries were not only able to look for support in the old bishoprics which were partly left over from Roman times (Chur, Strassburg and Mayence), or partly rebuilt (Basel, Constance and Augsburg), but also in the Romanic folk-remainder which had been left behind in these formerly Roman districts and which formed a considerable section of the population. Bearing in mind that stretches along the Rhine had come under Christian influence back in Roman times,⁷¹ it can be safely assumed that there were already many Christians among these Romanic people. It need surprise no-one that the christianisation of these landstretches followed without any great friction.

But it was quite another thing with the heartland of the Swabians which was to be found along the Neckar. As Swabians had settled again in this region – also formerly Germanic – towards the end of the 3rd Century, having been only for a short time in titheland (“*agri decumates*”) in the Roman Empire, it can be taken that they comprised an overwhelming moreness of the population, which was certainly not the case in the regions later conquered by them. The numerous reminders of heathen times which still today live on in songs, sagas, symbols and customs, show that the Teutonic heathendom had struck very deep roots, which can only have been possible in the lapse of many hundreds of years.⁷²

Thus it is of no wonder to us that, although the Swabian dukes and with them maybe a part of the nobility were already Christian round about the year 700,⁷³ the majority of the folkdom held fast to the olden belief. Moreover the Christianity, which had here made its entry, was so mingled with pagan elements that it must have seemed the “work of the devil” to the zealots among the Frankish bishops. Not only could one be baptised without having to forswear the old gods, and was Christ accepted as one of them, but the office of priest, both for heathen and Christian duties, could be invested in one and the same man. Of this mixed-up and – as is to be presumed – scarcely conceived Christianity Pope Gregory II wrote: “There are to the East of the Rhine who, under the cloak of the Christian religion, foster idolatry”. Seen from a folkish standpoint, it is however of the greatest weight that this germanised Christianity was so tolerant as to break neither the link with the heathen ancestors nor the link with those kinsmen holding fast to the belief of their forefathers, thus constituting no danger whatsoever to the unity of the folkdom.

It is clear that the Frankish potentates and their Roman helpers could find no satisfaction in these conditions. So we hear of a Frankish bishop who in the year 712 marched with a warband against the Swabian duke Willihar, and wroke in Swabia a frightful bloodbath. The many campaigns, which Charles subsequently led against Swabia, show that this first attempt at conversion had not begotten the wished-for result.

To the end of underyoking this land once and for all, Charles sought to instal the Roman hierarchy and to bestow on the Church such a position of power as to form a counterweight against the dukes who were striving to win back their autonomy. With this in mind, a new law was proclaimed (c. 720), the “*lex Alamannorum*” which was not, as is asserted by Protestant churchmen,⁷⁴ drawn up at a folkmoot of free Swabians but at a Frankish diet, and was imposed upon the land by force. It is worth while to dwell briefly upon this law, of which the first part, forming almost a third of the whole, is quite new and contains detailed provisions for the ecclesiastical system and for the rights of its upholders.

Firstly, it shows how the Church strove after economic might through the procuring of landed property. To this intent, it was laid down in the first article, that it was forbidden for anyone, even a duke, to hinder in any wise the endowment of land to the Church, while severe punishment was threatened for anyone who sought to make such endowments invalid. Through the leasing of land, the Church was now in the position to draft those men liable to military service, who were their tenants, into a military force, which they so badly needed against the duke. Besides this, the Church and its servants came under a special protection, so that any misdemeanours against it were threatened with severe punishment. In this way the bishops were placed on an equal footing with the dukes; both enjoyed a threefold wergeld, the seal of both carried an even weight, and the failure to obey a

bishop's order was just as heavily penalised as the failure to obey a duke's order. Bearing in mind as well that the bishops exercised their law rights "in all ecclesiastical matters" — a concept capable of a great breadth of interpretation — being therein independent of the duke and answerable only to the King, then it becomes evident how very much they were destined to walk as the real bearers of Frankish ecclesiastical authority on Germanic earth.

Furthermore, the Church gained the right of giving asylum to any pursued persons, e.g. for escaped thralls and maids. Apart from the violation of this new law, the breaking of the sanctity of Sunday stood too under threat of heavy punishment. For this default, slaves were treated with the cane, a freeman had to be warned three times and if he transgressed for a fourth time, he was punished by the confiscation of a third of his estate; if after that he still failed to pay enough respect to the sanctity of Sunday, he became a slave. It is true that no open attack was made yet against the heathens, whose existence was acknowledged, but they were lowered to second-class citizens. While, according to Germanic law, an accused could, with the help of sworn witnesses who swore his innocence and stood as guarantee for him, clear himself of suspicion by an oath on the naked sword, the new law demanded that an oath be taken in the Church and recognised only the baptised as sworn-in witnesses. Hence it is rightly remarked⁷⁵ that in no other Germanic folk-law were offences against the Church so harshly prosecuted. The Allemanic law was in this respect only exceeded by the lawgiving against the heathen Saxons at a later date.

No wonder then that this new law was to have an inverted effect upon a freedomloving folkdom whose strength was as yet unbroken. Three years later (723) Duke Landfried hoisted anew the flag of rebellion and unfolded such a might and main thereby that the campaigns which Charles Martel unleashed against him mishapped again and again. Not until 730 did the Frankish house-mayor defeat him, seemingly after overrunning Swabia. Against his two clerically-minded sons Swabia again uprose — as was already described — and not until the massacre of Cannstatt (746) did the underyoking and conversion finally overtake the unhappy land. Overwhelming proof of this are the oldest church records for this area which date from as late as the second half of the 8th Century.⁷⁶ Whoever, under the shock which this gruesome bloodbath aroused, was still not willing to enclasp the new doctrine, was forced to do so by a series of royal decrees which threatened the harshest penalties for those who would not be baptised or who clung to the old heathen wonts. The speedy introduction of the Roman Catholic Christianity was thus vouchsafed; but for folklife, this compulsive christening had those same deepreaching consequences which we have already noted respecting the conversion of the Franks themselves.

These consequences made themselves felt in two fields, namely in that of justice and secondly in that of the social structure and, bound up therewith, the racial makeup of the Swabian people. As far as the first is concerned, it should be noticed that, as the Church only acknowledged the Roman law for itself and its servitors and judged its subjects itself according to the rules of this alien law, in Swabia there were two systems of law, as in other christianised Germanic lands, next to and opposite one another. In conjunction with the sharp and deep differences between both bodies of law, this could do no other than disrupt the Germanic feeling for Right sooner or later. The introduction of church tithes was no less antithetical to this feeling for Right.

It was even worse that the barriers between the classes, which were to a great extent based on racial differences, now, by dint of the stress which the

Church laid on its dogma of equality, became blurred to an alarming degree. The zeal which the Church lavished in the service of serfs and thralls, the many liberations which it brought about, and the climb up the social ladder which it made possible for members of the lower classes had the result, that the less pure blood of these classes could mingle with the pure Germanic blood of the higher classes. In many a wise, the social order was turned up head-to-tail, this being the first step on the road to the mongrelisation of the breed upon whose purity the Swabian folkdom had hitherto depended. Thus it is no accident that at this period the first broad skulls begin to appear in Swabian family-graves.⁷⁷ The unspeakable spiritual confusion, which the intrust of the alien creed here once again occasioned, is the main cause for the dwindling-out of the Swabian nobility, whose members sought the shelter of monastery walls in such numbers that whole strains died out.

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In contrast to the sudden and exclusively violent conversion of Swabia, the christianising of Bavaria took place more gradually; in tempo and method it can be likened to the conversion in the Allemanic border regions. The ducal family of the Agilolfings, of Roman creed and most likely of Frankish blood, formed here the driving force. So in the conversion of the Bavarians, we see how the gossellers employ the same tactics as they had done already in the conversion of Chlodwig and his Franks. Suiting their tactics to the firm social limbwork of these peoples, the christianisers adopted a policy with the Teutons which was the exact opposite of that which they had wielded in spreading Christianity in the Roman Empire. Instead of appealing to the poor and downtrodden, they addressed their homilies first and foremost to the rich and mighty. Once the dukes and earls were won over to the new belief, the latter then passed it on to the people "who were bound to follow the example and bidding of their leader" (Timerding).⁷⁸

Although it may be assumed that in Bavaria, too, such a command will have been given, to be followed thus by an enforced conversion, there is too little known about the christianisation of this land as to make a direct proof for the violent conversion possible. However, it is significant that bishop Rudbert (or Rupert) of Worms, who came to Bavaria in 697 and settled in a monastery there which he had built near the ruins of the old *Juvavum* (= Salzburg) found himself again amidst a Romanic Christian folk-remainder who had lingered on in this former borderland of the Roman Empire.⁷⁹ It seems that these "Walchen" (= strangers, cf. our Welsh *asf.*), as they were called by the Bavarians,⁸⁰ were here too the springboard from which Christian missionwork set forth. The "Frank", Emmeram (d. 715), who was preaching at the same time in the old Roman fortress of Ratisbon (*Regina Castra*), was, like Rudbert, an itinerant missionary in the Irish style, but despite his Frankish name a Romanic, born in Poitiers. Also Corbinian, who had chosen Freising as his field of activity, was, as his name suggests, a Romanic, hailing from Central Gaul (Melum). If the preaching of these Romanic priests met with no resistance among the Romanic population, among whom they liked most of all to sojourn, this was surely quite natural.

In the region of the Main, which — as was shown in the last chapter — was wrested from the Thuringians by Chlodwig, preached the Irishman Kilian (Killen) and died a martyr under unknown circumstances at Würzburg (d. 689). Christianity thrust out also into Thuringia proper, but here too, the circumstances under which the conversion took place, are obscure. The crippling blow which the Franks inflicted on this folkdom should not here

remain unmentioned. A defeat such as that at Seithingi (= Burgscheidungen) on the Unstrut, where, as saga later told, so many Thuringians fell that the Franks were able to cross the river over the corpses as over a bridge, must have had a great after-effect on the Thuringian morale. Inasfar as the spiritual slump which followed this catastrophe had not already brought the Thuringians to accept the new teaching, coercion on the part of Christian dukes, who had been forced upon them, will have dealt the finishing blow. Just as in Bavaria, so here their Christianity was at first superficial and mingled with many heathen habits and notions.

Amandus too, who preached for years among the pagan folkhood in the region of Ghent, could make little headway without the wielding of force. To this end the "apostle of the Frisians" sought counsel and called upon king Dagobert who gave him, on his demand, a free hand in wreaking a violent conversion.⁸¹ The rigidity of this preacher's conception — he was born of Romanic parents in Aquitania — can be seen in the resistance which he met with from his underlings after he had become bishop of Maastricht in 647; a resistance so strong as to compel him to give up his office again after three years. It is reported in the biography of Landibert, one of his successors in that office (669-705 ?) that, in a missionary trek to Toxandria, a landstretch on the Southern border of present-day North Brabant, he laid waste many temples and idols, which points also to the use of violence. Here we should not forget Eligius, the last gosseller who can be reckoned as belonging to the first period of evangelism. He ministered in the neighbourhood of Noyon, where he was bishop for a time (c. 640), among the heathen Saxons and Swabians there abiding.⁸² How far the Irish influence stretched during his time can be plainly seen in the resolutions shaped at the Synod of Châlon (650) which gave express approval to sundry principles of the Irish mission; penance as the pre-condition for the salvation of the soul, the confession as laid down by Columba, the oath of chastity for priests asf.. The Irish dogma had thereby reached its highest peak of influence; but it had to make way for another in the further course of development. How far it was successful in awakening in the Frankish kingdom a religious life worthy of the name must remain here an open question.

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While the mission among the heathen Teutons was carried on in the first phase by Irish monks and their so-called "Frankish", but in sooth mainly Romanic successors, it lay in the second phase, that is now to be dealt with, as good as completely in the hands of the Anglo-Saxons. In so doing, it passed out of the hands of race-aliens into those of race-kindred. It is highly significant that the resistance offered during the second period is not weaker, but became even stronger than that offered in the first. The causes of this at first sight inexplicable phenomenon become clear if we study the points of difference between the Irish and the Anglo-Saxon mission.

A first difference is that, whereas the Irish gossellers had at first sought to awaken religious life in the Frankish kingdom itself through the preaching of penitence and self-chastisement, and only later went over to including the missionising of heathens among their activities, the Anglo-Saxons on the other hand directed their mission right from the start towards the heathens. It is still more tokenful that, in contrast to the Irish monks who preferred to address the people and who, only when their preaching had not the wished-for result, called in the prince, the Anglo-Saxon christianisers always turned first to the rulers, trying to bring them to force their subjects into the

Christian belief. However, the foremost difference was that the latter — in contrast to the former — always turned up as envoys and representatives of the Pope, whose authority they ever sought to consolidate or to extend. Timerding remarks rightly that, for the Pope, the church organisation stood to the fore and goes on:⁸³

“His position as head of the Church and the organisation of the newly converted land into bishoprics were for him the overriding issues. Admittedly, the striven-after goal could only be reached if the hearts of the people were won for the new belief. With farseeing wisdom the Pope himself ordered, instead of a violent strategy, mildhearted persuasion and, instead of a strict commanding to believe, the gradual stepover to Christendom”.

As we have no grounds for doubting the words of this Roman Catholic writer, we can take it that the papal power-politics took first place in the conversion of the Teutons, whilst the winning of hearts came second. From the last sentence of this quotation, which relates also to the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons themselves, can be seen moreover that, whenever papal politics from time to time gave preference to persuasion over force, it was never a matter of principle but of expediency. Considerations of expediency explain also why the Anglo-Saxon missionaries always worked in closely with the bearers of Frankish state authority. In this narrow co-operation, which made the “conversion” by force run abreast the political underworking of the once free Teutons, can be seen the close bond of interests which, as we have already seen, always linked the Frankish kingship with Popedom in the later Carolingian Age. This narrow binding of worldly to spiritual authority, of religious “conversion” to state subjugation can be held to be the cause for the stubborn and longlived resistance which the Teutons put up against the preaching of their Anglo-Saxon kinsmen. If we further ask how it came about that thoroughbred Teutons came forth as the forefighters and representatives of a power which, inspired by alien thought, aimed at the complete spiritual thralldom of Teutonkind, then we can only find the answer to this question in the history of the Anglo-Saxons and how they themselves were first converted.

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Out of dislike for the native British population, whom they partly wiped out and partly flung back into the West of the island, the Anglo-Saxons, after their settling in England (449), struck up a foemanly attitude also towards the Christianity which had been spread by that people. For the same reason, they remained immune to the Irish evangelism. Their conversion did not take place until the year 596, when a number of Benedictine monks, who had been sent out by Gregory the Great, appeared in England. The national antagonism of the Anglo-Saxons towards Irish and Britons, which was at the same time a racially rooted one,⁸⁴ had here a similar outcome to that which we have already observed with the Teutons who had driven into the South of Europe. Just as the Goths, Langobards and Vandals sought to secure their further life as separate folkdoms by holding fast to Arianism amid the engirding Romanism, so it was in this case the Teuton invaders who took on the Roman creed, whereas the native indwellers clung to a deviating form of Christianity which bestowed them a greater ecclesiastical autonomy than the conquerors, who yielded to Rome, could possess. It was the same cause in both cases, but this cause had diverging and even diametrically opposed consequences.

Undoubtedly, it was of great importance that the Roman Catholic

confession in England did not hold complete sway right from the beginning, but only gained power during the period of the conversion which didn't end until about the year 690. Thus the struggle against the Irish denomination which was then thrusting into the North of England, and which for a time held sway, coincided with the conversion. Owing to this, the Anglo-Saxon catholics were bound automatically to lay stress on the supremacy of the Pope over and against the "Welsh" (= foreigners). The relative insignificance of the differences between the two confessions which — apart from the primacy of the Pope — consisted rather in outward variance than in variance of belief is seen in the fact that Wilfried, the first Anglo-Saxon missionary among the Frisians who, as bishop of York, succeeded in settling the dispute over the Easter festival to the behoof of catholicism at the Council of Whitby, himself hailed from the Lindisfarne abbey which had been built by the Irish in Northumberland. This was by no means an isolated case, for it is reported that two other missionaries, Wigbert and Willibrord, stayed for some years in Ireland in order to complete their training; surely proof enough that there existed no deep cleft in the field of religion.

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Wilfried, the first Anglo-Saxon Christian preacher who went over to the Continent (in 678 ?), is said, according to the narration in Bede's church history,⁸⁵ to have been received in friendly wise by the Frisian king, *Aldgisil*. *Aldgisil* is also said to have refused to deliver him over to the Neustrian house-mayor Ebroin who nursed a grievance against the gospeller and demanded his extradition. While it is not clear what fruit his preaching bore, and in any case his was only a short stay, *Wigbert* is reported on the other hand as having reaped a poor harvest, after having gone to Frisia a few years later to preach, and therefore he returned to his homeland.⁸⁶

All this happened in the reign of the Frisian king *Radbod* (679-719), one of the few defenders of heathendom at that time whose name history has bequeathed us. The little that we know about this monarch is nonetheless enough to convince us that he was a strong personality who pursued a purposeful and yet tactful policy, a man of great strength of soul, whose resistance could not lightly be broken, even by the almighty kingdom of the Franks. Without a doubt, *Radbod* had grounds enough for mistrusting the Anglo-Saxon missionaries; the fact that he nevertheless received them and allowed them to preach, shows conclusively that he cannot be regarded as a "barbarian". If *Willibrord* too — according to Bede's narration — had had no success with his preaching during his first appearance in Frisia when he is said to have stayed in Utrecht, this was surely no fault of *Radbod*'s. It can be more readily assumed that an inner aversion on the part of the Frisians themselves was the cause of the failure. This assumption is supported by the fact that this first missionary trip had taken place in the year 690, in other words after the battle of Dorestad which — as we have already learnt — put an end to *Radbod*'s rule over Utrecht.

It was typical of the Anglo-Saxon mission that *Willibrord*, after this saddening experience, betook himself to Pepin of Heristal, who directed him to the land on the lower Schelde which had already been missioned by *Eligius* and *Amandus*. Just like his forerunners in that region, he made Antwerp, where properties and incomes were given to him by the state, the starting-point of his activities. A few years later he was sent to Rome by Pepin, where Pope *Sergius* consecrated him archbishop and gave him the name of *Clement* (695). Having returned, he first betook himself again to his taskmaster,

Pepin, and went from there to the monastery of Echternach, which had been founded by Irmina, a daughter of Dagobert II. In this monastery, whose abbot he was, he seems to have continually resided during the years to follow, which in no way surprises us, for this monastery had become through the many endowments one of the richest in the whole region, so that Willibrord now appeared as landlord over extensive estates. At all events, it was not until later that he again visited that part of Frisia which was hitherto free from the Frankish overlordship and met with just as little success as upon his first visit. What happened during this second stay is most typical of the conditions which then prevailed.

According to Timerding, the defeat of Radbod is supposed to have made way for a more friendly development in the relationship between Franks and Frisians. As an example of this is offered the marriage between Pepin's son, Grimoald, and Radbod's daughter, Theudesinde. However, the same Grimoald, as he was travelling to the bed of his critically ill father, was murdered by the heathen Frisian Rantgar at Liege in the Eastermonth of 714, which doubtlessly points to a less friendly relationship. It was also nothing unusual for a defeated ruler, under the stress of circumstances, to give his daughter in wedlock to a former enemy. There are examples enough of this in later times without having to speak straightaway of a coming-about of better and friendlier relations. If Radbod gave the archbishop Willibrord an honourable welcome, as became the visitor's rank, then it was rather by dint of his keen awareness of the weak position which he held in face of the importuning Frankish might than of a truly felt friendliness. Also the fact, told with emphasis, that Willibrord was unable to pierce the "stony heart" of the king with the "warm breath of life", shows that the friendly reception which Radbod afforded to his caller was one of calculation.

While Radbod's bearing bespeaks a great measure of self-discipline — a sure sign that he was no barbarian! — the further behaviour of Willibrord betrays a certain lack of equilibrium. After the misfiring of his plans he decides upon a seatrip to Denmark, with the aim of encircling, so to speak, the territory of the Frisians and Saxons. However, at the hands of the Danish king Ongentio, he meets with an even stronger opposition. During his return journey he exceeded all bounds in savaging the tribal halidom on Fositesland,⁸⁸ an island lying off the Frisian coast. This exploit cost the life of one of his followers and nearly cost him his own. No wonder that Willibrord, after these experiences, limited his preaching to those parts of Frisia which were already completely under the Frankish heel, and where he could count on the backing of authority. It seems that there his fellow-landsman *Boniface* (Wilfried) was one of his colleagues. According to the information which Liudger inserted in his biography of the abbot Gregory of Utrecht⁸⁹ regarding the first appearance of Boniface, his clerical career will have begun at *Wyrda* (= Woerden), where he was active for seven years, followed up by three years of ministry at *Attingehem* (= Adrichem in S. Holland) and three years at *Felisa* (= Velzen in N. Holland). Conflicting with the account which Willibald gives in his life-writing of Boniface, it must be assumed in keeping with this report, which is most likely true, that Boniface's missionary work on the continent began already in 705 and not — as Willibald would have it — as late as 716. Boniface was to experience too the tremendous repercussions which set in at the death of Pepin of Heristal (714).

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As we saw above, Radbod made best use of the wrangling and contention

which then broke out in the Frankish kingdom, striking over into Western Frisia and bringing to nought the work of conversion which had only shortly before been embarked upon. The wise, in which he made bold to exploit the temporary weakness of his gainsake, shows his statesmanly talent. He not only got help from the Saxons, who had been equally menaced by the obtruding Frankish might, but he worked in too with the internal foe of the Franks in the person of Raginfried. The rout which he inflicted on Charles Martel at Cologne (716) is a proof of his military strength; the fleet, which he fitted out, shows that his folk were still skilled in shipbuilding and seafaring. It is also noteworthy that we do hear of the driving-off but not of the murdering of the missionaries who had been thrust on to the Frisians, although a kind of pogrom, after all which had befallen, would have been very understandable. Charles Martel does not seem to have succeeded in bringing Radbod anew under his heel. It was only when the heroic and unbending Frisian died in 719 of a severe illness that he was able to force Radbod's weaker and less Christian-averse successor, *Aldgisil II* into the renewed secession of West Frisia, wherewith the conversion was taken up again with violence.

In what manner the christianisation of Frisia was effected, is spotlighted by a letter of Boniface to the Pope, wherein he writes: "that he was unable to get anywhere in the struggle against the heathen gods without the help of Frankish weapons".⁹⁰ Willibrord, too, warred against the heathen gods, when he tried, in his all too great believer's zeal, to smite asunder an idol on the island of *Walacrum* (= Walcheren), only to be nearly killed by the wrathful keeper of the halidom. Taking stock of these facts, it is nothing short of bewildering when, in historical works about our fatherland,⁹¹ the impression is given that the conversion of the Frisians went off peaceably as against the conversion of the later Saxons. About this "conversion" Dahn writes:⁹²

"The whole of the Frisian folkdom was incessantly imperilled in its olden godbelief as well as in its proud and deep-inwardly loved freedom by the Christian priests and Frankish earls, who struck forth from re-Frankised West Frisia. Everywhere the Franks compelled the still remaining heathen districts of their neighbours to admit the converters, who did not stop at the peaceful overwinning of souls, but with their own hands, or by the newly converted, smote to bits the halidoms of the heathens, felled their hallowed oaktrees, and upset or hindered their sacrificial feasts. Goaded by the desecration of all that they held holy, fearing the wrath of the offended gods, and resisting the Frankish yoke and the new enforced belief, they did often avenge such misdeeds by bloody acts of violence against priests, Frankish officials and warfolk, and even more against their renegade fellow-burghers and against the neighbouring Frankish marches. But it speaks for itself that the heathens, in their unmatched battle against a stronger Frankish kingdom, so incomparably more powerful in weaponing, technique and in state religion, could do no other than lose the struggle.

The annals, written exclusively by Christians and mostly by Franks, report then of "uprisings" and "onslaughts" of the heathens which, of course, were repulsed and punished by the Frankish kingdom. The same reports are silent, however, about the goadings which preceded these pagan outbreaks. But this is not quite right! They tell with great self-satisfaction about the reaving of the heathen halidoms by the brave converters, and woefully wail that the heathens do not take all that lying down. That for others too, the savaging and laying waste of halidoms is painful, does not enter into the heads of these Christians. We can be sure also that lust for plunder induced the neighbours of the wealthy Frankish kingdom to carry

out these raids. And just as surely will these folk, oppressed by the Frankish state and church, have sought to shake off again the twofold yoke: and then one hears how "the extremely harsh people rise up in wrath". But to assume a threatening of the Frankish kingdom by Saxons and Frisians — likened to the way, for instance, in which the Roman Empire was threatened by the Teutons in the 5th and 6th Centuries — to brandmark the heathens on principle as "invaders", and to present the virtuous Franks as acting in self-defence, so that the suppression and the baptism by force of the tribes must seem right and morally justified — all this calls for much sharp thinking, pious fervour, a most wilful juggling with facts, or the keeping secret of sources".

The methods employed make it readily understandable that the conversion of the Frisians now fell into a steady groove. After duke *Boppo* had fallen in the battle on the Boornzee (734), the Christian preachers were able, under the Frankish shield, to press on even as far as the Lauwers. Their operations were led by Willibrord, who at that time had built his seat at Utrecht, which town, together with the nearby Vechten, had been presented to him in 723 by Charles Martel, and where he built both a church and a monastery. The many endowments which he further received, afford a clue to the understanding of his personality; they show that, when it came to his own person, he did not take the Bible-word too seriously that it is better to give than to receive. Apart from the numerous gifts of land to his abbey at Echternach, he received from the Thuringian duke Hetan land around Arnstadt, Mühlberg and München (Weimar), from Pepin and Plectrudis the abbey of Susteren (714); and from Charles Martel Elst, Adrichem, Egmont, Velzen and Heiloo. Besides landed properties, he acquired also many relics as gifts, of which wonder-trinkets he had — according to Timerding — great need. In this way, he obtained from England the bones of Saint Oswald, while from France he fetched, for a rebuilt chapel in Utrecht, the remains of Saint Martin. Laden with gifts from all quarters, Willibrord, who gave up the ghost at his abbey at Echternach in 739, has little to warrant him being called a "follower of Christ", but shows rather the likeness of an ecclesiastical prince, spoiled by his worldly masters and bemused with the incense of his underlings.

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Boniface (Winfried), the other great figure in the ecclesiastical world of those days, is, for all his title as "apostle of the Germans", to be regarded more as a reformer and organiser of the Church than as harbinger of belief among the heathens. Born in Wessex of distinguished parents (round about 672), he hailed from another part of England than the Northumbrian Willibrord. During his first Roman journey (719), the Pope gave him the name Boniface and entrusted to him the mission among the heathens as well as the reform of the Christian Church on the Roman Catholic model of Thuringia. Having entered that land, he found he could achieve little without the strong backing of worldly power. The gift of persuasion was not enough to uproot the vestiges of heathendom still alive and the Irish Christian concepts and wonts which had come to dwell there. Unable to fulfil his mission, Boniface then betook himself to Willibrord, and was his guest for three years in Utrecht. After that, he went to Hesse, where he seemingly struck on good ground for his preaching; among other things, he founded there his first monastery at Amöneburg. For the second time in Rome (722), he was appointed bishop of Thuringia by the Pope. The Pope bound him to a

special oath, whereby he promised to oppose any bishops who might deviate in any way from the orders laid down by Rome. Furnished with a papal edict, which threatened anyone who hindered or withstood these orders with everlasting damnation, he returned to Germany.⁹³

It is significant that Boniface, before taking up his work of reformation, first called upon the house-mayor Charles Martel. Timerding, who goes to great lengths to gloss over as far as possible the violent trend of Boniface's behaviour, lets the cat out of the bag, however, when he states that, without a warrant from his worldly overlord, Boniface could achieve next to nothing in Thuringia. It was in keeping with the not very churchlike attitude of Charles Martel that he gave Boniface, in place of a proper warrant, only a writ which afforded the bishop protection. No wonder then that, under these circumstances the upshot of Boniface's activities was for the time being not so favourable, and all the more so since also the high Frankish clergy opposed him, at their head the bishop Gerold of Mayence.

In other words, it seemed impossible to "reform" the priesthood in Thuringia, i.e. to force them into celibacy, into adherence to the customs in vogue within the Roman Catholic Church, and into acknowledging the Pope's supremacy. In a letter to his earlier superior, bishop Daniel of Winchester, Boniface admits that he had struck upon a compact church fellowship, which spurned papal influence and went along in its own sweet way. Without the protection (read: armed help) of the Frankish thane he could do nothing; without him he was unable to lead the communities, nor could he protect the orthodox clerics; in fact, he could not even hinder the heathen wonts and idol-worship without his command and support. In his answer, bishop Daniel advised him to accept his lot *with a feigned cheerfulness*, since both clean and unclean animals lived side-by-side in the ark. These remarks about the attitude of the Thuringians are indeed most noteworthy. They show that this Germanic folkdom, too, which had lingered on in its broodland of yore, felt the need to hold itself free from mingling and degeneration by the shaping of a deviating form of Christianity and the wielding of a peculiar church organisation of its own.

It remained for Boniface to nip this striving in the bud. At first this was barely possible as it took him all his wits to hold himself above water. In the environs of Erfurt and Gotha, where he most preferred to stay, it would seem that he gained the most following. But he soon went back again to Hesse where he founded a monastery near Fritzlar, going on to fell near the neighbouring village of Geismar the oaktree which was hallowed to Thor. After Fritzlar, he founded the abbeys of Hersfeld and Fulda, so famous later, of which the latter became his favourite residence. He also built various nunneries. Raised to archbishop by the Pope (732), he was furthermore nominated papal ambassador in German lands and in the whole Frankish kingdom during his third stay in Rome (738), while he at the same time received the instruction to reorganise the church in Bavaria. This task, which entailed the wiping-out of still remaining pagan customs and influences of the Irish gossellers, was, with the mighty backing of duke Odilo, who — as we have already seen — was closely allied to the Pope over those years, fulfilled by Boniface in the shortest possible time. Already towards the end of the following year, the "reorganisation" had been completed. Therewith, Bavaria had come under the tight grip of the church hierarchy and was fully cast over to papal supremacy.

As Timerding, too, clearly admits, it was the death of Charles Martel which gave Boniface the chance to tread more resolutely in Thuringia. The churchmindedness of both of Martel's successors afforded him the support

he had hitherto lacked and without which he could not fulfil the papal intentions. As was the practice in other parts of the kingdom, Carloman and Pepin now prescribed for prelates in Thuringia the unwedded state, and even ordered that the marriages already extant were to be dissolved by the priests. Whilst, by the setting-up of three new bishoprics: Würzburg, Büraburg (near to Fritzlar) and Erfurt, the church hierarchy was spread out over Thuringia, various priests, who had opposed Boniface, were now sent into exile. A "Germanic" synod, held shortly after (742), decided on the banishment of all "false" priests, that is to say, of those not consecrated under canonical law, as well as the abolishment of all Irish rites and peculiarities — such as certain modes of priestly vestments — and lastly the replacement of the Columban monastic rules by those of Benedict. The synod also demanded of the priests obedience to their bishops and forbade the bearing of weapons and — under threat of severe punishment — affairs with women. Finally they announced a series of bans on the many heathen usages still in vogue.

With this synod, which totally quelled spiritual freedom in the middle and South of Germany, and which choked, along with the remnants of heathenhood, also the first signs of a self-standing churchly organisation in these Germanic lands, the Roman Empire had risen again, as it were, out of its ashes. By the ruthless subjugation of Thuringia and of its onlying regions, the church hierarchy and the primacy of the Pope had pushed out their confines right into the heart of Germany. The way was now open for Charles the Frank to bring the last remaining part of the Germanic heartland — Saxony — which, by the enforced conversion of Thuringia on the one side and of Frisia on the other, was now almost completely encircled, under the thong of the new Rome.

In the closing years of his life, Boniface underwent many rebuffs and vexations which stemmed mainly from the stubborn and petty-minded way in which he sought to crush mercilessly all expressions of worldliness and all things smacking of heresy. His raising to bishop of Mayence (746) was accompanied by much quarrelling, while things which were happening at the same time in Southern Germany, touched him painfully. It was, however, not the massacre at Cannstatt, which brought on his indignation, but the appointment of the Irishman Virgilius as bishop of Salzburg. It so happens that this Virgilius possessed a wide knowledge in the field of mathematics and of starlore, and taught, among other things, that the earth was spherical, whereupon Boniface accused him, before the Pope, of heresy. With his getting-on in years, this fear of heresy assumed unhealthy proportions, whereas at the same time his lust for carping and cavilling increased. Lastly, he even criticised the Pope, slated the conditions in Rome, and worried the head of the Church with the most trivial things. (Timerding)

Not a trace is to be seen any more in the life of this man of that free-mindedness which is the kenmark of truebred Teutondom. The spiritual treason which he committed on his own breed matches well the ravaging of heathen halidoms which he carried on with right up to his death. Nevertheless, the fact that his death-year is impressed upon our schoolchildren with the greatest care, whereas the deathyears of Frisia's freedom are either hushed over or disregarded, is decisive proof of the wholly folk-alien character of our instruction in history; 689 and 734 are more memorable dates for us than 734.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHARLES THE FRANK

No other historical figure is as important for the historical conning of the Frankish age than that of Charles the Frank, son and successor of Pepin the Short. In connection with the central position which this Frankish king holds in history, the embellishing of this figure by the official historical documentation, which has wellnigh overshadowed his true shape, is the greatest hindrance to the unfolding of an historical outlook which is to do justice to the great significance of Race. In lending Germanic or supposedly Germanic traits to his portraiture, which makes him seem to us a nearly ideal embodiment of a certain type of Germanic hero, this history-writing has paved the way for a veneration which is not only for the greater part misplaced, but at the same time eminently fitted to blur our insight into historical developments and, indeed, to make such an insight impossible. But worst of all is not that one, by such a measureless and unquestioning glorification, is prone to rank our Charles "the Great" among the heroes of world-history, but that a concept may arise whereby his life's work is seen as having exclusively wholesome consequences for the Teutonic peoples. It is allegedly thanks to Charles that the Teutons gained not only their first political unity and their first acquaintance with many tokens of civilisation, but even the blossoming-forth of their first "genuine" culture!

In order to show convincingly the indefensibility of this delusive thinking, we wish, in this chapter, to let the facts as far as possible speak for themselves. This means that we shall deal with Charles' descent and personality, the make and mould of his kingdom, and the typical way in which he put an end to the selfstanding of the Saxons — the only folkdom in Central Europe that had upheld the purity of its breed.

1. CHARLES' DESCENT AND PERSONALITY

Whenever Charles is portrayed by Dutch and German historians as an almost ideal prototype of the "genuine" Teuton, this can be put down to two causes which are closely tied up with one another. Firstly it should be noted that these historians start out, in their outlook, with a vague and most cloudlike idea of what they understand by a genuine Teuton. The second thing to be noticed is the bringing to the fore of all kinds of off-the-point trivialities, coupled with a complete overlooking of the main issue. In the very nature of things, the second fault is the logical and needful concomitant of the first. We must begin our survey with a closer outlining of what is meant by "Teuton".

Undoubtedly the concepts "Teuton" and "Germanic" have taken on a linguistic meaning in our age, in that peoples speaking Germanic tongues are so classed. It is, however, clear that, among the folkdoms belonging to the Teutonic speechgroup, the Nordic race is seen to be predominant or leading. Even less can it be gainsaid that this forestanding of the Nordic race

among the Germanic folk-grouping has appeared stronger and clearer, the farther back into history one goes; the olden Teutons were purer members of this breed than ourselves, while their tongues had not been borrowed on any great scale by folk-elements of alien blood — as is indeed the case today. It is the awareness of this weight of the Nordic race among the Germanic family of peoples which makes even the most obstinate opponent of the “race-theory” hesitate before naming a North American English- (Germanic!) speaking Negro a “Teuton”. It is quite impossible to call such a Negro a “genuine” Teuton on account of his perhaps exemplary speaking of the English tongue. Just as among the folkdoms of the Teutonic speechgroup the Nordic racial element predominates and sets the stage, so a person is deemed to be a “genuine” Teuton when in him the bodily and soulward features of this breed foreweigh. Apart from by his blond hair, a long and slender skull, lighthued eyes and a long slim body, the true German is typified in spiritual things by a free and independent bearing which has so highly characterised the Nordic breed throughout the centuries. We must now ask ourselves, how far were these features present in Charles the Frank, and how far did they determine his personality?

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As regards the lineage of Charles, it should firstly be remembered that the dynasty of the Arnulfings — as outlined in the last chapter — although on the spear-side maybe of Germanic descent, yet during its long stay on Gallic earth was so mongrelised through continual interbreeding that the Nordic racial features and typical bearing no longer come to the fore among the persons known to history, and in many cases are totally lacking. This is the case with Pepin the Short, the father of Charles, in whom hardly a trace of Germanic being is left; one needs only to think of his obviously short stature, his church-orientated politics and his lack of independent bearing.

It fits in fully with the mode of behaviour, which we have so far witnessed in this dynasty, that the mother of Charles is not known with any certainty. In the main, one speaks of Pepin's wife Bertha, or Berthrada, daughter of a certain Heribert, count of Laon. As she was not yet ecclesiastically married to Pepin at the time of Charles' birth (742 or 743, even the year is uncertain!) — the church-wedding did not take place until later (747 ?)⁹⁴ — Charles was in any case, according to church law, an illegitimate child. If Bertha was indeed his mother, remains uncertain. The sources contradict one another on this point. While Einhard, Charles' biographer, deems it “unfitting” to go into the question of his birth and youth any further, as if there were something fishy about it, there is among the documents one, in which Charles' mother was claimed to be an Hungarian, whereas another source refers to an East Frankish mother. Despite the uncertainty, Charles' inner as well as outer man justify the guess that the tale about his “Hungarian” (i.e. Mongoloid) mother does contain a germ of truth. It is rightly pointed out⁹⁵ that, even if Charles' mother did hail from France, she may all the same have been of Mongoloid descent, since, after the battle on the Catalaunian Fields, a group of Huns had been given a dwelling-place in the present-day Vendée.

Regarding the outer frame of Charles, it must be asserted, contrary to prevailing opinion, that his bodily shape by no means answered to that of a genuine Teuton. Whenever the latterday historians, in their hero-worship of Charles, refer to his tall figure, they base their picture on a skeleton which was found in the Church of the Virgin Mary in Aachen in the year 1164 — 350 years after Charles' death! — when, at the behest of Emperor Frederick



Equestrian statue of Charles the Frank, from Metz, now in the Carnavalet Museum, Paris. After Heyck: "Deutsche Geschichte", Bd. I.

Barbarossa, an attempt was made to dig up the remains of the great emperor of the Franks. This skeleton, which, according to later examinations, had the respectable length of 1.92 metres, and which continued to be kept in a special shrine in Aachen, as if it were the remains of Charles, offers not the slightest certainty for believing that it was indeed Charles' skeleton. Not only was it no longer known in the year 1164 in what chapel Charles had been laid to rest, but it was also not even certain if he was buried at Aachen at all.⁹⁶ If one looks at the shortness of his father, it is very unlikely that Charles was so strikingly tall. This assumption is also at variance with the report of Einhard, who describes his kingly friend and shielder as being not very tall, as having a short neck and a "singularly heavy body". The peculiarities, respecting Charles' outward appearance, which are further mentioned in the source: his round head, thin moustache and round face, point to a Mongoloid or at least Eastern racial (Alpine) descent. It is thus of great importance to establish whether his character was as Germanic as his present-day admirers would have us believe.

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The proofs which are brought forward for the Germanic nature of Charles, bear without exception upon his outward features only, and are therefore very unconvincing. Firstly, one points again and again to Charles' doughtiness and to his other warlike virtues, as well as to his foreliking for hunting, riding and swimming.⁹⁷ Straightaway there arises the question as to whether in Teutons alone courage and skill in strategy are to be found, or whether the coming to the fore of the said hobbies are only to be found in genuine Teutons; obviously this question must be answered in the negative. Just as little as the Teutons possess a monopoly in courage and martial talent, can the liking for the above-named sports — although indeed most frequent among them — be limited exclusively to them. The same can be said of Charles' great interest in farming and in the running of his estates, which are also proffered as evidence of his Germanic nature. If the Teutons have excelled in the field of land-tilling, yet they have surely shared this talent with various peoples of alien race. It sounds decidedly strange when a present-day historian regards Charles' interest in astronomy as a Germanic heritage.⁹⁸ It was precisely Charles who strove to supplant the eightfold segmentation of the compass by another division. Thanks to the failure of his endeavour, we have still today a compass card of 32 points. On the other hand, he succeeded in dividing the day into 24 instead of 8 parts. It sounds equally strange when the Germanic nature of Charles is deduced from the fact that he gave the Langobard Fardulf the task of building for him near to St. Denis a house "after the style of the forefathers", by which can probably be understood an old-germanic woodbuilt hall. Attila also possessed a Germanic hall, but no-one would dream of ranking him therefore as a Teuton.

Less foolish, though just as little convincing, are several other facts which are cited as proof of Charles' supposedly Teutonic nature. One points to the fact that he brought an equestrian statue of Dietrich of Bern (= Theoderic the Great) back with him from Ravenna, and gave it a place of honour in the main square of Aachen. This fact is supposed to shed the best light on Charles' character, providing one accepts that he admired Theoderic for the genuine Germanic virtues of which the Ostrogothic king possessed so many. But this is by no means certain. As Dietrich of Bern, Theoderic was admired and sung in untold songs throughout the West, so that it is most likely that Charles, in keeping with his character, simply accorded with the fashion of that time.

However, it must be acknowledged in this case that he evinced more broad-mindedness than the clerics who lived in his court, for whom this likeness of an Arian heretic, placed right opposite their main church, was an eyesore.⁹⁹ He gave just as little heed to the bleating of these clerics when he gave his order for the collecting and registering of old-germanic heroic songs, an order which must have met with the greatest disapprobation in those circles.¹⁰⁰ If Charles, as a practical-minded man, exceeded his spiritual advisers in width of conception, this can by no means be taken, however, as proof of a truly free and genuine Teutonic bearing.

But just as little does this bearing find its expression in the great measure of hospitality which Charles — as we are assured with emphasis — always showed and which is always brought forward as proof of his Germanic nature. It is worth asking, however, whether his dealings did indeed spring from an inborn Germanic character. When we read of the many pilgrims from Great Britain and Ireland who, on their journey to Rome, passed through the Frankish kingdom, and who placed a heavy burden on the state coffers, so that action had to be taken against the misuse that the pilgrims made thereof, we glean the assumption that Charles' hospitality arose not so much from adherence to an old-germanic custom as from a Christian virtue which, for all practical purposes however, came to the same thing as regards the pilgrims.

In addition to these barely valid arguments, which are based too much on outwardness to be able to furnish much information about Charles' character, certain facts are however drawn on by his admirers, from which it is possible to learn something of his personality. They point out, for example, that Charles kept, throughout his life, to the old-Frankish mode of dress which he only changed twice — both times on special occasions in Rome — for a Roman toga. Great emphasis is further placed on the fact that the Frankish dialect — a Germanic tongue — was his mothertongue. About the correctness of this statement, whereupon great weight is laid, there can be no doubt at all. For Einhard reports that Charles, "unsatisfied with the mothertongue", took pains to "learn foreign tongues, learning Latin¹⁰¹ so well that it became his wont to pray in that tongue just as well as he did in his mothertongue". Although certain things can be deduced from these facts about Charles' way of thinking and character, they still afford not the slightest proof that he was of Nordic blood. An answer to the question as to what racial qualities overweighed in his character is not afforded by these facts.

Yet it was of great importance for Charles' emotional life that his mothertongue was a Germanic one. Love for one's native speech is a most natural thing. Hence, we are not startled to learn that Charles loved his mothertongue and that he sought to enrich it and raise it to a higher evolutionary standing, as witness his striving to introduce Germanic names for the windquarters and months, and also his order for the recording of old-Teutonic heroic lays. His upholding of his forefathers' mode of dress and of certain Germanic customs — like frequent bathing and swimming — shows that Charles undoubtedly regarded himself as a Frank, if only by dint of his speech and the origin of his kin, and spurned romanisation in the field of speech and outward civilisation, to which in his age, after the much more dangerous romanisation had been wrought on the cultural plane, an ever greater part of the Frankish folkhood fell prey.

It would even seem justified to go a step further and to accept the likelihood that Charles, on the grounds of his native speech, felt himself to be not merely a Frank but a Teuton. The awareness of the narrow kinship existing between the sundry Teutonic folk-tongues was beginning to dawn at

that time, as is seen in the taking into use of the word "deutsch" ("theodisc", or "diutisk", in Latin "theodiscus", derived from the Old High German word for "people" — "diot"), whereupon they embarked upon a connotation of these languages, in scholarly fashion.¹⁰² Charles' command for the compilation of a "German", i.e. pan-Germanic grammar, as well as his endeavours in the field of speechlore (philology), make it likely that he himself shared in this awakening. Before him, the Teutons had never been anything more than a linguistic oneness, and even though he bewrayed a manysided love for the Germanic, yet he, as a halfbreed, lacked the needful intuition to grasp the Teutonic race-soul in its deeper springs. *The un-Germanic bent of his personality* comes out in a spotlighting of his family life.

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The wedlock and family life of Charles the Frank have been praised not a little by historians. His great sensuality is admitted, but it is explained that he was a strength-man who could not go for long without a woman; indeed his sexual unbridledness is all the more a proof of his greatness.¹⁰³ Despite his lust, Charles is said, however, to have been capable of loving truly. He is depicted also as a model father who loved all his many children — lawful or no — with tenderness, and watched over their interests as a wellmeaning if indulgent patriarch. After all this praisegiving, it is all the stranger to hear, immediately afterwards, that Charles banished his first wife, a daughter¹⁰⁴ of the Langobard king Desiderius, without cause, and married in the same year (771) an Allemanic maid, Hildigard, who was only twelve years of age, and who in the space of twelve years bore him four sons and five or six daughters. After her death in 783, he took — again in the same year! — Fastrada, the daughter of one of his landgraves, to be his wife. This domineering woman, she herself being hard and cruel, must have had such a strong influence upon him as to call forth two conspiracies, one of which involving his son, Pepin. This did not stop Charles from hitting up a love-affair with another woman, Liutgard, whom he took to wife after Fastrada's death in 794. She was, like Hildigard, an Alleman, and like her too, she is excessively praised by historians for her fairness as well as for her gifts of mind and character. After her death (800) Charles did not wed again, but lived with a trio of female "friends".

If this tale be somewhat unsavoury, especially as the sources will have donned the cloak of silence where needful, it is even more sickening to hear that Charles allowed his daughters such licence, that their doings will not have been without unwished-for consequences. Of course, the historians try to gloss things over¹⁰⁵ by contending that Charles could not bear to let his sweet daughters from his side, and that he would rather turn a blind eye than see them married and thus be deprived of their companionship, but this does not alter the fact that these things cast a most queer light upon his character. According to Dahn, one of his daughters, Hrothrud, bore a son, Ludovic, to Count Rorik of Maine. Ludovic was later to become protonotarius to Charles the Bald, and abbot of St. Denis, St. Riquier and St. Wandrille. Another daughter, Bertha, presented the abbot Angilbert of Riquier, the Emperor's most trusted adviser and friend,¹⁰⁶ two further sons! It is noteworthy that the abbot, even after these occurrences, still enjoyed the Emperor's special favour. Dahn goes on to write that such a debauchery held sway in Charles' court that it can be said of one of the Emperor's nieces, Gundrada, that she alone of all the womenfolk at court kept her chastity. It can be seen from one of Charles' *capitulationes* (Reichsgesetze = imperial laws) how far the whoredom at court had raged. Straightaway after his death,

his son, Ludovic, staged a radical cleansing. Enough has here been said to show that the most un-Germanic profligacy, which we have witnessed in the Merovingians after the Frankish conversion, was by no means absent at the court of Charles. It is clear that he did not belong at all to the few figures like queen Brunhilda and her husband Sigibert, who, with their unsullied blood, stood head-and-shoulders above this decadence.

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A Germanic way of life – and that's what matters to us – cannot be seen either in Charles' alleged foreliking for the Rhine region, connected with the fact that Charles, towards the close of his life, made Aachen his official abode. Even if he preferred to stay in the palatinates on or near the Rhine, such as those of Nijmegen and Ingelheim, this will have been prompted rather by practical considerations, such as the wish to be in the proximity of the restless Saxons who were bent on shaking off the Frankish yoke. The same considerations will have weighed in the choosing of Aachen as his abode, as this townstead, in contrast to Rome, lay in the geographical middle of his kingdom, whereas Rome, with its peripheral site, could not be accepted as a capital.¹⁰⁷ In Aachen too, the presence of the healing springs, of which Charles made grateful use in later years, may have influenced the choice.

Most un-Germanic was Charles' bloodthirstiness and cruelty, traits of character which – as even his latterday admirers are bound to admit¹⁰⁸ – were unknown in old Germania. Typical of his character is the story told by Notker of St. Gallen of his school-visits. According to the tale, Charles promised the poor but industrious boys, as a reward for their keenness, later positions of office and authority, whereas he gave the more noble-blooded but lazy boys¹⁰⁹ to understand that he cared little for "their nobility" or their "smart looks" and that they need expect nothing from Charles. Is this not eloquent of a bastard's hate towards the noble, and perhaps also the aversion of an alien towards the Nordic race, which in that very nobility found its purest embodiment?¹¹⁰

As regards the talents which seemed to have come to the fore in Charles and which marked his personality, they must, it seems, be explained by his alien blood. Whenever we read that he aroused the admiration of his contemporaries by the outstanding way in which he administered and controlled his wide kingdom, and whenever it is stressed that he surprised his surroundings by the extent to which he was up to the mark, not only in particulars touching the government of the kingdom but also in the upkeep of his many "villae" (= big landed properties), we are immediately struck by the similarity to the rulers of the Mongolian empires which shone forth in organisational giftedness and administrative cunning.¹¹¹ Be it as it may, the predominance of these talents in Charles doesn't necessarily mean a presence of Nordic blood, since the Nordic breed, although likewise gifted in the field of organising ability, seems rather to show a stubborn dislike of bureaucracy and administrative hairsplitting.

Finally, Charles' great *interest in theology* and his habit, closely linked therewith, of delving into dogmatic quibbles and niceties, is a sure sign of ungermanic character and – measured by a Nordic yardstick – of ungenial heritage. In this interest, he went as far as to meddle in the theological wrangles of his time,¹¹² not only taking part personally in the debates, but also busying himself with the improvement of Latin texts and with the search after the original rules of the Benedictine order. It was typical of his cramped mentality that he bade the Pope come over the Alps in the winter of the year

804 in order to speak with him about a miracle which is said to have befallen at Mantua.¹¹³

Taking all these facts into account it is nothing less than bewildering that it is still today the wont for this narrowminded, superstitious and theologically thinking king, whose cultural talents — measured by the yardstick of Nordic kind — can only be reckoned as mediocre, to be exhibited as a typical thoroughbred Teuton and to be classed among the genial men of world history. Instead of placing this Frankish king on a par with an Alexander, a Caesar or a Napoleon, with whom he cannot bear comparison, he deserves rather to be aligned with those rulers whose talents stood in no relation to their actual power, a series of rulers to whom belong men such as his later namesake, Charles V, as well as Philipp II and Louis XIV. Even though Charles the Frank belongs to the *main figures* of history, yet his name should be erased from the list of the *great figures*. *The aureole, which he has won in the eyes of the afterworld, right into our age, is one bestowed upon him by the Church.* As the historians, in emulation of Einhard,¹¹⁴ have stripped his image, as far as possible, of those features most loathsome to the Teuton taste, it has been possible for this light-ring to gleam over his head even into our modern times, and indeed, without having lost much of its brilliance. If one refuses to be blinded by this halo, there will be little left, after an impartial analysis, of his alleged geniality, which later lifetellers have ascribed to him, just as little as is left of his racially pure Germanic character which they have given him. We must still ask, however, whether or how far his life's work was of benefit to the Germanic kindred.

2. THE "IMPERIUM CHRISTIANUM"

a. The Kingdom of Charles the Frank, its Origin and Character

The empire of Charles the Frank has been likened by historians to that of Napoleon, not unjustly, for with regard to expansion, geographical limits and ethnical framework, both have many traits in common. But in pressing this comparison farther, one is struck at once by a characteristic difference. If one heeds the way in which the two empires arose, it becomes clear that, while the empire of the great Corsican is to be looked upon mainly as a personal achievement, that of Charles must be deemed as the *end-phase of a long development*. Intoned by Chlodwig and brought into play again by Pepin of Heristal, this development spelt a telling victory over the withstanding forces, thanks also to the unscrupulous politics of Charles Martel, Carloman and Pepin the Short, so that it only remained for Charles the Frank to reap the fruits thereof. Even for his earlier and latterday admirers,¹¹⁵ Charles is not so much the pathlayer of a new evolution as the fulfiller of a work begun by his forefathers.

In this connection, we cannot wonder that the primal character of the later French Empire, which moves one with its abiding freshness and originality — however much one may have misgivings about its nature and makeup — is totally lacking in the kingdom of the Carolingians. As we have already said — Chlodwig had given the Frankish kingdom a universal character, and the salving of Pepin the Short had bestowed thereon a theocratic stamp. Charles, however, did not make the mightstanding of the Frankish kingdom, but only strengthened it. As protector of the Pope, or — to use the expression of the time — of St. Peter, Pepin had already established himself, in the eyes of his underlings, as the rightful guardian of the Roman Catholic Church, so that he may be rightly regarded as the pathlayer for a patronage over the whole of Western Christendom, which his son was to claim for himself. As

the mightiest prince of the West, he struck up relations with the Byzantine emperor¹¹⁶ as well as with the Kalif of Baghdad, with the result that, under his sceptre, the history of the Frankish kingdom grew into the history of the whole of Western Europe. How far Charles built upon the work of his forbears, can be seen in a closer survey of his conquests.

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Amongst these conquests, those undertaken against Saxony and North Italy are the most outstanding and, in their consequences, most fateful. In both, Charles was only fulfilling what his forerunners had already begun. As we saw in the last chapter, the underyoking of Saxony was made possible by Charles Martel, Carloman and Pepin the Short, who, by their inthrust into Frisia on the one side, and by the consolidation of their might in Southern and Central Germany on the other, had converged on the Saxon borders from two sides. At the same time, these princes, by the recurrent campaigns which they undertook against Saxony, lay the course which Charles' aggressive strategy was to follow with respect to that hitherto free bidding part of Germania. Bearing in mind that Charles, for all his awesome overnight, embarked on an almost lifelong struggle to reach his final goal of subjugating the Saxons — this struggle lasted, without reckoning a short respite of years (app. 785-792), more than thirty years (772-804) — that is surely no proof of his greatness either as a warleader or as a statesman. However, much rested upon the make and mould of the Saxon folkdom, which, feeling itself threatened and beset in all it held holy, withstood to the bitter end the alien overlordship.

The overcoming of the Langobard kingdom (774), by which Charles swallowed the North of Italy into his empire, was — as is clearly seen in the fore-history leading up to this campaign — anything but the outcome of a well-laid plan of his. This conquest, which was to exert a far-reaching influence on the mediaeval history of the later Germany, was rather the upshot of a series of co-incidences, which were decisive at the outbreak of hostilities. For instance, the ignoble behaviour of Charles towards his first wife, who was the daughter of the Langobard king Desiderius, played a great part thereby. This detracts in no way from the fact that the spread of power over Northern Italy stood in line with an historical development, which was initiated by his father. The Lombardy campaigns of Pepin, and his guardianship over the papal seat, had here again set the stage, on which Charles was able to quench his thirst for conquest. The quick success, which came his way here, was — in contrast to the Saxon wars — not so much the offshoot of his own geniality as the far-gone state of weakness under which the Langobard kingdom, for a host of reasons,¹¹⁷ suffered.

This same lack of originality appears in the other conquests which Charles undertook. His infall into Spain was only the sequel to the war against the Mohammedans, which had begun under Charles Martel and which already under Pepin the Short had taken on an aggressive rather than a defensive trend; one needs only to think of his taking of Narbonne (759). Moreover, Charles was unable to realise the great plans which he had at first cherished in respect of Spain. With the famous wartrek which he undertook in the year 778 against the Kalif of Cordova, he had in mind nothing less than the overthrow of the whole of Spain.¹¹⁸ After the capture of Pampelona, he struck out towards Saragossa, which he beleaguered in vain, and during his retreat, his rearguard was completely wiped out in the pass at Roncesvalles.¹¹⁹ True, the so-called Spanish March came into being later (795), comprising

the area which had been overrun on the other side of the Pyrenees, but this does not alter the fact that his originally far more ambitious plans had totally misfired.

On the other hand, the incorporation of Bavaria (788) had been foreshadowed to such an extent by previous happenings that Charles was able to complete it without any effort worth mentioning. Not only was this land, since the overthrow of Lombardy, closed in on three sides by Frankish territory, but it was no match for its mighty neighbour. Moreover, the reaching of Charles' goal was facilitated by the weak attitude of the Bavarian duke Tassilo, who broke again and again the vassal's oath which he had sworn at the beginning of Charles' reign; breaking and renewing this oath in turn, he was unable to summon up enough courage at the critical moment to fight for his independence.

As heir to Bavaria, Charles embarked upon the struggle against the Avars, a Mongolian horseriding people who had been dwelling since the sixth Century in Pannonia (= present-day Hungary), and who in the year of Tassilo's demise had unleashed a savage onslaught into Bavaria. As defender of Western Europe against a menace from Asia, Charles trod here in the footsteps of his great sire, Charles Martel, and undoubtedly merits our esteem. It also holds good that in the Avar War (791-795), which brought greater hardships, if we think of the nature of the Avar land and the character of its inhabitants, Charles did expend a great energy and gave proof of a keen insight. One need only recall his transport of troops over the Danube and, in this connection, his plan to link this river, by a canal, with the Rhine and the Main (cf. map II). Although this plan remained an impossibility judged by the facilities of that age, it must nonetheless be deemed a genial idea. As to the course of the war itself, it should not be forgotten, when analysing Charles' success, that the Avars under their Great Khan formed only a loose unity, while some of the "*tuduns*" (steadholders) had Frankish leanings. Despite this want of unity in the hostile league, it lasted some years before the main "ring" of the Avars was overcome (795), and some further years went by ere their resistance broke down completely.

The Slav tribes which, having settled along the Eastern border of the Frankish empire, had become tributary to him in the course of his reign, had hardly begun the building of a state, and thus were not in a position to withstand stoutly any pressure exerted on them from without. In addition to this, some of these tribes enjoyed considerable advantages through their bondfellowship with the neighbouring empire, besides, their ties with the central power were so loose as scarcely to be felt, which tended to hinder any growth of resistance. If one insists on reckoning this partial subjugation of the Slavs to Charles' conquests, it will have been, at the most, provisional in character.

In summing-up, it can be said that, with the exception of Northern Italy, where a mouldering statehood yielded under his sledgehammer blows.¹²⁰ Charles' conquests were either the outcome of a long and changeable struggle (Saxony, the Spanish March, land of the Avars), or fell as ripe fruit into his lap (Bavaria), while in all his undertakings, save where circumstances thronged in upon him, the way had first been opened for him by his predecessors. On what rests, then, the assertion¹²¹ that Charles, in all his conquests, had been driven by the wish to unite as many Teutons as possible within his empire, envisaging thereby the foundation of a Germanic-Christian imperial unity? The facts give the lie to all this! Among all the lands overrun by Charles, only the Saxonland had a wellnigh pure Germanic folkhood. In a long and most bitterly waged war, this folkdom was not only

thinned-out in a most frightful fashion, but wilfully mongrelised, for Charles resorted to deporting great sections of the population, whose places were then taken, partly by Franks, but mainly by Slavs. Whereas the Germanic element held sway in Bavaria, it formed but a thin upper-layer in Italy and the Spanish March, being almost wholly lacking in the lands of the Slavs and Avars. This summary justifies the theory that Charles' conquests alienised rather than teutonised his empire, and relatively weakened the Teuton-ness of his Frankish state. And this must have been all the more the case when he succeeded in bringing his plans of conquest in Spain to complete fruition. The borders, which he gave his empire, bore no relationship to the lifeland of the Teutons but were, in their independence of folk-boundaries, a looking-glass reflecting clearly the cosmopolitan nature of his kingdom. More than ought else, these borders are queathful (expressive) of the boundless urge for conquest, which drove Charles, as it did his forbears, throughout life.

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The same want of originality is seen in the internal organisation of Charles' empire. His methods of government were essentially the same as those of his forerunners; the new features, taken on by the apparatus of government under his rod, were not incisive, and had been loaned moreover from the Church. Now as before, the division into shires was the groundwork upon which the administrative edifice rested, and the serving-nobility remained, as of old, the mainstay of kingly authority. Also the fargoing intermingle of worldly and ecclesiastical authority was of ancient date. New was the introduction of margravedoms, which were installed along the frontiers in the latter half of Charles' reign and which, it seems, were his personal shaping. New was also the installing of King's envoys (called in Latin "*missi regii*" or "*missi dominici*"), who supervised the counts, but this institution was no work of Charles', but a parallel to the bishops' visits customary in the Church.¹²² Inasfar as this institution can be deemed a sign of imperial mistrust, it is at the same time a clue to the crumbling framework of Charles' empire and to the vacuum present between the Imperium and the people who befolked it, between the central dominion and folk-life in shire and landship (Zaunert). The attempt to make good the lack of natural bond of feeling between the monarch and his subjects by bureaucratic means was doomed to failure. The fact that the attempt was made at all, can be taken as a foretoken of the coming rift in the heterogenic empire.

Of great tokenworth for the character of the Frankish state was the social unfolding which came about during Charles' time. In the wake of the endless wars and of the continual increase in jurisdiction, the HEERBANN (i.e. compulsory military service) and the DINGPFLICHT (i.e. the duty of taking part in law proceedings) became an unbearable burden for freemen and allodial yeomen alike. This resulted in their yielding-up more and more of their allodial rights and even of their freedom, seeking the protection of the great landowners. Charles did take some measures to alleviate the pressure, but although wellmeaning, his efforts did not meet with the desired result. The halting of this progressive development, which could only end in the feudal system, would have been an almost superhuman task. By dint of the gradual waning of the old Teutonic yeomanly freedom, the Frankish state assumed, in its social structure too, more and more an ungermanic character. Let us see now, which concepts and ideals were fostered by Charles in the steering of his state.

b. The Idea of the God-State and its Fulfilling

We can see clearly by what concepts Charles was moved in his political life when we learn that Augustine's book, "About the City of God" (*De Civitate Dei*) — which was briefly outlined in the first chapter — was his favourite reading, and that he had it read out aloud to him at mealtimes. Indeed, it was under the influence of this book that Charles drew nearer and nearer to the vision of a Christian world-kingdom, "*Imperium Christianum*", over which he, as King of the Franks and "*defender of the Church*" was called to govern, a calling which at the same time constrained him to subject by violence the heathens into his empire.¹²³ While Augustine's teaching, namely that the "God-state", i.e. the organised visible church, was to inherit the earth, enabled him to give his purely worldly politics of conquest a religious hallowing, the same teaching of that holy father with regard to the duty of the earthly world-state served him in the leading back of heretics into the Church's fold and to the "converting" or wiping-out of heathens. Through the fanaticism of Augustine, who has been not unjustly dubbed by Dahn as one of the greatest but most pernicious teachers of mankind, Charles was prompted to make the religious "conversion" of heathen folkdoms, whom he incorporated into his kingdom, synonymous with political subjugation. The enforced conversion of these heathens even became the main task to which Charles applied the might of his empire.¹²⁴

To what extent Charles was dominated by these ideas can be seen by the fact that, when he decided on the campaign of 778, his main goal was the freeing of Spanish Christians from the yoke of Islam, and it lent to his enterprise, which was moved by the lust for conquest and craving for might, a sacred blessing. Typical of his way of thinking is a letter which he wrote to Spanish heretics¹²⁵ in the year 794, rubbing it into them that he would have to abandon his goal, if they, by their lingering in heresy, should make it impossible for him to keep fellowship with them. A greater bigotry is hardly conceivable, and here we can no longer find any trace of a Germanic bearing. The ideas, by which Charles came under the sway of Augustine, have been thumbnailed by Dahn¹²⁶ as follows:

"Long before the year 801, his conception of a ruler's duty was a theocratic one: law, morality and religion were not distinguished in any way from one another. Law is simply the means to the end set by morality. All morality is religious. The Church, as the bearer of revelation, determines the morality. The King (or Emperor) has the duty of shielding the Church. God's kingdom on earth is the Church: Church and state forming a onehood. They form nothing more than a sphere, the upper half (spiritual) and the lower half (worldly) make together — "Christendom". Charles' kingdom is fitted not only to be a community in law, but a community of the "moral Christian life"."

How great the influence was that these tenets exerted on practical life in the State, can be seen firstly in the capitularies which Charles had drawn up, wherein — apart from questions of law and political affairs — purely ecclesiastical matters were dealt with. These imperial laws have thus a bearing not only on rites and liturgy, but also on the Church-teaching itself. Such resolutions were, it is true, struck only by clerics at their synods, which usually coincided with the imperial assemblies, or preceded them, but this does not alter the fact that they, as "*capitula*" (= chapters), were inserted into capitularies dealing also with other things, and that there can be no question of a sharp distinction between worldly and spiritual gatherings.¹²⁷

The theocratic attitude which Charles fostered towards his kingly office comes out in the oath of allegiance which he craved from his subjects. In this

oath, they were not only called upon to pledge trueness and obedience, but also compliance with the Jewish Ten Commandments. Not content with that, this "genuine Teuton" so changed the oath formula after his crowning as emperor, that a still greater emphasis was placed on the moral and religious duties of his underlings.

The far-reaching blend of religion, morality and law in this "most Christian state of the Franks" found its most pungent expression in the monasteries, which fulfilled the secondary function of state prisons. Into these institutions, which were the offspring of a piety so foreign and incomprehensible to the Teutons, Charles cast all those who were of danger to him, or whose unyieldingness marred the smooth run of his plans. Not only did the heathen Saxons, who languished in hundreds behind the monastery walls, experience this, but so did also the Christian king Desiderius who, after his fall, was shut away with wife and daughter in a Frankish monastery. The same lot befell also the Bavarian duke Tassilo who, having first been sentenced to death for breach of allegiance, was spared his life by Charles, but was afterwards given a monk's tonsure, his two sons following suit. The ungermanic character of the "God-state" is nowhere better seen than in the subordination of an ascetic ideal to political thralldom.

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It is significant that Charles *regarded himself – and not the Pope – as the head of the God-state*, and trod forth as the highest lord, not only in secular things but also in purely church matters. What opinion he held in his relationship to papacy can best be seen in a letter which he wrote to Pope Leo III on the occasion of the latter's enthronement, in which he prescribed the duties of King and Pope as follows:

"It is Our task to defend the holy church of Christ outwards, everywhere and with armed force, against the onslaughts of heathens and the devastations of unbelievers, but at the same time to secure it inwardly by winning recognition for the Catholic faith; it is Your task to give support to Our warfare by lifting Your hands to God in the manner of Moses".¹²⁸

It is clear from these words that Charles would not brook any political initiative on the part of the Pope, seeking to limit the latter to purely spiritual functions. Thus the Pope was treated like just another bishop of the Frankish empire, and the fact that Leo III founded at the King's "behest", as it was expressly termed, the archbishopric of Salzburg in the year 798, setting it aside as a mission centre for the newly conquered land of the Avars with its connected Slavonic regions in the south east, shows that the Frankish state was not far distant from a "*Caesaro-papism*" on the Byzantine model. The only thing that Charles left to the Pope in the nomination of bishops was the salving ceremony. The letter which the Pope, Adrianus I, wrote to him in the year 791, in order to inform him of the obstacles¹²⁹ which might crop up thereby, shows that he acknowledged, at least in principle, the right of the Pope to handle the consecration ceremony.

On the other hand, there was no longer any question of a popular influence in the naming of these dignitaries. While it had been for long the wont in the Frankish state, with respect to the nomination of bishops who, according to canonical law could only be chosen by clergy and laity with the approval of the metropolitan and the other bishops, for this said nomination to be in reality made by the King,¹³⁰ there is no evidence to show that Charles had broken with this custom. How estranged one had become to the typical Germanic spirit, a spirit echoed in the Old Swedish West.Göotalag,

where we read:

"If a bishop has to be chosen, it behoves the King to inquire among the citizens of the land what man they would have; it must be the son of a yeoman. Then the King may be pleased to hand him a staff and a golden signet-ring. After that, he is to be led into the church and installed in the bishop's seat. From that moment, he is in full possession of his authority, *without consecration.*"

The guardianship over the Church which Charles, as "*patricius Romanus*" — a title also borne previously by his father — claimed as his right, was interpreted so broadly by him that he worried himself with purely ecclesiastical matters and made independent decisions therein. As "guardian of the Church on all sides" (*tubique*), as he was soon¹³¹ to call himself, he heeded not only to his duty of converting his heathen neighbours by force, but stood watch, always and everywhere, on the purity of the belief. Thus, on account of the heresy¹³² of two Spanish bishops, of whom only the one was his subject, while the other one came from the Islam-ruled part of Spain, he called together an imperial synod at Regensburg (792) where, under his personal control and without as much as asking the Pope for his opinion, this heresy was condemned and one of its two bearers forced to recant. A council which convened two years later in Frankfurt, and which was likewise presided over by the King, went still farther; it condemned a resolution made at the synod of Nicaea (787) with regard to image-worship, which had been approved by the Pope, and called upon the Pope, in the crassest wording, to condemn that which he had erst approved of.¹³³ Although the Church made him later a saint, Charles seems to have strayed far from the belief in the papal infallibility.

His crowning as emperor brought no change into his attitude as head of the Church. A synod held at Aachen (809) decided, on his proposal, that — in contrast to the teaching of the Byzantine church — the Holy Ghost emanates not only from the Father but also from the Son, and had this tenet taken up into the Creed. It is typical of the conditions prevailing that the Pope expressed his approval of the new dogma afterwards, although he rejected the taking-up of the "*filioque*" into the Creed. It is no less significant that Charles instructed the high priesthood in several epistles touching the belief and the offering of the sacraments. While the synods of the year 812 unanimously and humbly acknowledged the right of the Emperor to utter decrees also in purely spiritual matters, the synod, which was held in the following year at Mainz, saw fit and proper to bestow the title of "*commander and regent of the Church*" upon the monarch.

The dependent position, in which the Pope found himself, is lit up from another side if we cast an eye on the conditions in the Ecclesiastical State. Although Charles (in 774) confirmed the bestowal made by his father to St. Peter and pledged himself to magnify the latter with still more Italian territories,¹³⁴ yet he kept the upperhand in Rome and thereabout, and regarded himself as the sovereign over the Pope too. In spite of repeated differences of opinion, everything shows that the Pope always acknowledged this sovereignty in principle. The strongest proof of this is to be found in the behaviour of Pope Leo III who, having been taken prisoner and mishandled by a hostile faction of the Roman population, betook himself thereupon to Charles to crave of him a legal inquest, punishment of the guilty and the restoring of his dignity. The action which Charles then indeed embarked upon, and whereby he played the part of *judge over the Pope*, will have been the act which immediately led up to his crowning as emperor.

c. The Emperor's Coronation and its Symbolic Meaning

The first thing that strikes one about this imperial crowning is that the new title, although heightening Charles' reputation, brought about no material change in the span and character of his monarchical rights. Even though he had only been called hitherto "king of the Frankish and Langobard kingdom", Charles' power status was already, in sooth, a universal, i.e. imperial, one. Moreover, the rebirth of the Western Roman imperium was foreheralded in the title of "*patricius Romanus*", which Charles — in emulation of his father — assumed at the beginning of his reign, for this title spoke not only for his lordship over Rome and over the Pope, but also for his protectorship over the whole of Italy.¹²⁵ If the imperial crowning brought about no change in the factual power status, yet it was to be of the greatest weight for the future by the way in which it was engineered. It is of the greatest importance as a sign of the swing which had taken place in the spiritual bearing of the leading Franks. We can see how great this change was if we examine the way in which the notion of the imperial crowning had arisen.

In connection with the mighty span of Charles' power, it was only natural that the more learned men came to think of his standing as imperial and universal, although being in name only a kingly one. Pope Adrianus I, who in a letter to Charles in 778 refers to him as the "new all-Christian emperor Constantine", seems to have been the first to lend utterance to this thought.¹³⁶ Presumably this title was only a phrase of courtesy which the Pope deemed his duty to use in connection with the great effort which Charles had made in the said year to wrest Spain from the hands of Islam. As numerous utterances have shown, this thought was current in learned circles at his court, circles which have been called his academy. As these utterances, of which the first fall round about the year 794, became more and more frequent toward the year 800, it must be concluded that the notion of an imperial crowning arose in that ring of learned men.¹³⁷ For these men who — like Alkwin (*Alcuin*) — lived wholly in the mindworld of the old, but already Christian Rome, Charles was, as head of Rome — the World's capital! — and as protector of the Church, already Emperor "everywhere", though not bearing as yet the title officially. The notion of an imperial crowning arose also from the fact that these learned, for whom the mindworld of old Teutondom no longer existed, saw in Charles no more the king of the Franks but the leader of Christendom — "*rectorem populi christiani*", as Alkwin names him in one of his letters. A greater slump in Teutonic world-outlook and tradition cannot be imagined.

In the forsaking of the Teutonic outlook lies without a doubt the deepest cause for that which came about with the crowning. After all, the role which the Pope played in this ceremony, although eminently fitted to giving this new emperorhood a theocratic and ungermanic mould, was however — it can be safely assumed — not in keeping with the original aims of Charles at all. The idea of bestowing the title of emperor on the Frankish king, can hardly have stemmed from the Pope; indeed, seeing that the position which the bishop of Rome had attained as worldly prince and spiritual primate, had already been shaken by the ever-spreading might of Charles, the papal status could only be further threatened by the renewal of the Western Roman emperorhood. There existed the possibility that the new emperor would establish himself firmly in Rome,¹³⁸ so bringing to naught the advantages which successive popes had won for themselves by making use of the circumstance that since the year 555 the lawful sovereign dwelt in far-off Byzantium¹³⁹ and was thus powerless to make his authority felt. It must

have also struck the fellowtimesman, who could not possibly foresee the speedy waning of the Frankish might after Charles' death, that the re-establishing of emperorhood would only greaten the dependency which popedom already suffered in respect of the Frankish king. Did not the danger prevail that the rebirth of the Roman Empire might at the same time touch off, in the West too, the rise of a "caesarean papism"? With the Byzantine model before him, the head of the Western Church could not possibly have any sympathy with the re-instatement of the Western emperor. This did not hinder the Pope, however, from turning the events as far as possible to his own behoof, after the re-instatement had become inevitable.

It was of the greatest meaning for the future that Leo III, making a virtue of necessity, made the initiative for the crowning appear to stem from his own person, in that he, at a moment when Charles was fully unsuspecting, and before the crowning could take place in the way Charles wished it, took him unawares and shoved the crown over his ears. While this priestly stroke of cunning enabled later popes — with a semblance of right — to assert that to the representative of St. Peter fell the right of disposing at his own discretion of the imperial crown of the West, it is for us most significant that they bestowed thereby a new content upon an office which had been originally marked by the spirit of the Nordic race, and which now lacked the last vestiges of that race-spirit. After all, it had been a Roman principle since times of yore that the army conferred the title of emperor. This "*imperatorem facit exercitus*" ran abreast the concept of the king's election which had formerly held among all Indogermanic folkdoms — old Romans and old Teutons alike.¹⁴⁰ Now that the Pope had crowned the emperor, this office took on that same theocratic character which had been imposed on the Frankish kingship previously by the anointment ceremony.

The salving of Pepin and the imperial crowning of Charles lie in one plain; being at root ungermanic both events can be looked upon as symbolic of the ousting of the Germanic world-outlook and Germanic law by the outlook and law of the late-Roman race-chaos. They form furthermore the gateway for a clerical overlordship which was to carry to its farthest point the thralldom of the Teutonic soul in the coming centuries. What conception Charles upheld towards his new office can be gathered from the fact that he looked upon his emperorship not as a title in the hereditary possession of his house but as a strictly personal title which was to fade out again after his passing. Theocratic as his outlook was, he thought of his many conquests and great power as proof that he was chosen personally of God to act as protector of the Church.

It is hard to link up the idea of the "God-state" — which can scarcely be thought of otherwise than as lasting, at least insofar as the said term can bespeak any validity on earth — with this temporal emperorhood. Even more incompatible is the fact that Charles, in the year 806, divided his empire among his three sons, Charles, Ludovic and Pepin, in order to forestall after his death any strife resulting from the said division. The setting of a "God-state" on to an equal footing with a private possession, which after the owner's death is to be shared out among the heirs, is impossible to our way of thinking.¹⁴¹ Yet it is a fact that the early death of two of the three lawful sons prevented Charles' empire from falling in bits after his death; for as the office of emperor was destined initially to die out again, there would have been no single bond left in that case to hold the three parts of the empire together. The image of an indivisible state authority was just as foreign to Charles, it seems, as it was to his Merovingian and Arnulfingian foregoers; in this respect too, he failed to tread out new paths. The cleft between his

religious ideal and the political tradition of his forebears, he was powerless to bridge.

d. "Frankish Culture and Cultural Politics"

Before asking ourselves what importance Charles' empire had for Teutondom, we should dwell for a moment on the nature of the so-called "Frankish" culture and the way in which it was broadcast. Both were totally ungermanic, and the violent way in which an outworn bastard culture was foisted on the folkdoms living within the empire, was surely eminently fitted to nipping any inborn and living — i.e. genuine! — culture in the bud.

More light is shed on the makeup of this pseudoculture if we cast a glance at the prizeless ring of poets and men of learning which Charles had gathered at his court. These men, to whom among others Petrus of Pisa, a grammar-teacher from Italy; Paulus Diaconus, the writer of Langobard history; Paulinus, later patriarch of Aquileia; Theodulf, a Spanish Visigoth, being not only Charles' best poet at court, but also a learned theologian, belonged, as well as Dungal, an Irishman, whose bardly gift did not stop him from withdrawing later into a monastery; and abbot Angilbert, whom we have already heard of in connection with Charles' family life, and Alkwin (Alcuin), an Anglo-Saxon, who trod forth as Charles' foremost counsellor in cultural matters; all these men were, it is true, for the most part Teutons, but the culture, which they brought, was no less ungermanic in character. What they revived at Charles' court and what they sought to impose on the folkdoms of his kingdom — Germanic and Romanic alike — was the outlived and Christian-coloured sham culture of the late Roman race-chaos, which here underwent its renaissance.¹⁴² Just as their princely protector had his churches and palaces built on Roman and Byzantine models, so these poets and learneds wrote Latin tracts and verses, being in form and content nothing more than apings of antique patterns. The cultural victory of a dying Rome over its Teutonic vanquishers, spoken of in the first chapter, was already at this court an accomplished fact.

We can gain an insight into the mindworld, in which the men of this learned circle, including Charles, dwelt, if we look at the bynames they gave themselves in their mutual dealings with one another, which must have been very free and easy: Charles was called David or Solomon, Alkwin was addressed as Flaccus, abbot Angilbert as Homer, while Einhard was allotted the name, believe it or not, of Bezaliel. Thus it was an international sphere of thought of a fully unfolkish kind in which Charles moved and in which he sought to rear the peoples of his empire.¹⁴³ This is also the reason for the baneful practice of foisting on the Teutonic folkdoms leaders whose world of thought possessed a folk-alien and blood-alien character, being cut off from the mindworld of the common folkhood by an unbridgeable rift. *So we see the birth of the inner twainhood which, like a deadly bane, has infected the spiritual life of these folkdoms right into our own day.*

Ungermanic, but ecclesiastical and Christian was also the method of teaching which Charles promulgated in his kingdom. Decisive for the scope and trend of this teaching, which was carried on almost exclusively by clerics, was the royal school under the headship of Alkwin, to which Charles sent his sons and daughters to be taught along with other youngsters. The aim of this school, which was to be the model for many others in the bigger towns of the kingdom, has been described as follows by Dahn:

"This school was planned, however, not only for clerics but *also* for the laity. But in keeping with the theocratic principles with which Charles' thinking was thoroughly imbued, the whole framework was — *as far as its*

intention was concerned — a theological one, laymen too, just like clerics, had at length to reach the stage where they could understand the revelation given in the Bible".¹⁴⁴

Strong light is cast on Charles' cultural politics by the fact that ignorant priests were suspended from office until such time as they had filled up the gaps in their education. The cathedrals and monasteries were pledged to provide for a thoroughgoing ongrowth of well-grounded clerics, and indeed, the upshot of this regulation was that at the end of Charles' reign the clergy had a higher standard of education than at his enthronement. With the aim of making clear to his subjects the obligations incumbent on members of the "God-state", he ordained in an imperial law of the year 801 that the educational standard, not only of the clergy, but also of the laity throughout the kingdom must be reviewed. While the clergy were constrained to know sufficient Latin as was needful for reading the Liturgy, he craved of the laity that they should be able, on pain of whipping and withdrawal of food, to recite in front of a bishop, a count, or a royal messenger, the Lord's Prayer and the Athanasian Creed. Although the latter edict was incapable of fulfilment, it is however no less typical of the ecclesiastical ends which Charles pursued in his cultural politics and of the manner, unworthy of a freeborn Teuton, in which he sought to realise them.

3. CHARLES AND THE "GERMAN" LANDS

a. Charles' Government and its Meaning for the Teutons

If we ask ourselves how far Charles' life-work can be said to have been advantageous for the Teutons, we should first bear in mind the previous levelling-out effect of the Frankish kingdom, as was described in the second chapter. By dint of its universal and theocratic character and its pseudo-culture bereft of any link with race, this kingdom formed, quite apart from the personality of its rulers, a deadly threat not only to all folk-life, but also to all genuine — i.e. racially linked and racially engendered — culture.

But it is equally clear that the levelling-out effect, which the Frankish empire wielded on the life of those peoples dwelling under its authority, was strengthened to a considerable degree by Charles. The comparative self-standingness, which he allowed some of the folkdoms embodied into his kingdom to keep, and the old clan-rights, which he normally let stand, should not lead us up the garden-path in this respect. After all, there could be no talk here of a real self-rule, as witness alone the fact that this most limited autonomy did not extend over the field of culture,¹⁴⁵ in other words, for that field most vital to folk-life. Charles' way of thinking is typified in his idea of easing the melting of peoples into his kingdom through mixed marriages.¹⁴⁶ Although this idea, recalling involuntarily the mass-weddings, which took place at the behest of Alexander the Great between Macedonians and Persians, does not seem to have taken shape, it characterises nevertheless Charles' striving towards the extinction of all folkly and racial barriers, a striving which flowed quite logically from his religious and churchly ideals.

It was also Charles' ideals, and his intolerance bound up therewith, which heightened still more the dangerous character of his kingdom and made his Imperium into a peril for the life of the subject folkdoms — especially the Teutonic. In connection with its allworldly and theocratic mould in the blending of religion and politics, church and state, which typified it, the Imperium can best be compared with the empire of the Arabian kalifs. However, it should be noted that while the followers of Mohammed at least allowed the peoples subdued by them to keep their own religion, or in any

case did not get round to changing their beliefs by force, Charles converted those folkdoms, whom he had absorbed into his kingdom, where needful, by the sword. Whilst both empires can — as so many others — be likened to enormous rollers, which have flattened and moulded the peoples over which they have rolled, that of Charles is undoubtedly the most destructive in character; that this roller left behind not even as much as a bit of grit is evidence of the unwonted hardness of the Teutonic granite.

What made Charles' kingdom so dangerous, particularly for the Teutons, was the seemingly genuine Teutonic nature, which allowed the race-alien to loom forth to a certain extent in disguise, being less easily recognised as such. We are here struck by the similarity with the Habsburg monarchy, whose folk-alien political ideals were undoubtedly, as far as Germany is concerned, furthered by the apparently German character of the house. The forelove, which some of the Habsburgers may have shown for the German tongue as well as for German usages and customs, does not detract from the fact that their house, taken as a whole, has been foe to the German folkhood and has marred the progress of German tilling or culture. In the same way, nothing can alter the fact that Charles the Frank, for all the liking which he bewrayed for the Frankish tongue, for the garb of his forefathers and maybe for certain Teutonic habits and wonts, did yet threaten with extermination, by his religiously motivated politics, all Germanic tilling and folkhood. How much the admiration, which he at times evinced for certain expressions of this folk-being and culture, ran athwart the notion of a politics dominated by the God-state, can be seen in the fate of the Germanic epics, which he had gathered and put into writing, for, under the rule of his son, Ludovic — whom his fellowtimesmen significantly dubbed the "pious" — all heathen relics were destroyed by the Church. By and large, this political action could only bring about a violent twisting of the Teutonic nature, and if it had, alongside the many unfavourable, also favourable consequences for the Teutons, they were surely unintended and even unwanted. This was namely the case in the field of language, as we shall now see.

b. Charles and the "German" Tongue

As was mentioned in passing in the first part of this chapter, there arose in Charles' time the awareness of the narrow kinship of the Teutonic tongues to one another, in connection with which the word "deutsch"¹⁴⁷ came into vogue as a name for the greatest group of Teutonic tongues. The word was first used by the men of learning to designate the folkspeech as against the Latin, which was written and spoken not only by themselves but also by the Church and, for the time being at least, by the poets. It may be that the word forthcame at the court of Charles.¹⁴⁸ Of greater importance is, however, that its origin shows how Charles' kingdom furthered the recognition of a unity in Teutonic speech. The employment of the alien tongue, which had a privileged standing in this empire,¹⁴⁹ deepened the insight into the being of the mother-tongue, and the awareness of the linguistic oneness of the German tribes broke forth after Latin had begun to be spoken and written. In fact, this very awareness ensued from the domination of an alien language which the underyoking of the Teutons in the Frankish kingdom occasioned.

For it was the study of Latin which afforded a deeper insight, too, into the groundwork of Teutonic grammar, and in so doing, made not only the foreign but also the native tongue an object of contemplation.¹⁵⁰ One dare assume that this was the case with Charles himself, as witness his behest for the drafting of a "German", i.e. a pan-Teutonic grammar. This bid to contrive out of the manifoldness of Teutonic dialects a standard written tongue must

undoubtedly be accepted as a service towards the development of the German tongue. However, there are grounds for asserting that it was mainly practical, religious and ecclesiastical motives which here overweighed. When we learn that, during Charles' reign, official correspondence took on "for that time, amazing proportions" (Hampe), it becomes clear that Charles was constrained to foster the growth of German literary tongue if only on the grounds of political technique. Also, the contributions which he made to the birth of a German literature by his order for the documenting of the folk-laws, hitherto handed down by word of mouth, will most certainly not have been intentional. Meanwhile, it can be seen from these facts that Charles, through his unifying of the tribes into a greater league, strengthened the need for a common German literary speech on the one hand, and facilitated and hastened the rising of this literary speech on the other.

It is certain that considerations of a religious and ecclesiastical kind will have made themselves felt. In order to bring about the christianising of German tribes, Charles directed the bishops, who had their sees in mainly German regions, to preach each Sunday in German, and ordered the putting into German of the Catechism, the Lord's Prayer and various religious formulae.¹⁵¹ Here we have Charles' second contribution towards the rising of a German literature, a contribution of purely Christian religious content and, like the first, just as little intended as an enrichment of Teutonic culture. It is clear that, when the Church spread the use of the Latin letters among the Teutons, it did it with the distinct aim of speeding the introduction of the Roman Catholic form of Christianity, which they embodied, into the world of Germanic speech, together with all the exotic and, for the Teutons, indigestible cultural elements bound up therewith. On the other hand, Charles was a practical-minded adviser. For whilst his entourage — Alkwin at its head — clung to the old doctrine of the three holy languages: Greek, Hebrew and Latin, which Boniface had already propounded, Charles was herein a revolutionary and pointed out to the Church the right way of propagating their doctrine further. But this way happened to be that of the complete thralldom of the Germanic soul. Despite his undeniable services to the German tongue, which might be partly explained by his genuine love for it, but which on the other hand were linked up with his church politics, Charles cannot be hero-worshipped as a promoter of Teutonic culture, but must be branded rather as is queller.

c. Charles and German Unity

It was of great tokenworth for the further run of history that, together with the becoming aware of their oneness of speech, the awareness arose among the Teutonic tribes of the later Germany of their folkish togetherness. And here again it must be asked if Charles can be revered as the purposeful begetter of this Germanic awakening.

As can be gleaned from the work of Tacitus, who wrote down the tribal saga of the three brothers, from whom the Teutons have sprung, the olden Teutons were not lacking in a feeling for the bonds of folkhood. This undoubtedly limply developed feeling had gone lost again in the storms of the Folkwandering. The narrow contact and the enforced co-existence with peoples of other race and blood sparked off the revival of this feeling among the Teutons of Charles' kingdom. The path of this development is uplifted in the history of the word "deutsch", which originally denoted only Teutonic speech, but which later — after the death of Ludovic the Pious — came to be used also for the folk speaking that tongue, and for the land wherein that folk was dwelling. Though presumably weak as yet, and scarcely to be likened to

the national feeling of our day in depth and strength, yet this reborn Teutonic feeling of togetherness caused the tribes of the Bavarians, Swabians (= Allemans), Thuringians, Saxons and Frisians to be conscious of their folkly otherness throughout the early Middle Ages, which meant that the unity, that Charles had imposed by force on the German tribes, was able to live on in the restless times that followed his death.

The revival of antique learning, which has brought back the word "Germania" into vogue among poets and scholars, so meeting their need for a word to designate the common living-space of all German tribes, could give at the most a conciser outline to the reborn feeling for folk-unity. At any rate, the influence of the word has been limited to a small circle, and never has thrust out into the people.¹⁵² If the awareness of its Germanic being ever awoke within the people itself, then this was due first and foremost to the sharp contrast which held in relationship to peoples of other tongue and strain, peoples with whom — thanks to the enforced co-existence in a common kingdom — they came into closer contact than heretofore. The awakening of this selfawareness was, if anything, a consequence, of the hard and long downtreading which the whole of this folkdom underwent at the hand of an alien might not content to enthrall by political subjugation alone, but bent also on spiritual suppression.¹⁵³

d. Charles and the Slavs

We can see how incorrect it is to revere Charles as the forger of this German unity if we stop for a moment to examine the politics which he pursued with regard to the Slavs dwelling on the Eastern reaches of his kingdom. It cannot be doubted that Charles, by the partial subjection and enforced conversion of these tribes which brought on their gradual "germanisation", i.e. the assumption by these tribes of German speech and customs, cleared the way for the Eastern politics of the later German kings. Here too, it is advisable to distinguish between wanted and unwanted — or at least, unintended — consequences. It was his unbridled lust for conquest and his equally boundless zeal for conversion which prompted Charles to subject these peoples, while the need for an adequate shielding of his borders was the pretext under which he sought to justify his dealings. And in so doing, it is certain that at no point did he envisage a widening of the German speechfield or the reconquest of those parts of the Teutonic East which had been lost in the course of the Folkwandering.

This can be clearly seen if we look more closely at the tide of events. First of all, it was Tassilo, and not Charles, who began with the underyoking and enforced conversion of these Slavs, and can thus be looked upon as the author of this policy. It should be borne in mind, however, that this policy had for long been instrumented by the Frankish Kingdom with regard to heathen neighbours, Tassilo being the first to use it against the Slavs. By a gradual widening of territory, coupled with a mission that found strengthful support from the State, he had already incorporated the land of the Slav Carantanians (the present-day Carinthia) when he was deposed by Charles. Thanks to his greater power, which was to be more keenly felt in those parts after his subversion of the Avars, the latter was able to continue his work of conquest and conversion on a greater scale and with more emphasis. It was something new, however, that this conquest was accompanied by the beginning of a *colonisation* in the conquered regions. Since, in the nature of things, mainly Bavarians were concerned with this colonisation, a widening of the field of German speech was the outcome. Although Charles can thus claim a certain right to be deemed the founder of the German Eastern March

(Ostmark), the later Austria, it should not be forgotten that this yet thinly settled land was to be again engulfed, a century later, by a new Mongolian floodtide, namely the Magyars who then swept out of Southern Russia into their present-day lifeland. The devastation was so great that the work of colonisation had to be taken up all over again.¹⁵⁴ Hence, it is only with some reserve that Charles can be called the founder of the Eastern March!

The way, too, in which he acquitted himself on the North Eastern confines of his empire proves that there can be no talk of the awareness of a Teutonic or German mission, as far as he was concerned. If he had loomed up in the North as the ally and mighty shielder of the Saxons, and had sought contact with those numerous Teutonic remnants who had lingered on since the Folkwandering in the regions beyond the Saale and Elbe, still sparsely populated by the Slavs, he could have used these bases to conquer the land for the Teutons. Instead he preferred to play the various Slav tribes one against the other, gaining the support of some in the almost lifelong war of extermination which he waged against the Saxons. Thus, the Slav policy of Charles the Frank is a striking proof again of the imperial and ungermanic trend of his statesmanship.

e. Summary

If we would sum up in a few words the importance which Charles' government had for the Teutons, we must fully acknowledge the favourable consequences which the enforced incorporation into his kingdom brought with it for the tribes, who had stayed on in the old heartland. On the other hand, it must be asserted just as strongly that those are of little weight alongside the fatal effect which Charles' Imperium had upon Teuton blood and culture. Built upon the rubble of Germanic freedom, his empire rang in for the Teutons a period of political oppression and spiritual slavery which was to last over many hundreds of years, the aftermath of which is to be felt in our own time. The violent twist which came about in the unfolding of the Teutonic folkdoms finds its most visible expression in the breaking of the cultural bond which had hitherto held between the Northern and Southern Teutons. While Charles, by his overthrow and violent conversion of Saxony, tore away this pure Teutonic land from its kindred land of Scandinavia, with which it was bound by many ties of belief and wont, thus shutting the gate to the North for his new subjects, he opened the gate as wide as possible in the South by his conquest of Italy and by the ecclesiastical trend of his politics.

So it can be explained how the German Empire, which as an unwilling consequence of the policy of conquest which Charles had pursued in respect of the Teutons, arose about a century after his death, had precious little Teutonic about it. This "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" bears only too clearly the stamp of its origin; it lives mainly by non-Teutonic traditions; it possesses an alien culture imposed from without, and thus essentially fake; it practises a religion forced on to the folkhood by violence, and finds — this fact is highly significant! — its centre of gravity no longer in the heart of old Germania, but on its outer edge, on the Rhine, although its greatest and doughtiest figures¹⁵⁶ hail from the Germanic heartland. What an awful pressure this ungermanic (Romish) empire, as heir to the Frankish kingdom, has exerted on the spiritual life of the German people, can best be seen in the centuries-long struggle which this folkdom has had to wage in order to win back its freedom, step by step. If it took centuries for the German folkdom to regain awareness of its own being in the Reformation, still further centuries had to pass ere, with a better knowledge of the Teutonic past, this awareness could fully break forth. The fact that certain

emperors, namely the Saxon: such as Henry the Fowler, and his successors, take up again links with the Germanic tradition, does not alter the ungermanic nature of this first empire of the Germans in any abiding way.

By his universal monarchy, Charles not only paved the way for the universal monarchy of the mediaeval German emperors, but also for the world-dominion of the Popes, whose theocratic and worldwide monarchy was to relieve that of the emperors in the 13th Century. In this respect too, Charles' empire can be likened to that of Napoleon's, which was later to fulfil a similar role.¹⁵⁷ In keeping with its entirely theocratic character and priestly culture, the papal empire was predestined to carry through the enslaving of the Germanic soul to its bitter end. In this priestly state, Charles' "Imperium christianum" found its natural heir.

4. THE SAXON WARS

a. The Saxons and the Christian Mission

As the only Teutonic folkdom on the Central European mainland which had kept its independence, the Saxons, at the beginning of Charles' reign, still lived in Germanic antiquity. Does this prove their backwardness? Undoubtedly it does, if we take as our yardstick in matters of belief the opinions of Christian writers, the earlier and the later. When Christian sources, which lay stress throughout on the many kinds of superstition rife among the Saxons, mention the chastity, the stern customs and the heed given to purity of blood, for which things that folkdom was famed, this "backwardness" seems to us a most enviable thing. The following quotation, which is taken from one of these sources, and which relates to the Saxon heathens, cannot be said of many Christian peoples:

"They also had *excellent laws* for the punishment of ill-doers. And in their *moral purity*, they were keen to possess many useful and, in keeping with natural law, also *praiseworthy institutions*, which could have brought them true blessedness, had they not dwelt in total ignorance of their Maker and been thus far wanting in the truth of his service".¹⁵⁸

While the Saxons had remained behindhand in a development, which had begun with an almost complete demoralisation of the Teutonic peoples, and was destined to end in their total spiritual and cultural thralldom, it meant on the other hand that they stuck to a form of government which, if best fitted to meeting the need of the Teutons for selfrule, made them seek in the field of foreign politics as opposed to the mainly romanised Franks with their – for those days – strongly centralised monarchy. On the one hand, it is indeed quite remarkable, and proof of the presence of an organic sense of statehood, that the roughly hundred "gawe" (shires), into which Saxony was divided, sent every year, in times of peace, their representatives to the land-moot at Marklo (on the Weser). Each "gau" sent twelve representatives taken from the "athelings" (nobility), the "frilinge" (freemen) and the "liten" (serfs). On the other hand, the existence of this organically summoned "parliament" – as it has been called – did not alter the fact that even the four main groups, into which the Saxons were divided: the Westfalians, Engrians, Eastfalians and North-Albingians (north of the Elbe), were no fixed political formations, so that, even in wartime, the "gawe" often acted independently. A duke could be put at the head of the whole people in the event of war, but this possibility of improvising a one-man leadership in time of need could not make up for lack of unity. Moreover, according to Bede, this duke was chosen by the casting of lots, a regulation which probably goes back to the fear of giving rise to a monarchy, but which was totally unfitted to guaranteeing the choice

of a truly mighty personality as leader.

It was against this war-couth and brave folk, but a folk ill-organised for a struggle of life-or-death, that Charles threw the weight of his imperium into the balance, and not merely his trained army, but also the political methods which his foregoers had learnt on Roman earth.¹⁵⁹ The outcome of the struggle, which had in fact been begun by his father,¹⁶⁰ can, by this disposition of strength, hardly be of doubt. The internal dividedness of the Saxons meant that Charles, at least in the first years of the war, invariably found himself up against comparatively small sections of the people, whom he could quite easily subdue. It also had the effect, that resistance flared up again and again at many different points, making quick and decisive action impossible, all the more as Charles was continually being drawn away on other engagements (the Langobard War, the Spanish campaign). Undoubtedly he had within Saxony itself his allies; the practice of bribery belonged to the stock-in-trade of the Carolingians, and according to one source, it contributed just as much as violence to the underyoking of the Saxons, as witness the capitulary which was drawn up to settle the disposal of benefices (mainly landed properties) for the Saxons.¹⁶¹ Although it is likely that Charles sought and found his henchmen mainly from the ranks of the nobility, there are no grounds for assuming that the nobility, as a whole, co-operated with him in maintaining his position of power. There can be no question of a ruling nobility in Saxony, nor was there class-strife amid this landtilling folk,¹⁶² even if the classes as such were sharply divided off from one another and the nobility in possession of great influence.

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The failure of all peaceful attempts at conversion shows that the Saxon aversion to Roman Catholic christianity was general, just as general as among the other Teutonic folkdoms. The Anglo-Saxons form, in this respect, the only exception. As we have already seen in the last chapter, the freewilled transition to Christianity, at least of their princes, must be put down rather to political motives. It is not wholly impossible that the uprooting, which colonisation of a strange land must at first bring about, smoothed the way for the overtread of this people to the new teaching,¹⁶³ as was most likely, too, in the case of the Franks. As for the Saxons who stayed behind in their broodland, it is noteworthy that the Christian preaching confined itself at first to the outer-edge of their land, and only later, in the wake of the Frankish warbands and under their aegis, dared forth into the interior. In addition to the Anglo-Saxons, we meet with only a single Frisian among the missionaries who, however, does not appear to have hailed from the heartland of the Frisian kindred, but from the region overthrown by the Frisian princes.

After the "white" and the "black" Ewald,¹⁶⁴ both Angles, had had to pay for their attempts at conversion with their lives in the days of Pepin of Heristal, the Anglo-Saxon *Liafwinn* (*Lebuinus*, d.775) had been preaching among the Saxons in the neighbourhood of Deventer since the beginning of Charles' reign. It is noteworthy that he was once forced to flee to Utrecht after an attack on the part of Saxons who were angered by his activities. However, he later returned to Deventer, presumably under the protection of Frankish arms. *Willehad* (c.735-789), also an Anglo-Saxon, appeared around about the same time in the Dokkum area and began preaching among the Frisians. Later he moved to more easterly regions, finishing up in Drente. At the behest of king Charles, who had beaten the Westfalians at Bocholt the year before, thus bringing the whole of Saxony under his heel, Willehad went

to Dithmarschen in 780 and built there, at *Melinthorp* (= Meldorf) the first church. His ensuing activity in Eastern Frisia and surroundings was interrupted by the uprising which was unleashed by Widukind in the year 782, forcing him to flee to Frankish territory. Only after Widukind's surrender in 785 was he able to wend back to Eastern Frisia and resume his work. Consecrated as bishop of Bremen by a synod held at Worms (787), he was so richly endowed by Charles that he was able to bedizen the capital of his new bishopric with a (wooden!) church, the splendour and fairness of which were especially praised.

How many heathen halidoms this "temple-breaker", as he was justly named by the heathens,¹⁶⁵ had laid waste in his life, we do not find reported in his life-story.

Liudger (744-809), the third great apostle of the heathens at that time, was most likely born at Zuilen on the Vecht (near Utrecht) of a noble family, and can therefore only be termed a Frisian with reserve. It is significant that he, too, began his ministry in Deventer and in West Frisia — on the edge of Saxony and in a Frisian territory long since subjugated, and was subsequently sent to Dokkum (778) as Willehad's successor.¹⁶⁶ The fact that he had to flee before the uprising which Widukind unleashed in 782 shows that this folk-movement had met with a mighty resonance in the Frisian regions which had been conquered only shortly before. After his return in 785, he was allotted by the Frankish king the "gaue" *Hoegmerki*, or *Hoegmark* (= roughly the Westerkwartier of Groningen), Hunsingoo, Fivelingoo (both in Groningen) and the Emsgau (= roughly the present-day East Frisia) as missionary districts. Some years later, Westfalia was added thereto, and finally (804) Liudger became the first bishop of Münster. Of him it is also told in his biography that he sacked and even pillaged the temples and sacrificial grounds of the heathens; of the treasures taken as plunder in the land of the Frisians the king received a share of two thirds,¹⁶⁷ a fact which sheds a weird and glaring light upon the close collaboration between the worldly and the spiritual authority, one which crops up again and again during the christianisation of the heathens. When we learn from a trustworthy source¹⁶⁸ that Liudger's family, which gave up to the church many other servants and handmaids, is an eloquent example of how old noble families died out, owing to the entry of their members into the clergy, we can clearly see what perils lurked in the Roman Catholic form of Christianity for the as yet heathen Saxons.

b. Frankish Warfare and Lawgiving

It is unknown what precise cause led Charles to undertake the campaign against the Saxons in the year 772. The question as to what pretexts he found to justify his in-fall into his neighbour's state is, however, of little importance; the main thing is that his action fitted well into the framework of the Frankish politics of aggression which had been wielded beforehand by his uncle Carloman and his father Pepin in respect of the old Teutonic heartland. While this politics had so far led to the subjugation of the entire South and Central Germany to the Frankish imperial might as well as to the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical power, it was now Saxony which, as the remaining heart of a free Germania, managed to withstand the onslaught of these two ever colluding and mutually welded-together powers. That Charles demanded of the heathen-lingering Saxons a religious conversion as token of a political succumbing was a fateful but inevitable proof of the fact that Roman Catholicism was the best mortar for holding his heterogenic kingdom together. The missionary zeal, which he betrayed, sprang not only from the wish to

clothe his imperialism with a religious hallowing, neither can it be explained exclusively by his personal intractability.

How far his missionary keenness went, can be clearly seen in this first fieldmarch which he undertook against the Saxons, and during which, according to Egil's biography of Abbot Sturm of Fulda,¹⁶⁹ he furnished his army with a host of priests and monks, while he "converted" the Saxons "*partly by the sword, partly by persuasion and partly by gifts*". The religious character of the war came to the fore in the *Reaving of the Irminsul*, a tree-stem of unwonted greatness, which betokened the World-Ash and was revered far and wide by the Saxons as their foremost halidom.¹⁷⁰ The dividing of the spoils, looted from the temple by Charles' troops, shows that plunder was not strange to these actions. Then again, the storming of the Eresburg (stronghold on the Diemel) was the only armed blow of importance in this first campaign which moreover, as seen in the report of Charles laying waste everything with fire and sword, resulted in the complete destruction of the landship overrun by the Frankish warbands.

No wonder that, when Charles embarked on his Italian campaign two years later (774), the Saxons took advantage of his absence by laying waste the Eresburg and carried out a plundering expedition into Hesse. Charles did not only wreak revenge by a new infall into their land, whereby — as is stressed in one of the sources¹⁷¹ — he ravaged all by burning and robbing, killing many Saxons who withstood him, and wending back home with fantastic booty, but he also decided in the following winter (1st Jan. 775) at Quiercy "to make war on the faithless and perjurous Saxonfolk, and not to let up *ere it be conquered and subjected to Christianity, or completely wiped out*".¹⁷² The character of the Saxon War, which in its further course degenerated more and more into a war of extermination, is well typified by this resolution, which casts the weirdest light on the Christendom of that time.

It is needless, and it is not our intention, to sketch the unfolding of the struggle in greater detail. We need only be reminded that Charles, after wallowing in the blood of a fresh rebellion, forced the Saxons into pledging their troth to Christianity at the Reichstag of Paderborn in 777, but that *Widukind* (Wittekind), the duke of Westfalia, whose name crops up here for the first time in history, was absent. This man Widukind, who had fled over to the Danes, becomes henceforward the daring and tireless protagonist of heathenhood and freedom, and a true folk-champion.¹⁷³ He turned Charles' march on Spain to his behoof in rallying his people to a new freedom-struggle in which he, backed by Frisians and Danes, thrust out to the Rhine. Taking into account that, in this onslaught, the Frankish territory was devastated with fire and sword, we should regard Einhard's comment on the great bitterness of the foe's actions as proof that the onslaught was prompted by revenge and not by desire for plunder. In this respect, Dahn¹⁷⁴ notes quite rightly:

"Here it is openly acknowledged by the Franks that it was not so much a matter of warding off the raids of Saxons on their frontiers, but that the revenge of the Saxons had been provoked by the savaging and reaving of their halidoms. Quite apart from the wound which, painful as it is for all men, was inflicted by the encroachment upon all that they hold to be holy, the heathen Teutons were faced with the consideration that the wrath of the heavenly dwellers, the kinfathers of the people, would come down upon their seed, if they did not do everything in their power to hinder such awful misdeeds or, having happened, took no steps to punish them. Thus for the heathens, the feeling for revenge becomes ennobled and hallowed as a

religious and moral duty, just as Charles' emotions: his lust for conquest and power, and later his lust for revenge and injured military pride were idealised and masked by the delusion that he was *obliged* to act thus as defender of the faith. All too little heed has been paid to the fact that it is not only Christians who have holy things. It has been only the Christians, and not the heathens, whose wildest emotions have been justified by the idealisation of the Belief. However, it is always the heathens who are taken up with the defence of their halidoms, and the Christians with the destruction of foreign ones. And one dares to call the Saxons the "faithless folk" (still in 1882!), simply because they, true to the olden belief, shake off again and again the belief that had been thrust upon them; they found it hard to practise *hypocrisy*, a quality unknown to heathendom, and it brought the heathens not a single advantage."

Evidence of how unbearably hard it must have been for the Saxons to practise this hypocrisy is shown in a find made some time back in the neighbourhood of Orhaim (earlier *Ohrum*) on the Ocker, the place where, in 780, the Saxons had to turn up to surrender themselves and to take on baptism. There were found, during the dredging of the riverbed, a great number of leaden crosses whose origin the local farmers were still able to explain. They were crosses, which had been hung about the necks of converts at baptism, but which had been flung into the brook, apparently immediately afterwards.¹⁷⁵ Their behaviour becomes quite understandable to us if we take note of the circumstances under which this baptism came about. After his return from Spain, Charles had launched a fresh attack on the Saxons, defeating the Westfalians at Bocholt (779). The fact that this in itself insignificant battle could lead to the subjection again of the whole folkdom is conclusive proof of the lack of unity which reigned among the Saxons. Master again over the whole land, Charles was able to proclaim in the following year (780), at a Reichstag held at Lippspringe, his notorious "*capitulatio de partibus saxoniae*", the law written in blood which was to seal, together with the subjugation of the Saxons, also their conversion. It is worthwhile to dwell at some length on the import of this state document so characteristic of Charles' Saxon politics.¹⁷⁶

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The first part of the "*capitulatio*" deals with *the introduction of Christianity into Saxony* and is, for us, of greatest importance as such. After the first chapter had laid down that the Christian churches in Saxony were to enjoy greater reverence than had hitherto been paid to the heathen temples, the second provided for the granting to the churches of the right of refuge, a right which heathen temples had borne in olden days and which protected the ill-doer, who sought shelter behind the walls of those buildings, even from the hand of the state authority. In the following chapter, the death penalty was fixed not only for the violation of the said right, but also for the robbing or setting afire of a church.

This "may he die the death" ("*morte moriatur*") recurs again and again with dull sameness at the end of almost all the chapters to follow. The death penalty was imposed for the wilful failure to keep the fast of forty days, while it was left for the priests to decide whether or no any malice aforethought was present. With regard to this stipulation, it must be remembered¹⁷⁷ that the Oriental train of mind at the root of the custom of fasting was, for a Teuton, something incomprehensible. The holy standing of the Christian priest is brought home to them, however, in the chapter which demands the death penalty — and not the customary wergeld — for the wilful or accidental killing of a bishop, priest or deacon. And with one other regulation, which

threatened with death any person hiding with the aim of escaping baptism, it was like setting the fox to keep the geese. Threatened with death was anyone who sought to forge a plot with the heathens against the Christians, or fostered stubborn hostility towards the same. The chapter which prescribed the death sentence for unfaithfulness towards the royal master had the same breadth of application; both laws made a mere *hostile bearing* grounds enough for a death sentence and, in so doing, gave Charles the opportunity for slaying prisoners-of-war with a semblance of lawfulness.

How deeply this Frankish lawgiving cut into the life of the Saxons can be seen in the chapter which prescribes the death penalty for the practice of cremation. After all, the burning of the dead was an old custom which they shared with many other Indogermanic folkdoms and which was tied up with their religious thoughts. On the other hand, the forbiddance of the custom stemmed from the idea of the resurrection of the flesh, an Oriental concept¹⁷⁸ alien to the Teuton in that form.

Two other chapters, which on first sight seem to breathe a spirit of enlightenment, find more grace in our eyes. In the first, the death penalty was set forth for anyone who, misled by the devil, deemed some man or woman to be a warlock or witch, hence roasting him (or her) and eating his (her) flesh or giving it away to be eaten. This would seem to be a praiseworthy commandment. However, the Saxons were here given blame for an evil of which they were guiltless. The heathen Teuton was not given to eating human flesh, not even that of witches, whereas witch-hunting and fear of devils were quite strange to him. All these notions came in the wake of the civilisation from the South, and it is highly remarkable that the same South drew up prohibitions against evils which it had itself imported, and whose bane now spread slowly over the Germanic North. Surely we might rightly ask ourselves why Charles, if superstition were in sooth so loathsome to him, did not combat witch-hunting there where it was truly to be found — in the Roman Catholic church. Maybe then, the grisly bloodlettings, to which in the centuries to come millions of guiltless humans fell foul, could have been forestalled.

The second chapter, on which we now cast an eye, puts under pain of death the sacrificing of human beings to the “demons”, i.e. to the Germanic gods. We know that prisoners-of-war were sacrificed to Woden. But whether human sacrifice was customary among the olden Teutons is a moot question. What they certainly did *not* practice is the “sacrificing” of children, who were immured alive in monastery walls as “masonic sacrifices” — until late on in the Middle Ages.

At the end of the first part of the *Capitulatio* it was ordained that anyone who, having committed any of these crimes, fled to a priest of his own accord, should, after confessing and doing penance, be spared the death sentence *on recommendation of the priest*. It is clear that this clause had not only the purport of widening still more the already great power of the priesthood, but moreover, by the freedom from punishment which it afforded renegades, could not but give a lending hand to folk-treason. Hence, this law not only struck at the Saxon folk in its depths of soul, but furthered at the same time its disintegration by giving the individual misdoer hope of reprieve.

The second part of the *Capitulatio* regulates, to begin with, *the financial position of the Church* and makes fast its economic foundation. It is laid down to what extent the shiremen must donate to their church and how many thralls and maids they must give to it. Of the greatest importance was the introduction of the *tithes*, which meant that not only a tenth of all taxes

and incomes, but also of all properties, was to fall to the Church. On its own account, this confiscation of ownings was for a yeomanhood, such as the Saxons, an almost unbearable burden. On top of this, it should be borne in mind that they, as a free folkdom, had hitherto known no form of taxation. The meeting of these demands, impossible of fulfilment, must have weighed all the heavier upon them, since these tithes went to the upkeep of a church which had been forced upon them and which they could not inwardly acknowledge.

Over and beyond that, a series of bans were drawn up in this second part, which had the goal of weeding out as completely as possible the heathen wonts, and which bear a strong likeness to a legislation which we have got to know of in an earlier historical phase of the Frankish Empire. Admittedly, the death-penalty was supplanted in these clauses by fines, but they were so heavy that they must have meant financial ruin for the persons concerned. It was forbidden to hold public meetings and gatherings on Sundays; church-going was commanded. All children had to be baptised within the year. Fines were imposed for unlicensed and forbidden weddings, including those where one of the partners was heathen. Of course the praying or offering at springs, trees and hallowed groves was forbidden; the rider to the effect that the fine could, where necessary, be commuted into service for the Church, shows how exorbitantly high these fines were. Furthermore, it was forbidden to bury the bodies of Christian Saxons in the barrows, or burial-mounds, of the heathens. The committing of these dead to the churchyards is again a measure which smote deeply at Saxon feeling. It was still worse to demand of them that they deliver "soothsayers and warlocks", that is to say, their own spiritual leaders over to the Church and its servants. When we read further that the harbouring, or shielding, of "robbers and criminals" — by which is meant also the opponents of the King — was forbidden, that the Frankish division into counties was to be introduced — a means of subjugation par excellence! — and that a summoning of any "*ding*" (= moot) or like assembly was forbidden, then we must conclude that this Frankish blood-law, if only by its extraordinary harshness, was very much destined to bring the Saxons at last to a oneness of mind.

And indeed, the resistance put up by the Saxons in the following years took on a more general character, and desperate bids were made to win back the lost freedom again from the alien invader. The final breakdown of these attempts seems to be the outcome of the late-achieved unity, which was only of short duration, and which was far from perfect. It is a fact that Charles was in the position to place at the head of the newly formed counties Saxon nobles who had betrayed their kinsfolk and the belief of their fathers, and had chosen the side of the yokemasters.¹⁷⁹ Therein lies the proof that he had succeeded in bringing by persuasion and bribery, at least an influential and mighty part, if not the ruling part, of the Saxon nobility, on to his side. Mutually divided and weakened and partly bereft of their natural leaders, the Saxons, for all their great heroism, were bound to lose the fight for their independent folk-being which had now entered its decisive stage.

c. The Climax of the Struggle and the Bloodbath of Verden

It was assuredly a great disappointment for Charles that the nomination of these counts, which he undertook at Lippspringe in 782, did not mean the ending of the war, but was instead the spark which caused the war to flare up anew, fiercer than ever before. The tough resistance which, from now on, the incorporation into the Frankish kingdom (in a narrower sense!) awakened among the broad mass of the folkdom, is doubtlessly linked up with the

sharing of freemen and athelings in the conduct of tribal affairs.¹⁸⁰ Charles dwelt, however, under the illusion that he had already broken the resistance, which in fact was only just beginning. Thus, at the start of the year, he went about drafting Saxon manpower into the *heerbann*, whom he called upon to fight back an inroad made by the Slavonic Sorbs into the land of the Thuringians. The bringing-in of compulsory military service seems to have been, for this newly subjected folkdom, the last straw. Whilst the Frankish-Saxon army was moving up to the eastern frontier of the kingdom, there broke out, at the instigation of and led by Widukind, an uprising on the Weser in the North. After the Frankish warmight had altered its line of march in order, first, to put down this revolt, it was then witheringly defeated in the Süntel mountains (= the present-day Wiehen- and Wesergebirge, near Minden).

It was this debacle, the severest which he had ever suffered at the hands of this folkdom, which compelled Charles to tread once more the Saxons' land and prompted him to wreak a judgement of blood which seeks its like in history. As the land-reeves and athelings¹⁸¹ were unable to present him with Widukind, who had fled again to the Danes, they brought him the "false leaders" who had taken part in the uprising. Charles had all of them beheaded at Verden on the Aller (782) in the course of one day. Although attempts are made on the part of the Church to belittle the extent of the bloodbath, wherein 4500 Saxon noble-bred yeomen lost their lives, or even to place the deed as such in doubt — as Protestant circles have recently done — the facts are irrefutable. Not only do the sources agree on all the main issues — and this includes Einhard, Charles' friend and adviser¹⁸² — but they are supported, too, by Saxon tradition, in which Charles lives on, right into our age, as the "*Slaughterer*". Moreover, this massacre fell completely into line with Carolingian tradition; Cannstadt was the model copied by Charles. In contrast with his uncle Carloman, who, through the memory of the gruesomeness he had witnessed, went out of his mind, Charles was never later worried by twinges of conscience, at least not to our knowledge.

If he had thought, by this cravenhearted murder, to have quelled for good the resistance of the Saxons, he was soon to admit himself mistaken. In the following year (783), a general uprising broke out. The wrath of the Saxons, embittered by the slaying of their kinsmen and plighted to wreak revenge, was so great, that they dared at first to seek battle with Charles in open country. Thus it came to the only two real pitched battles which took place in the course of the Saxon Wars. How far the resistance of the Saxons had grown can be seen from the fact that Charles' "victory" near Detmold was of such a dubious kind that he was forced to turn back to Paderborn to await reinforcements. Admittedly, he gained a more decisive victory on the river Hase where, according to the source, an "untold host of Saxons" met their death, yet, although this win enabled him to press forth to the Elbe and to plunder the land far and wide, he was still unable to bring about the complete underyoking of the Saxons. The lingering of this resistance, even after that heavy defeat, is surely an eloquent proof of the great stalwartness with which the Saxons defended their freedom.

In 784, the rebellion began to spread even over the eastern parts of Frisia, whence Liudger — as we have already seen — was forced to flee. Together with his like-named son, Charles went ravaging through Westfalia to the Weser. As his further onmarch was impeded by extensive floods, he wended eastwards through North Thuringia, reaching the land of the Eastfalians which he transformed into a wilderness. In their naive but no less meaningful wording, the yearbooks of Einhard¹⁸³ describe the barbaric warfare with which Charles, in the end, reached his goal and brought the war

to a temporary end. The re-subjection of the Saxons is depicted therein in the following way:

“He (Charles), leaving them (his family) behind with a sufficiently trustworthy and strong manning of the fortress (the Eresburg), set out with a lightly armed troop to lay waste the land of the Saxons and to plunder their hamlets; he provided the Saxons with a most restless winter, in that he sent out not only his own troops, but also the army leaders, *to cross through the whole land, harrying with fire and murder*. After he had sorely afflicted, throughout the winter, almost all landstretches of Saxony with such destruction, and had obtained supplies from Franconia towards the end of that same winter, he held at Paderborn, in his habitual manner, the general imperial gathering of his people (785). After that, he drove forth towards the Bardengau,¹⁸⁴ and upon hearing that Widukind and Abbio were dwelling on the yonder side of the Elbe, he warned them through Saxon emissaries to give up their disobedience and to yield without further ado. However, when they, in awareness of their misdeeds, flinched from placing themselves under the King’s protection, the latter promised them, at their wish, impunity, and also allowed them hostages as a pledge of their safety; he sent Amalwin, one of his courtiers, to them with this message, and the latter re-appeared with them at the King’s palace at Attigny where they submitted to baptism. They were baptised before the King at Attigny in Franconia, since he, after sending Amalwin to fetch them, had returned to the land of the Franks. Thus did the stubborn Saxon faithlessness find, for a few years, an end, if only for the reason that no new opportunity for falling back into the old ways presented itself.”¹⁸⁵

d. The Methods of Subjugation

If we recall how hard the Saxons had been smitten, how deeply they had been humiliated and what unspeakable torments, in body and soul, they had undergone, it seems unbelievable to us that, despite all this, their resistance rose to life again after a few years, even into a fierce blaze. Yet it is a fact that in 792 – seven years after Widukind had let himself be christened – a new uprising broke out throughout Saxony. It seems even more improbable to us that this insurgence was to be the signal for a new war which was to last a further twelve years. This last period of the struggle is of prime importance when conning the methods used by Charles to downtread this “stubborn” folkdom. At all events, it was in these later years that he resorted to *the deporting and shifting away of the populations of whole regions*, a method of warfare first practised in history by the Assyrians and which is highly characteristic of the all-flattening and race-quelling nature of Asiatic despotisms. Certainly, Charles had previously borne off prisoners-of-war out of Saxony,¹⁸⁶ but, up till then, it had not yet come to a mass evacuation in the two foregoing phases of the Saxon Wars. The fact, however, that in 777 at the Reichstag of Lippspringe Charles exacted a declaration from the forgathered Saxon nobles in which they agreed to a confiscation of their properties, should they commit breach of faith against the King,¹⁸⁷ makes it probable that this measure had been in his mind for a long time. But what prompted the Saxons to take to their weapons for a second time?

Mention should be made, first of all, of the trueness with which they clung to their belief. In a letter which Alkwin wrote to Charles on the occasion of the subjection of the “Huns” (= Avars) in the year 796, he expressed the opinion that the hour for the divine choosing of the Saxons had not yet struck, for which reason many of them persisted “with the devil, as sinful and condemnable men, in the mire of their evil wonts”. Apart from

their clinging to the old belief, the resistance of the Saxons can perhaps be explained, too, by the harsh and unsparing way in which they were forced to pay the church tithes. Alkwin warned again and again about this, but to no effect. In the afore-mentioned letter, he reminds his kingly master that the apostles never craved any tithes, and that it were better to forgo them than to bring to naught the belief. To the bishop of Salzburg he writes that the tithes had, as it was said, brought the belief of the Saxons into decline. It is, above all, an instructive letter which he sent in the same year (796) to Megenfried, the King's treasurer. He writes:¹⁸⁸

"If the mild yoke of Christ and the light burden were to be preached to the stubborn Saxon folk with the same tenacity, as is extended in enforcing the payment of tithes and of penalties for transgressing against some form or other of legal clause, *then perhaps they would not have such a dread of the baptismal sacrament.* Many teachers at last come forth, formed on the model of the apostles; may they be men of preaching (*praedicatores*) and not men of prey (*praedatores*). May they trust in the pious faith of him that says: "Carry neither purse, nor scrip"¹⁸⁹ asf. and in the words of the Prophet: "He who never forsakes him that trust in him"."¹⁹⁰

What must have embittered the Saxons most of all is that these taxes had to be paid for the upkeep of a church, which had been foisted on them by force, and of high-ranking clerics who neither dared to nor would enter the newly "converted" territory. In a source,¹⁹¹ which is beyond suspicion in this respect, we read that Charles, after having divided up the land into bishoprics (here is meant presumably the temporary partition which he announced at Lippspringe in 780), could barely find men to nominate as bishops over the rough and half-heathen people, "since no cleric found it safe to abide among a folk which sank back from time to time into heathendom and who were not only wanting in the religion, and all that belonged to it, but who had absolutely no knowledge thereof". This noticeable lack of evangelical zeal caused Charles to draft a regulation whereby the new bishoprics were to fall for the time being under the Frankish bishops. Whilst the obligation was placed on these prelates to move into the regions allotted to them and to instruct the churchfolk "as often as time allow", they could at the same time delegate the pastoral care over this dangerous area to priests of lower rank whom they would be pleased to nominate from the clergy within their own dioceses. This regulation, so agreeable to the church principals, was to remain in force, until "with God's help" the conversion had been so far implemented as to enable "their own bishops to dwell with dignity and freedom even in the more remote dioceses".

To the Teutonic way of thinking, it was just as reprehensible that the work of conversion was wholly, or at least to a great extent, carried out by clerics of Saxon descent who had received their training by dint of the fact that they had, in their youth, been taken prisoner or held as hostages in Frankish monasteries.¹⁹² With the aim of introducing the monastic system into Saxony as well, Charles sent a great number of these unfortunates to the monastery of Corbie on the Somme,¹⁹³ which was renowned for the fact that it was run by the King's nephew, Adalhard. These clerics, estranged from their own folk and kind by the monastic discipline were, by preference, entrusted with the burden of converting their own countrymen. No wonder that the Saxons pursued their renegade kinsmen, who had been converted in this way, with a special hate, a hate so strong that, according to the records, they found no peace, not even among the Saxon settlements which had been formed by deported Saxons within the Frankish kingdom.¹⁹⁴ No wonder too, that, in every uprising, they bloodily avenged themselves first on the

bringers of the religion which had been forced upon them. Their vengeance is depicted in glaring colours, for instance, in the life-story of Willehad.¹⁹⁵ Whenever the names of the victims are mentioned, it always awakes the impression that their number was only small, even if not all the names are given. Be it as it may, the numbers sink into insignificance in face of the enormous toll of victims which the "conversion" cost the Saxons. They had certainly not got to know of Christianity as a "religion of love".

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It is indeed typical of the feelings nursed by the Saxons in respect of this new religion that in the uprising of 792, which was touched off by a raid on Frankish ships passing down the lower Elbe, the churches were straightaway and everywhere set afire and the priests driven off, while the folk, as a whole, reverted to the worship of the olden gods. Everything points to the fact that this uprising was well prepared, because the sources speak not only of secret relations which the Saxons had struck up with the Avars and other "barbarians" (Slavs?), but also of yet another lucky attack which they pulled off in the Rürstringen region (*Riustri*) on the left bank of the Weser estuary — thus in a region that was then Frisian! The force of the uprising can be gathered not only by the fact that the sources distinctly speak of a "general apostasy" among the Saxons, but also by the circumstance that it took Charles, who had also other worries,¹⁹⁶ until 794 to partly break down the resistance. It is said that he contrived to advance with two warbands coming in from opposite directions — a strategy to which he took a liking — in order to overwhelm the Saxons.

However, it is certain that this subjection, which was belike attained by bribery, was limited only to a few areas, and these were so restless that Charles was forced to intervene in the aforesaid Bardengau in the following year (795). At Bardowick he received the news that his Slav ally, the Abotrite prince Witzin, who had helped him the year before against the Saxons, had been killed during his crossing of the Elbe by a Saxon detachment. It was on hearing these tidings that Charles not only laid waste the land far and wide, but took 7070 Saxon men, a third of the male population, as "hostages" — i.e. as prisoners — and scattered them over other parts of the kingdom. In their place, Franks were settled in great numbers in the man-reft land. They received in turn the ploughlands of the prisoners and, as can be assumed, wedded the wives and daughters who had been left behind.

Even after, in this wise, a start had been made in the deliberate crushing of the Saxon folk-strength, there were still districts left at the mouth of the Elbe and on the lower Weser where resistance prevailed. Even in the *gaue* (counties), which had been but recently subjected, rebellion broke out afresh as soon as Charles' back was turned. For this reason, he went in the following summer (796), with his sons Charles and Ludovic, through the luckless land again, "burning and pillaging, and dragging off an untold host of prisoners, this time also women and children with their men, out of the Draingau".¹⁹⁷ In the following year, this punitive raiding was repeated, and carried further into Frisian territory towards the estuaries (the present-day province of Hadeln near Cuxhafen); and for the second time, the *gau* of *Wigmodia*,¹⁹⁸ which had belonged to the former mission area of Willehad, was badly hit. After the population of the insurgent district had yielded, a third part of the manhood together with women and children was deported, and again their places were taken by Franks. In the light of these frightful happenings, it matters little that in the "*Capitulare Saxonicum*", which was drawn up in the

same year at the Reichstag in Aachen (797), the cruel lawgiving of 780 was made milder on some points. The very fact alone that Charles again — as 784-785 — dwelt the winter through in Saxony, shows how heavily his hand rested on the stricken land.

As incredible as it may seem, all this could not stop a new uprising from breaking out in Saxony in the following year (798). After the North Albingians had slain royal emissaries, the Engrians and Eastfalians also took to their weapons. Coming in great haste from Herstal, Charles then laid waste the whole region betwixt Weser and Elbe, and again deported nobles and others as “hostages”, “as many as he wanted”. He depended again on the Slav Obotrites in his strife against the North Albingians — “his” Slavs (*sclavi nostri*), as the sources quote significantly. With the help of these heathens the Saxons were beaten in a battle which cost them 4000 dead. Drosug, the Obotrite leader, was thereupon “wonderfully” honoured “as he deserved”. What a frightful setback the Saxon folk suffered once more in this year can be seen in the report that Charles deported no less than 1600 noblemen out of Saxony and strewed them out over “Francia”.¹⁹⁹

Likewise in the following year (799), great parts of the population were borne off; the land, which was thereby left open, was distributed among bishops and priests, and among counts and royal vassals. He turned a deaf ear to the warnings of Alkwin who doubted even then (in 799!) if God had really set aside the Saxonland for Christendom, for only the deported had become Christians. This time Charles was right, for the exhaustion of the hapless land was so great that, during the following years in which he stayed in Italy, it could no longer summon up strength to rebel. Only once more, in 804, the resistance flickered up; here again, North Albingia and Wigmodia were burning-spots of resistance. Frightful was the way in which Charles’ vengeance fell on these provinces. He gave to Drosug the land on the yonder-side of the Elbe. Thereupon he ordered all Saxons left in that region (Northalbingia) and in sorely ravaged Wigmodia to be dragged off, together with women and children, into parts of the kingdom beyond the Rhine. The boys were wrested from the care of their parents to be reared by monks and priests in the monasteries. It is characteristic of the harsh and brutal wise, in which the evacuation of these lands took place, that the christianised Saxons, too, had to share in the lot of their fellows.²⁰⁰ Apart from those already named, several other regions, as named in the annals, were also unpeopled, so that the figure of 10,000 men, said to have been deported in that year, is certainly not too high. The stillness, which then came over Saxony, was the stillness of the grave.

At long last, Charles, for whom, as Einhard remarks, the Saxon Wars meant more than even the war against the Avars,²⁰¹ had overcome for good the stubborn folkdom and shackled it to himself and to Christianity. The installing of six new bishoprics²⁰² set the seal upon his victory. But at what unspeakable costs and under what barbaric methods had this victory been wrought! If Alfred Rosenberg has likened the Saxon Wars to the Thirty Years Wars, this comparison is insofar justified as the first-named had, as can be assumed with certainty, the same disastrous aftermath for the Saxonland as the latter had for the whole of Germany.²⁰³ The reader should refer to the Fourth Section of the survey at the end of this book to gain an idea of the extent of the devastation and of the depopulation stemming from the repeated deportings with which the Saxons were beset in the course of the war. The most remarkable thing of all is that Charles was powerless to wipe out the old tilling (culture) of the Saxons without assailing first the blood of that folkdom and mongrelising it with ruthless hand.

It has been rightly pointed out by a German historian²⁰⁴ that Charles' deeds bewray the spirit of an Oriental despot and the cruelty of the Old Testament, but by no means the spiritual bearing of a Teutonic king. His behaviour can only in part be excused by the theocratic illusion, which held him in its spell and which made him view the violent spreading of Christianity as a religious duty. While poetry of the Middle Ages, written under the sway of the Church, hero-worshipped Charles in a spate of legends and sagas, celebrating and besinging him as the greatest lawgiver of alltime, more convincing for us is the picture which has been handed down, right into our times, by the Saxon folk-tradition. How clear this picture has been kept throughout the centuries and how, still today, it dominates the emotional life of the Lower Saxon landfolk, became evident shortly before 1914, when it was intended to build a statue of Charles the Frank opposite the Hermannsdenkmal. Armed with flails and pitchforks, the farming-folk arrived on the scene to hinder the laying of the cornerstone for this monument, which was to honour the "Slaughterer". The nature of a folkdom which, in a past seemingly dead and gone, had brought greater sacrifices in the name of freedom and belief than possibly any other folk on earth, could not fail to come out in these doughty offspring of a doughty ancestry.

This ancestry was not only doughty, but possessed other gifts as well. The conquest and settlement of England by the allied Angles and Saxons — for those days an undertaking of grandeur comparable with the colonisation and conquest of North America by their descendants in centuries to come — shows how hidden forces slumbered in those peoples. In lust for conquest and in statesmanship, the Saxons in no way fell short of the original (pure Germanic!) Franks. But it was the thrusting of those Franks into the lands of the late-Roman race-chaos which made them take over the methods of organisation, the outworn administration and the military technique of the effete Romanic world, even at the cost of their own folkly nature. Therewith, the Franks had gained a start in all these fields which, however dearly paid, was to stand them in good stead over and against the other Germanic folkdoms. Or was it not rather the race-chaos which — thanks to the infusion of Germanic blood — received the strength to triumph over the one folkdom on the Central European mainland which had kept pure its Germanic nature? It is clear that in both the Thirty Years' Wars of German history²⁰⁵ the Teutonic spirit had to take up cudgels with the might from the South. While both wars are religious in kind, they also resemble one another in the fact that, in both cases, help for the cause of Teutondom was to come from the North. However, it was the fate of the Saxons that this stepping-in of the North Germanic peoples came too late to save them from their doom. The Vikings, to whom our last chapter is devoted, could no longer tread forth as rescuers. But they became instead fearful avengers.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NORSEMEN AS REDEEMERS OF GERMANIC HONOUR

There is, perhaps, no other historical happening, around which centres such a heap of prejudice and misconstruction, among historians as well as laymen, as the invasions of the Norsemen.²⁰⁶ These raids, which for over two centuries 787-c.1000 ravaged the christianised part of Europe, are described to us by a history-writing, which falls far short of its duty to elucidate, as an outburst of barbarous lust for plunder and murder. The cause of these misconceptions lies in a method of chronicling which bases its reports as good as completely on the utterings of monks and other clerics who were, in the nature of things, the foes of these heathens. Not only did they adopt an emphatically "southern" standpoint, which cannot claim freedom from bias, but they also deprived themselves of the chance to form a judgement on the Viking behaviour by omitting to examine the circumstances under which these Nordic warriors lived in their fatherland as well as their culture and way of life. A closer study of the Norseman in his land of birth is our only means of enabling ourselves to ken these motives with a high degree of likelihood.

Credit must be given to latterday German scholars, among whom are outstanding knowers of old Norse literature,²⁰⁷ for having cast a better light on the earliest history of the North. The perusal of the old Norse sources, which these historians consulted with minuteness, coupled with a sharper and more critical look into the Latin-Christian narration, was their way of piercing through to the deeper roots of the events. As we take the North as the starting-point for our survey and seek to view the tide of events from a Germanic vantage, we cannot forgo a brief inspection into the oldest history of the Norse folkdoms, even if this should fall rather beyond the scope of this book. The picture, which may thus be gained of this history, serves to dispel many a misconception which has gained a foothold in recent times.

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According to the opinion fostered up till now, the Norsemen were, up to their conversion round about the year 1000, uncouth barbarians, and their land had no history. But how totally different is the picture of the earliest unfolding of these folkdoms when beheld in the new light shed thereon by the innumerable prehistoric finds! The splendid bronzecast "lures"²⁰⁸ from the Bronze Age (c.1800-c.800 b.t.), found in Jutland, bear witness to the great craftsmanship of the North Germanic tribes, even at that early time; they are one of the many proofs of the high antiquity of their culture. The great rock-drawings of the same time-span, which are met with in Scandinavia²⁰⁹ and can be explained only as the work of a greater society, bestow with their likenesses of ships, often manned with a hundred oarsmen, of ploughing farmers and grazing cows, of knights with spear and shield and often of war-chariots, the overwhelming proof, not only of a very high cultural unfolding, but also of a political framework which had already

outgrown its infancy. Without a certain degree of state organisation, the shipbuilding and seafaring, shown in these drawings, are just as inexplicable as the presence of mighty monuments such as the "king's grave" at Hågå in Uppland.²¹⁰ Thus, the historical bequest of the North must begin, before the year 3000, with kinglike leaders, who can be likened to the folk-kings of the oldest Iranians and Greeks who hailed from the North.²¹¹

The scant reports, which the Greeks and Romans have handed down to us in respect of their Nordic kindred, are in keeping with the dumb witness of these rock-drawings. Pytheas of Massilia, a Greek sailor, who lived presumably in the fourth century before Christ, tells us in his traveller's tale, which is only known to us through later excerpts, of his voyage, six days past Britain, to *Thule*, of the short nights there, of corn-growing and of mead-brewing. On the other hand, Plinius (79 in our timereckoning), in whose lost work much more about the North had been written, speaks of the five hundred shires of the Northmen, whom he names *Helleviones*, of *Nerigon*,²¹² or *Berrice* and of the great "island" of *Scadinavia*. In the year 98 i.t., Tacitus speaks of the "states" of Sweden, of their kings, their wealth and their fleets. Of the rest of the Cimbrians in the North of Jutland he says: "They are a small folkdom, but their fame is great". This report is of great importance inasfar as it shows how the memory of the great deeds of a people, which had once made Rome shake in its foundations, still lived on, after two centuries, in the kinsmen who had been left behind in the North.

Hence, an historical tradition, in part of very great age, was kept by the heathen Northfolk a full thousand years before their conversion. This tradition was, however, apart from isolated and late communications on rune-written staffs and stones²¹³ — of which "runestones", alone in Sweden, more than 3000 have been found — handed down by word of mouth. In epic songs and alliterative verses the Bygone was held fast in the memory. Thus it is no wonder that this memory could be falsified and twisted as soon as the new powers, which triumphed in the introduction of Christianity, and to whose advantage it was to blacken as far as possible the heathen past, set themselves the task of putting down this history in writing.

Above all Sweden, the land with probably the oldest history, affords an example of falsification of history. The genealogy of thirty Swedish kings, handed down to us from heathen times, is the work of the Norse skals (= poet or singer) Thjodolf, who lived towards the end of the ninth century. But, in the form in which it is handed down to us by Icelandic historians from the early-Christian period, it smacks strongly of a "chronique scandaleuse". Bloody family feuds with murder and manslaughter, adultery, strife with the Danes and Goths, and human sacrifices made for the most unlikely reasons, alternate in colourful sequence. King Högni, who is said to have been hanged by his own wife, by means of a golden chain, on a tree near the later Stockholm, is certainly the one figure in this gloomy tale, who best fits into this fantasy. In the meantime, other sounds reach our ears. We read of a later king, Oenund, that Sweden fared well under him, that he re-conquered the Estonians, had forests cut down, had farmsteads built and, above all, had roads built through woods and marshland and over mountains. On that account he was named, "Highway-Oenund".²¹⁴ This report is not the only one of its kind in the tale, for it is said of other thanes, too, that they had woodlands cleared. Recalling how the Christian chroniclers cannot find words black enough to describe these heathen princes, their cultural level comes as a pleasant surprise to the unbiased reader.

This impression is strengthened still further by what has been handed down concerning the laws of the Swedes and Goths.²¹⁵ Although the latter

have been written down in the Christian era, their core stems from a much earlier age. Both folkdoms were, after a period of severe mutual strife ending in victory for the Swedes, united into a kingdom which seems only at a later date to have become split (after 300). The choosing of the king within the tribe of the Ynglinga and the homage to be paid to the chosen thane were laid down exactly. It should be noted here that the power of the king was limited by the influence of the "jarls", but no less by the rights of the freemen who, together with the athelings, chose the king at the "thing" (moot).

In Norway, which was not yet united into one single kingdom, the provincial thanes were dependent on the co-operation of the folk-assemblies which consisted of free yeomen. The only evidence of the oldest history of this land, which the Icelandic scholars have wholly neglected, are the runestones, place-names and kings' graves. Likewise, the history of the kings who ruled Denmark in heathen days has become almost completely lost. It is nonetheless a fact of importance that the Danes too, some hundreds of years before their clash with the Frankish kingdom, were ruled by kings. Neither can the history of this clash be understood in all its girth and meaning if one insists on regarding the Nordic folkdoms of that time merely as barbarians instead of as *peoples with a culture of centuries' standing and just as ancient a history.*

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We can see by this survey of the earliest history of the North how improbable it is that the invasions of the Norsemen, or Vikings,²¹⁶ as they called themselves, were but the work of wild searobbers, who undertook their expeditions solely with the aim of killing and plundering. It has been all too often overlooked by our historians that the lack of a Nordic chronicle dating from that time, from which we might, as it were, from their own mouth, learn the motives and thoughts of the Norse leaders and thanes, has given rise to a very biased reporting. Instead of taking the starting-point for their investigations in the North and observing the Norseman in his own fatherland in order to explain his appearance in history in the light of his lifetale and outlook, his nature and the breadth of his horizon, these delvers of history espy the Viking – even if subconsciously – from the monastery window, illumined by men who were neither willing nor able to understand this heathen warrior in his deepest being.

Another shortcoming of current history-writing is that not enough heed is given to the circumstances under which the first appearance of the Norsemen took place. This appearance must be seen as the direct answer to the underyoking and enforced conversion of the Saxons by the Frankish king. The barbarous and cruel means employed by the latter must have awakened among the heathen folk of the North loathing and indignation. It can be taken as certain that the tragic happenings in their neighbours' land, to which they were linked by blood and speech,²¹⁷ must have found a like echo among the Nordic folkdoms as does the heroic struggle of the Finns in our day. Twice (in 777 and 782), *Widukind* sought refuge with the Danish king *Siegfried* and many other refugees will doubtlessly have accompanied him, thus arousing strong fellowfeeling among their Germanic brother-folk. And doubtless too, the awareness will have grown in Nordic lands that their own future, also, would be threatened in the event of a further onset on the part of the already increased Frankish power. The train of thought, which came to many, can be summed up in the following words of a German write:²¹⁸

"After the bloody example of Lower Saxony, it must have been a

foregone conclusion, for the dwellers of the North, that both the worldly might of the Franks and the Christian priests were foes, to the death, of their religion, their morality and their social order. The Vikings were bound to see in the monastic system and monkhood the vanguard of the enemy rather than an organisation given to the spreading of Christ's teaching of love."

So they intervened finally in the war which Alfred Rosenberg has rightly named the "*First Thirty Years' War*" of German history. The Nordic folkdoms stepped into the breach, in the same way as their descendants were to do in the second Thirty Years' War, as defenders of the Germanic world-outlook. A short survey of the events of this period can show us how probable it is that the leaders of these peoples, who were by no means barbarians but men of great circumspection, were clearly aware of their goal.

The attack, made by a number of Norsemen from Hórdaland²¹⁹ on Wessex in the year 787, forms the beginning of the actual Viking raids. It is straightaway noticeable that it was carried out shortly after the first bloody subjection of the Saxons (785). However, too little is known here of this first attack to justify the drawing of definite conclusions. But it was quite another thing with the next infaill which struck Northumberland in the year 793. In that attack, the monastery at *Lindisfarne*, which was the foremost centre of the Roman Catholic mission in Northern England, was laid waste by Vikings. In view of the fact that monasteries were fulcrums for the enforced conversion which, on the Continent, always went hand in hand with the submission to Frankish state authority, and at the same time bearing in mind that these places, which were set aside for seclusion and contemplation, were also used by Charles as state prisons wherein he locked up his foes, including many Saxon youngsters, there can hardly be any talk, here, of a co-incidence.

In the years to follow, the Vikings spared England for the time being, but it is significant that they then pointed their attacks mainly against *Ireland*, the land which had long been the centre of radiation for the Christian gospel in North-Western Europe. It was also mainly churches and monasteries which were hit by the Viking storm, and monks as victims of battle. Thus in 813, the *monastery of Iona* on the island of that ilk, which had served the Irish monks as a springboard for the conversion of Scotland, was devastated by the Vikings. This remarkable phenomenon cannot be explained away by the wealth within the monasteries. It was Ranke, the great German historian, who first connected the Viking raids with the religious enterprises of Christian Europe, especially with the Irish and Anglo-Saxon priesthood, those raids giving thereto the pagan answer.

The territory of the Frankish kingdom appears to be at first spared by the Norsemen. Not until the year 800 do we hear of Viking raids on the coast of Gaul. Charles introduces a kind of coastal watch against them and at the same time has a fleet built, to which end he abides for a long time at Rouen.²²⁰ In 804, at the moment when he has overwhelmed the Saxons again, this time for good, he exchanges ambassadors with the Danish king *Göttrik*, or *Godofried* — as the Franks called him — presumably the successor to the afore-named Siegfried. Göttrik turns up with his fleet and his entire cavalry at his stronghold of *Slieuthorp* (= Schleswig) on the border of the North Albingian region, subdued shortly before by Charles, and craves to visit the Emperor in his leaguer. But he is hindered from doing this by his retainers, who seem to be only too well aware of the proverbial Frankish treachery. In the negotiations which follow, Charles demands, seemingly in vain, the extradition of the Saxons who have fled over to the Danes. At all events, the break between the two rulers is to become ere long a fact.

Remarkable is then the unfurling of strength, of which Göttrick, who, apart from being a shrewd leader, seems to be also a strengthful and self-assured personality, proves himself capable. In the year 808, we see him going over to the attack. Together with the Slavonic Vilsians, who are likewise hostile to the Frankish kingdom, he leads an infall into the region of the also Slavonic Obotrites,²²¹ who are Charles' allies, drives off their headman Drosug and overwhelms, albeit with heavy losses, two thirds of their land. Not until Charles' son and namesake draws up with a whole army, does he withdraw, laying waste his own merchant base of *Rerik*²²² and ordering his army to build the border-wall which was later to become known by the name of "Danewirk". This border-wall, which stretched from the mouth of the Eider into the North Sea over to the Schlei which flows into the Baltic, possessed only one sally-port and was intended to shield Danish territory from any attack from the South. Not only the laying of these defence-works on the frontier, but also everything that Göttrick does further, shows a businesslikeness and affords evidence of a strategic talent which stands in no way second to that of the Frankish leaders.

After the misfiring of the peace negotiations, and after Charles had answered the laying of the Danewirk with the building of the fastness at *Esesfelt* (= Itzehoe), the war broke out anew (810). Göttrick first put to advantage his overnight at sea; he sent a fleet of 200 sails to Frisia, which plundered all the islands lying off the coast and set ashore an army. The area was then treated as a conquered province; it had to bear a yearly tax of 100 pounds of silver, the first instalment to be paid immediately.

Upon hearing of these happenings, Charles had a fleet built in all haste, bringing the seaboard of his kingdom into a state of defence. He even left his palace at Aachen in order to set himself at the head of a warmight, which he mustered to meet the Danish king who had in the meantime subdued again the Obotrites. In the neighbourhood of *Verden*, at the confluence of the Aller into the Weser, both armies drew up their lines of battle. How far everything for Charles stood on the razor's edge can be seen by the fact that — according to Frankish reports — Göttrick not only regarded himself already as master of Frisia and Saxony, but also announced his intention, after having defeated Charles, of *riding into Aachen as lord over all Germania*.²²³ But before this decisive blow could be struck, which — according to Ranke — might well have turned the tide and smashed Charles, the Danish king was murdered by one of his countrymen. *Hemming*, his nephew and successor, made peace with the Emperor (811), and so dwindled for good the last chance of wresting Saxony from the grip of the ecclesiastical Frankish authority. *The death of Göttrick forms therefore a decisive turning-point in history*. Seen from the standpoint of the Church, this slaying is regarded by the historian, Adam of Bremen,²²⁴ as a deed of Providence. On the other hand, viewed from the Germanic angle, it was an irreparable loss that the age-old cultural fellowship, which had erst united the Norsemen with their southern blood-fellows, was now broken for good.

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In the time of decay, which began for the Frankish kingdom with the death of Charles, two things warrant our attention. Firstly we see *Ludovic the Pious* (814-840) employing the same means with respect to the Norse kingdoms, enabling the church hierarchy to bring the North under its authority. It is sought to achieve by political intrigue what might of weapons alone cannot bring about. Ludovic takes a refugee Danish prince, by the name

of *Harald*, under his wing. After paying homage to his feudal lord, the latter makes three invasions into Denmark. The mighty king, *Ragnar Lodbrok*, finds however help in Norway. So we see a civil war unfolding which may well have been instigated by those same forces who were behind Göttrick's murder. In order to gain more help, Harald has to submit to baptism in the usual way at Mainz, together with 500 Danes, in the year 826. Thanks to the armed help of the Emperor he can then occupy Schleswig, where he lays waste heathen halidoms, drives off the priests, wipes out the veneration of the "false gods",²²⁵ and has a church built to the honour of the Christian god. Admittedly, he is driven out again in the very next year by Ragnar, whereupon the old faith comes into its own again, but this can only retard the fall of heathenhood together with the quelling of the old folk-freedom. However, the final triumph of Christianity was not the outcome of the conversion work done by *Ansgar* who, ordained bishop of Hamburg by Ludovic, undertook several missionary journeys to the North which turned out to be fruitless. It was once again violence that settled the issue.

After *Gorm the Elder* (900-935) had consolidated the might of the king in Denmark, his son, *Harald Bluetooth* (*Blaatand*, 935-985), was beaten by Emperor *Otto II* and forced into introducing Christianity. A fresh heathen reaction under *Sven* (985-1014) could no longer undo what had been done. His son, *Canute* ("the Great", 1014-1035) who, in addition to ruling over Denmark and over the England conquered by his father, was also lord over Norway, had himself baptised and thus brought the North anew – and this time for good – under the yoke of ecclesiastical power. The raids of the Norsemen into the christianised part of Europe ended thereby of their own accord. It is of note that this underyoking was preceded, in Norway and Sweden too, by the installing of a centralised monarchy, which harnessed the nobility to its authority. Without a doubt, this meant a tremendous upheaval which was to smite deeply into the social framework of the Nordic folkdoms, but which cannot be dealt with here. Let it suffice to be noted that all this did not come about without Carolingian influence. Although the Church failed to obtain such an irresistible grasp on souls as had been the case in lands brought earlier under its sway, its victory was unmistakable.

In the second place, we gain the impression that the Norse invasions of this period get more and more out of hand. Their attack of the year 845, in which with their fleets they overwhelm Hamburg – the starting-point for Ludovic's projected conversion of the North – and at the same time Paris, bewrays still a planned course of action. On the other hand, the picture given of the events in the years thereafter, during which so many Frankish towns were sacked by the Vikings, shows precious little of a purposeful warfare. More and more, these Norse raids seem to take on the shape of isolated ransackings, whereby reaving and looting and no longer any political aims are paramount. And yet it seems remarkable that, even on West Frankish territory, they brought heathenhood back to life. The turning of the palatinate chapel of Charles the Frank at Nijmegen into stables for the horses betokened, perhaps, the winning-through of heathendom. To what extent the Viking hosts forsook by and by their ties with the fatherland is best illustrated by the fact that they finally allowed themselves to be used *against* this fatherland. It is the above-named Harald *Blaatand* who hires the league of the Joms-Vikings²²⁶ as professional soldiers, and uses them for an onslaught on Norway, which he not only sought to bring under his own thong but also under that of the Church. Simultaneously, he employs other Vikings against Sweden.²²⁷ So the Vikings, who had begun their career as forefighters of the Teutonic outlook on life, now ended it as searobbers and mercenaries.

Yet the data taken from this period show that the Norsemen were not barbarians by a long chalk, and did not make their mark solely as searovers. In those parts of Europe where they settled permanently, they founded kingdoms which, by dint of their exemplary organisation, aroused the admiration of their contemporaries, and became centres of light radiating Nordic shaping-might and energy. We need only recall here the foundation of the dukedom of Normandy by the Norman *Rolf* and his fellows (912), the conquest of Southern Italy and Sicily from that base (1042-1130) achieved by the twelve bold sons of the old count *Tancred of Hauteville*, and the conquest of England by *William the Conqueror* (1066), likewise from Normandy. With regard to Eastern Europe, there is the comparable founding of Russia by the *Varagians* (from Old Norse, "*vaeringjar*" = followers) under the Swede, *Hrurekr* (Slav: *Rjurik*). The influence, which the Norsemen have further wielded on the political and cultural unfolding of our continent, can hardly be overrated. That the Middle Ages were to witness once more an outpouring of the Germanic soul can be mainly put down to a Nordic influence. One should just stop to think of the remarkable fact that the typically Germanic Gothic style came into being in Normandy, which can scarcely be a coincidence. It is no less significant that Frederick II, the emperor who, by his freethinkingness, brought upon his head the remorseless hatred of the clergy, had a Norman mother.²²⁸ The Nordic will to conquer finds a further outlet in the Crusades and many other undertakings, and the strong Nordic racial element in those states founded by the Northlanders was to make itself felt for hundreds of years.

Another contribution, which has secured the Vikings a place of honour in history, are their voyages of discovery, which gave rise to the colonisation of previously unpopulated or sparsely populated regions. We need only mention here the colonisation of Iceland, discovered by them shortly before (874), the finding of Greenland (982), where a folk-settlement was also established, and the unsuccessful bid to gain a permanent foothold on the East coast of North America (1000). The mighty expansion drive, which is the outstanding symptom among the Nordic folkdoms of that time, must be looked upon doubtlessly, in a wider sense, as the last phase of the Germanic Folkwandering which, at an earlier period, had so thoroughly altered the political and cultural appearance of Europe. Apart from a relative overbreeding which, in the rocky and barren land of Scandinavia, made itself sooner felt than elsewhere, and the strong tendency of the Nordic race to swarm forth, making the need for more living-space more urgent than with other breeds, there must also have been political motives behind this expansion drive. It was the Norse king, *Harald Harfager* (= Fairhair, c.860-933) who, by his introduction of the centralised monarchy on the Carolingian model with its attendant confiscation of the odal property of many noble and yeoman families, caused the latter to seek for themselves new dwelling-grounds, either overseas or in unreclaimed parts of Scandinavia. The grand trek, which then took place, can be explained by the great love for the old folk-freedom and bereft Norway of its best elements.

Hence, the Viking storm, which made Christian Europe dither, strengthened once again the political preponderance of the Germanic selfhood on this continent, drenching and fertilising it anew with Nordic blood. But, at the same time, it weakened its own Nordic fatherland, widened the contacts with the spiritual powers of the South and thus, unwilling and unintended, hastened the triumph of the same. It is the tragic irony of history that the selfsame conquests, which the Norsemen sealed with their weapons, should pave the way for the spiritual vanquishment under a system of clerical

politics, to whose protagonists they had made themselves. The free spirit of the Nordic race, so distinctly borne out in the Vikings, suffered, on the political plane, the defeat at the hands of the organised spiritual power from the South, embodied in Charles' Imperium Christianum.

CLOSING WORDS

Having come to the end of our survey, we deem it of advantage to sum up, in its main features, the development which this book has sketched in broad outline. Let us now go back to where we set off!

At the time of the Imperium Romanum, the Romanic and the Germanic world stand facing one another as two sharply distinguishable and evenly valued powers. Each of these worlds forms a selfstanding whole, rests within itself, hearkens to its own laws and has its own world-outlook, even though at the tangential point where the two parties meet, a mutual influencing takes place. While the one folkhood, which shaped the Imperium, has become mongrelised in the run of the centuries and its Nordic-blooded element, wherein its original strength rested, has all but dwindled away, there stands on the other side of the line a folk which, thanks to its unsullied blood, has been bold to keep its youthful strength unbroken.

Another contrast runs parallel to this. As against the outlived culture of the Imperium, which is no longer worthy of the name, built up as it is on the most heterogenous elements, nor being linked up with any single race, indeed the very embodiment of the spirit of race-chaos, there stands the sound if undeveloped tilth (culture) of the Teutons. The ingathered knowledge from the past, the schooled habit of thinking, the scientific or would-be scientific methods, the technique and the outward civilisation are to be found on a great scale in the camp of their enemies. Moreover, there is a clerico-political system which has clad itself with the organisational forms of the Imperium in order to win mastery over the souls. Animated by the same imperialistic craze as erstwhile the caesars, the bearers of this system are out to continue the power-politics of the dying, secular Rome and to make it triumphant, by using other methods, where the Imperium failed.

It is this slowly dying world, which, almost unnoticed by the contemporaries who are unable to comprehend the events in their breadth, suddenly yields to the blows which have been ringing about them since the outset of the Folkwandering. It is overwhelmed by the Teutonic peoples who conquer the West Roman Empire, founding their own kingdoms upon its territory, but who settle only in relatively small numbers. Already beforehand, some of these folkdoms have begun to accept Christianity, which had risen to power in the Roman Empire shortly before its fall; after the conquest is completed and the sundry tribes have taken up their ultimate living-zones, this conversion makes further headway. It is of the utmost significance here that the greater part of these folkdoms let themselves be converted, not to Roman Catholic christianity, but to Arianism. Even though, at root, unteutonic, this latter form developed quite independently from Rome and yielded to the strong influence of the Germanic soul. It is foe to monasticism and belief in miracles, sets the Bible to the fore and preaches in the native tongue. The conversion of the Germanic kindreds to this form of Christianity, which must be viewed as a forerunner of the later Protestantism, opens wide perspectives. It seems possible that they, with the help of their Christian

teachers, can now gain access to the richness of wisdom and learning which the moribund culture of the Imperium had stored up from the past, thus girding themselves with the spiritual weapons of their foeman which they needed for the life-or-death struggle for existence in a racially alien environment. But this possibility, even though present for a long time, did not find fulfilment.

Whereas the Arian Teutons held themselves aloof from the Romanic population whom they had subdued, it was quite another thing with the one Germanic folk which had, right from the outset, and from the lips of its king, confessed to the Roman Catholic creed. It was here political motives which called the tune. We have here a selfish prince who, against the will of his folkdom which is forced to follow, treads a path which will lead to the gradual melting into one another of the conquerors and the conquered. *Chlodwig's conversion to the Romish faith (496) is of the utmost importance* to the extent that it furnishes him with the means of smashing the neighbouring Germanic peoples and, with the co-operation and backing of the subject Romanic population, of bringing them partly under his heel. The first Germanic prince had thus placed himself in the service of race-alien ideas, so setting the stage for a supranational state, in which Germanic and Romanic elements of folkhood and culture are blent in more and more, and of which the church hierarchy, which for the time being goes hand-in-hand with the royal power, forms the binding tissue. At a somewhat later date, the other Germanic peoples, who have escaped annihilation at the hands of East Romans or Franks, go over to Roman Catholicism (c.600). Their lesser numerical strength and their blood which, too, has become bastardised through the mixing with the subject population, are the reasons why they are at length unable to keep up the struggle for the integrity of their kind, especially since the bonds with the Teutonic heartland have long since snapped asunder.

So the year 600 forms a decisive turning-point. The effete Romanic world, which had wilted before the weaponmight of the Teutons, now rejuvenated itself by the absorption of Nordic blood, overcame spiritually the indriven conquerors, and harnessed them to their own ideas. Meanwhile, the old Teutonic heartland was diminished and weakened by the loss of numerous folkgroups, who were among the best, and by the onset of the Slavs, while its outlook on life and on the world was brought to the brink of downfall by the overtread of its emigrant sons to a new and incomprehensible doctrine. In so doing, the borderline between the two worlds, which had been hitherto so marked, now became dimmer and dimmer, and partly, to the undiscerning eye, even erased. In the strife which now flares up, the second Rome, just like the first, is to set Teuton against Teuton, but this struggle is to take place under quite different dispositions of strength than those which have obtained betwixt the earlier Germanic tribes and the Roman legions, and will have quite a different ending. The complete military triumph which the inpouring Teutons gain in the decadent empire, is to be answered by just as complete a *spiritual victory* of the new Imperium which has stepped into the shoes of the old; and while the Vandals come to the end of their triumphal way on the edge of the Sahara, the Cross triumphs right into Scandinavia and Iceland. We see a spectacle unroll before our eyes, the like of which we can see in the history of earlier and later times. We need only recall the remarkable fact that the military and political crushing of Carthage was answered by the Punicising of the Roman Empire.

The internal upheavals and quarrels wherewith the Frankish Empire is visited for a long time after Chlodwig's death, bring about a fairly lengthy

pause in this development. The peaceful preaching of the Irish finds an ear in the borderlands of the former Imperium, mainly among the Romanic remnants. Not until the unity of the kingdom is brought about under the powerful leadership of the Arnulfings can the great onslaught on the Teutonic heartland begin. In the struggle which then breaks out, worldly and clerical authority go hand-in-hand, and force of arms clears the way for "conversion". Especially fierce is the resistance of the Frisians, among whom the preaching of Willibrord is powerless to bear fruit until Pepin of Heristal has defeated king Radbod at Dorestad (689). The victory which Charles Martel gains over Duke Boppo by the Boornzee (734) lays North Frisia open to Christian preaching. Bonifatius, too, cannot forgo a similar help in his gospel-work in Hesse and Thuringia. Not until this help is fully granted to him under Pepin the Short and Carloman does he succeed in destroying not only the heathendom but also the Irish-Scottish Christianity which has infiltrated. The yoking of the Swabians under the church hierarchy does not take shape until the leaders of this folkdom have fallen in the massacre of Cannstatt (746).

It is noteworthy that almost everywhere, where the Roman Catholic teaching is brought to unmongrelised Teutons, it can only be celebrated by the wielding of brute violence. An exception to this rule is formed by the Anglo-Saxons and — at a much later date — by the indwellers of Iceland. With the first-named people, the transition to Roman Catholicism is, as in the case of Chlodwig himself, to be put down to political motives. With the Icelanders, where the conversion took place by dint of a resolution passed in the folkmoot (1000), it stemmed from the wish of the folkfellowship to be spared religious dissensions.²²⁹

On the other hand, the loathing of the Saxons for the creed enforced upon them is unmistakeable, as witness a thirty years' war which is waged against their conversion. How deep the roots of this loathing went, can be judged by the fact that Charles the Frank, in order to break the resistance for good, saw no other means, in the end, than that of an enforced deportation of the folkdom, by which he deliberately mongrelised it. His fitful wrestling with the last free and heathen Teutons left in Central Europe brings the final decision, and the throwing-in of the unspent strength of the Nordic folkdoms was unable to reverse it. By the downthrow of the Langobards and the territorial expansion which he achieved, he became the founder of a universal monarchy within which nigh-on the whole of Catholic Europe was united. Finally he brought about, through his crowning as emperor, the revival of the Roman Imperium. Therefore, Charles can rightly be regarded as the foremost creator of Mediaeval Europe, and throughout this drama, he is unmistakeably the figure who contributed most to the complete spiritual thralldom of the Teutons. Thus our judgment of this drama cannot be separated from our judgment of his historical role.

As we have seen in the course of our examination, there is not a single reason for glorifying Charles as a "true Teuton", while there are all grounds for doubting his Teuton nature. Moreover, he lacks the originality which, as the yardstick of our race, must be deemed to be the typical mark of genius. However, it cannot be gainsaid that — apart from spiritual affinity of a religious kind — all those for whom the blurring of all dividing-lines is the highest ideal, who crave the melting of the particular into the general, who strive after the integration of peoples and, even more so, of races, and who believe in the existence of one "humanity" as the ethical community of all human beings dwelling on earth, have every cause to praise Charles and his work. But for those who see in the fulfilment of sundriness their ideal, who believe in a natural world-order and in the existence of different folkdoms

and breeds as a reality postulated by a higher will, it is another matter. Such men are quite unable to admire Charles' Imperium Christianum and, instead of paying homage to the conquering Frankish king, they would rather pay it to his vanquished gainsakes, *Widukind* and *Göttrik*. Thus in the last analysis, our judgment of this historical figure depends upon the world-outlook to which we are given.

* * * * *

Last of all, let us take a look at the further tide of events! After centuries of spiritual thralldom, during which the Germanic soul could only express itself but seldom and hiddenly, the ecclesiastical hegemony was to undergo, through the revival of the study of Oldtime during the so-called Renaissance, a serious weakening. Then again, the Reformation brought a partial liberation which lifted into the light of day the antithesis between the Germanic and the Romanic part of Europe. Whilst the "West" was only able to conceive state and society in the likeness of a machine, Luther compared both to the animal organism, and bestowed upon the free-growing "Northland" the foundation for a world-outlook of its own,²³⁰ in many ways sib to the old-Germanic philosophy. The following centuries have deepened and sharpened the rift which had divided Europe anew, but the French Revolution brought for the Northland a dangerous reaction. Ensnared in the mind-ways of Liberalism, which go back to the basic thoughts of that Revolution and find their deepest roots in the mechanical world-outlook of the West, and blinded also by the Marxist system of thought, which was of yet more alien origin, the Northland was again in danger of becoming estranged to its own make and mould. A deepdelving meditation upon its own Past and a world conflagration were of need to bring in the nick of time, salvation.

The upbuilding of a Northland that is freed from alien influences, and that — as the Germania of old — rests again within itself and hearkens to its own laws, is a task for the future. Should this come to fruition, then Europe will have, as it were, returned to the starting-point of its history, for once again it will be divided into a Germanic and a Romanic world, divided clearly, too, on the spiritual plane. Was then this whole evolution bootless, and is history naught but a senseless repetition? By no means! Nothing in history happens without design, not a single happening is senseless. The centuries-long struggle against the spiritual hegemony of race-alien elements has led, for the Teutons, to a full recognition of their own kind and character. This awakening, which is the fruit of a long and changeful history, is today breaking new ground, and this bodes well for the future. The new Germania, that we see growing, will become inwardly richer and hence mightier than the old.

NOTES

- 1) Wilhelm Teudt in his "Germanische Heiligtümer", Jena 1929, p.148-, quoted by Knöpp, "Karl and Widukind", p.46.
- 2) Cf. Wolf: "Angewandte Geschichte", Leipzig 1913, p.80.
- 3) By Dr. R. Luft, who used the expression in a work on the Franks to be dealt with later.
- 4) L. G. Tirala pointed out in his work, "Rasse, Geist und Seele", that, in the later Rome too, the crossing of certain races brings with it homosexual aberrations which hinder the instinct for the rearing of children.
- 5) Cf. the above-named work by Wolf on p.81.
- 6) An excellent discussion on this relationship can be found in the work of Laagland which opens the series of publications on "Der Vaderen Erfdeel" (The Heritage of our Fathers).
- 7) The first Christians were themselves Communists, cf. Acts 4: 34!
- 8) Cf. Wolf: "Angewandte Kirchengeschichte", p.83.
- 9) Cf. Chamberlain's "Grundlagen" p.557 of the "Hauptausgabe".
- 10) By "ascetism" is understood self-flagellation, which is thought to please the gods (or God).
- 11) By Pachomius who, in 340, founded the first monastery on the island of Tabennae in the Nile.
- 12) The forms which Christianity has taken on in the run of the centuries diverge greatly from one another and are very numerous. Each is convinced that it preaches "the true teaching". We choose neither one side nor the other, and leave Christ, who stands above all these true teachings, beyond the scope of this survey.
- 13) We hold this distinction to be needful because there exist under the name of "heathendom" the most heterogeneous beliefs which often differ very deeply from one another. Thus there is between the "heathendom" of the Teutons and that of the later Rome a difference very much greater than that existing between the latter and Christianity.
- 14) Wolf refers to this remarkable co-incidence on p.299 of his "Angewandte Geschichte", from which the details given in the text have been borrowed.
- 15) By Dr. R. Luft in his "Die Franken und das Christentum", Munich 1936, an excellent work which is based on an extensive perusal of the sources, and from which a great deal of the information contained in this chapter has been drawn.
- 16) Why are these names lacking in our history-books? The tragic doom of these Frankish princes, who can undoubtedly be reckoned as belonging to our forefathers, seems to us to be every bit worth mentioning.
- 17) Treves (*Augusta Treviorum*) was in those days a Roman centre.
- 18) Salvianus in his "*De gubernatione dei*", cf. Luft p.16.
- 19) This feature is also Indo-Germanic, as wanderlust is typical of all peoples of Nordic race.
- 20) Cf. Luft, p.15.
- 21) The Ubians lived on the left bank of the Rhine near Cologne.
- 22) The name is derived either from the Latin word "*sal*" = salt (water), in which case the "Salian Franks" would have the meaning of Sea-Franks, or from *Isala* = IJssel, or from *Salon* = Salland (a *gau* in the present Dutch province of Overijssel).
- 23) Ripuarians, from the Latin word "*ripa*" = bank, hence meaning "riverbank-dwellers", i.e. of the Rhine.
- 24) *Chlod* = famous, *-wig* = strife; another way of writing this name, the oldest form of Ludovic, is Hluodwig.
- 25) The kinfather and namegiver of the Merovingians.
- 26) The son of the former Roman steadholder, Aegidius.
- 27) Perhaps at Zülpich (*Tolbiacum*), S.W. of Cologne; this is, however, not certain.
- 28) Luft, from whom we take this data, has here drawn on the work of Rettberg, "Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands", para.43, p.287, quoted in his notes.

- 29) The name is derived from "*auster*", the Germanic word for East, and means "Eastland". The meaning of the word Neustria remained for a long time unexplained. As P. Kretschmer states, the older form is *Neaustria* – *Niuwistria*, or *Nuistria* – so that the word Neustria clearly means "New-Austria" (= Austrasia), cf. "Germanien" of Midyear, 1938, p.206.
- 30) He lived from 538-594, and is the writer of an extensive work on Frankish history which has become the main source of knowledge about this period.
- 31) By Dr. A. Baldamus in Weber-Baldamus' "Weltgeschichte", part II, para.34.
- 32) An opinion with which we cannot agree. Even if the depravity began in the higher classes – being the first to be converted – and went therein to the farthest extremes, there is ample evidence to suggest that it spread at length throughout the whole population. One needs only to recall that, under the influence of Christianity, the class-barriers had become so diminished that the Germanic class-system can be said to have been turned upside-down.
- 33) The writer forgets here to add that this society had already become Christian, but that it made no difference, since the population had nothing more in common with ancient Rome.
- 34) Who was by birth a bondsmaid.
- 35) By Dr. Ulrike Garbe in her excellent study, "Frauen des Merowingerhauses", Leipzig, 1936.
- 36) Luft, p.34.
- 37) As a result thereof, the Thuringians had to cede the Main region to the Frankish Kingdom; hence the names "Upper Franconia" and "Lower Franconia" borne still today by parts of this region, but this should not mislead us into seeking there the birthplace of the Franks.
- 38) The Frankish name for the Swabians, which the French were later to use in respect of the Germans as a whole.
- 39) Thus Baldamus defines the historical significance of the Frankish Kingdom.
- 40) The word means "helpers", in this case, of the king, and is derived from the Latin word "*trustis*" = comfort, help, protection.
- 41) Originally, these Romanic men were dubbed, according to highest privilege which fell to them, "*convivae regis*" = table-companions of the King.
- 42) Cf. the article: "Die Herkunft der Karolinger" by H. Aubin in "Karl der Grosse oder Charlemagne? Acht Antworten deutscher Geschichtsforscher", Berlin, 1935.
- 43) In contrast to the principle, valid with us, of the territoriality of the law.
- 44) Dettweiler refers to this in his short work, edited under Kummer: "Reaktion oder deutscher Fortschritt in der Geschichtswissenschaft", Leipzig, 1935, in which he, under the title of "Rückantwort eines Biologen", contests the viewpoint of the eight "Geschichtsforscher" concerned.
- 45) By P. Zauert in his essay on "Die Entwicklung des Karolinger-Typus" in "Volk und Rasse" of Jan. 1933.
- 46) The firm bond between landed property and state service, which we here see unfolding, laid the foundation for the feudal system. The most important development, which was rang in thereby, cannot be treated here.
- 47) According to Baldamus in his "Weltgeschichte", part II, p.93.
- 48) The Sincfal or Zwin was a stretch of water on the border of present-day Zeeuwsch Flanders. It was once the southern border of Frisia and, later still, the limit of Frisian legislative territory.
- 49) Pepin was, in this respect, a true offspring of his strain, in which it was just as much the tradition to have several wives as it was to beget a multitude of illegitimate children.
- 50) The province to the south of the Loire which, during that time of confusion, had managed to make itself independent.
- 51) Cf. Felix Dahn: "Deutsche Geschichte", part II, p.231, where he refers to the sources.
- 52) Why have not the Frisians, who are said to be so proud of their breed, had a monument put up in honour of this hero of freedom? Is it perhaps because he was a heathen? How differently the French and Germans acted, for whom the pagan belief of Vercingetorix, the Gallic hero whom Caesar vanquished, and of Herman the Cheruscan was no hindrance when it came to immortalise these national figures by monuments.
- 53) Partly perhaps also by dint of the fact that Visigoths, who had stayed behind in that region – and among whom there were perhaps still some Arians – tended to resist. Cf. F. Dahn: "Deutsche Geschichte", part II, p.247.
- 54) This people dwelt at that time by the river Garonne, and occupied a greater area than nowadays.
- 55) Cf. the essay of W. Kinkelin: "Das Blutbad von Cannstatt und seine Folgen für

- das Schwabenland", in "Germanenerbe" of Sept. 1938, from which we have taken a lot of data.
- 56) Cf. Timerding (a Roman Catholic author): "Die christliche Frühzeit Deutschlands in den Berichten über die Bekehrer", part II, p.50 onwards.
 - 57) One should bear in mind that Swabia (i.e. the region of the Allemans in the narrower sense!) is still today that part of Southern Germany where the Nordic race is most strongly represented, and one should compare in this connection the map on p.163 in Günther's "Rassenkunde des Deutschen Volkes".
 - 58) Nowadays, a part of Stuttgart.
 - 59) Incorporation, since the actual Swabia had hitherto only been subject to the Frankish supreme authority, while its inhabitants, as far as their internal affairs were concerned, had managed to uphold their freedom. On the other hand, the northernmost part of the Allemanic territory and presumably also the Western part (Alsace and its thereabouts) had already been incorporated by Chlodwig into the Frankish kingdom (namely in 496).
 - 60) Not, however, as their personal property, because – just as was the case originally with all the other Germanic folkdoms – the Swabian farmstead, and the land belonging thereto, were the inalienable property of the family, or kinhood.
 - 61) It is enlightening that, through these councils, further measures were taken against the heathen wonts still persisting among the people.
 - 62) Cf. Timerding, p.51.
 - 63) Timerding, part I, p.53 onwards.
 - 64) A conception to which Timerding rightly objected.
 - 65) Luft: "Die Franken und das Christentum", p.47.
 - 66) As Dettweiler does on p.20 of the aforementioned work edited by Kummer.
 - 67) Cf. p.45, last paragraph, and also p.43, where the impression is given as if in the conversion of the Teutons already evinced itself "der Wille zum Aufstieg", i.e. the urge for development.
 - 68) Timerding, part I, p.103.
 - 69) At least according to Timerding who is, in this respect, a source beyond suspicion! Cf. part II of his work on p.249.
 - 70) Alsace seems to have been incorporated already into the Frankish kingdom, as witness the appearance there of Frankish counts.
 - 71) As Prof. J. de Vries observes in his "Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte", Vol. I, p.220, one must not regard the christianisation of the Roman border provinces too superficially; the Frankish system of bishoprics originates, for instance, from Roman days.
 - 72) Compare the aforementioned article of Kinkelin in "Germanenerbe" of Sept. 1933, from which we draw our consideration of the consequences which the enforced christianisation had for Swabia.
 - 73) Cf. the article of E. Wittmann: "Das Blutbad von Cannstatt", in the journal "Deutscher Glaube" of Midyear 1940 from which details given in this text have been drawn.
 - 74) Cf. the article of J. W. Hauer: "Die lex alamannorum", in "Deutscher Glaube" of Aug. 1940.
 - 75) Namely, by Wittmann in his above-named article.
 - 76) According to Kinkelin.
 - 77) According to Kinkelin.
 - 78) Part I, p.33. It should be noted that it was, from the Teuton point of view, an intolerable situation for king and folk not to share a common "salvation" (*heil*), for the folk to draw their salvation from the old belief while their king drew his from the "White Christ". How can the king, under such circumstances, bring salvation to his people? The conversion of the leading men usually brought with it a gradual christianisation – if only outwardly – of the folkdom, at least as long as the bonds between the two were firm. But it could happen just as well that the folkdom regarded the bonds as being broken with the baptism of their king, and then violence was inevitable.
 - 79) Timerding, part I, p.221.
 - 80) Their presence is recalled by a wealth of geographical names such as Walchstadt, Wallberg, Walchensee, Walchsee and Wallersee. Cf. the words Wales, Wallonia and Walloon which have the same meaning, viz. "foreign".
 - 81) Timerding, part I, p.162.
 - 82) These folk-remnants had accompanied the Franks in their conquest of Gaul and had then settled in the region concerned.
 - 83) Part II, p.4.
 - 84) Since the Celtic overlayer of these peoples, which belonged to the Nordic kind, was at that time already considerably bastardised, the Irish and Britons of that

- time must be classed as of Mediterranean race, while the Anglo-Saxons, as Teutons, belonged mainly to the Nordic kind.
- 85) Timerding, part II, p.9.
 - 86) The year 692, in which Timerding sets this return, cannot, in our opinion, be right, since Wigbert's preaching must have taken place before the battle of Dorestad (689). Timerding gives this battle, also, a later date.
 - 87) Dahn, part II, p.218.
 - 88) This island, named after Foseti, or Forseti, the god of lawgiving, seems to have belonged to Radbod's territory. Willibrord baptised three human beings at a hallowed well, and had sacred animals slaughtered, which were grazing on the island (Heligoland?).
 - 89) Timerding, part II, p.43.
 - 90) Cf. the note on p.28 of the work by Luft which has been mentioned several times.
 - 91) Thus, for example, in the "Handboek tot de Staatskundige Geschiedenis van Nederland", by Dr. I. H. Gosses and Dr. N. Japikse in which can be read on p.XXV: "Furthermore, it did not come to a hard clash between Christendom and Heathendom; the people was finally converted by the mission and not by the sword". Since the authors ascribe to the Frankish kingdom a Germanic character and consider that this kingdom had little which could instil oppression and terror, this misconception is understandable.
 - 92) Part II, p.231.
 - 93) Timerding, part II, p.46 onwards, from which our further details concerning Boniface have been borrowed.
 - 94) Cf. Dahn, part II, p.274, where it is also pointed out that nothing is known about Charles' birth, boyhood or youth.
 - 95) By Dettweiler on p.14 onwards of his aforementioned article from which we have taken a few particulars. It must be observed that the mother of Charles can hardly have been a Hungarian, since this folkdom was at that time still dwelling in the steppes of Southern Russia. It is more likely that, in the document concerned, the Avars were confused with the Hungarians who were related to them, just as the first-named people were often referred to in the sources as Huns.
 - 96) Cf. Dettweiler, p.15.
 - 97) Again by Prof. H. Naumann in his essay on "Karls germanische Art" in "Karl der Grosse oder Charlemagne?". However, it is surely wrong when this writer invests Charles, among other things, with a "Sinn für die Flotte", because Charles did not get around to building a fleet until very late and, even then, only out of pure necessity.
 - 98) Namely by Naumann from whom the other arguments discussed in the text have also been taken.
 - 99) Cf. the relevant article by Naumann.
 - 100) According to Naumann, Alkwin (*Alcuin*), Charles' adviser in cultural things, severely chid the monks of Lindisfarne for busying themselves with these songs.
 - 101) This is a reference to vulgar Latin, the forerunner of Old French. Cf. Dahn, part II, p.396.
 - 102) The name "Teutons" (*german*: - a foreign import and never popular among them) fell out of use in the Germanic folk-tongues after the Folkwandering. The lacking of a common name for all German tribes is a proof of the absence of a German folk-awareness. Cf. Erdmann: "Der Name Deutsch" in "Karl der Grosse oder Charlemagne?"
 - 103) Among others, Prof. K. Hampe in his article on "Die Persönlichkeit Karls", in "Karl der Grosse oder Charlemagne?"
 - 104) Her name (Bertherada?) is not known for certain. For Charles' family life, compare Dahn, part II, p.386, and the footnote on p.277.
 - 105) Not only Hampe does this, but also Dahn, who still regards Charles as a pure Teuton and thus feels himself obliged to extol him.
 - 106) The behaviour of this abbot is surely a striking proof of the rightness of Hampe's remark that it is wrong to think of a onesided theological, or even ascetic, spirit dwelling at Charles' court. No, this man, later to be made a saint by the R.C. Church, can hardly be said to have lived an ascetic life!
 - 107) For Naumann, on the other hand, the fact that Charles never thought of making Rome his imperial abode is one of the proofs of his Germanic nature.
 - 108) Among others, by Naumann.
 - 109) Note the paradox! The qualification "lazy", which is given in our source to boys of noble birth, can be readily explained as a manifestation of the slow mental development - a characteristic of the Nordic race. Children of predominantly Nordic strain mature later than those of other races, as a consequence whereof they often are, or seem to be, frivolous and lazy.

- 110) The craze for killing which Charles showed towards the Saxons can be explained partly, perhaps, by his mixed origin.
- 111) Think of Jenghiz Khan and his successors who were excellent organisers and whose states were typified by a thorough-going bureaucratic system.
- 112) He defended, for example, the addition of the "*filioque*" to the Creed in the so-called "Carolingian books", a writing which has been officially acknowledged as his own work. Cf. Prof. A. Brackmann: "Kaisertum und Römische Kirche", in "Karl der Grosse oder Charlemagne?", p.86.
- 113) Brackmann, p.90.
- 114) According to Brackmann, Einhard leaves Charles' religious motives out of consideration and does not represent his wars as religious wars, so that his biography "contains a complete secularisation of the imperial figure". The reason for this is probably that Einhard based his biography on the model of those that Suetonius gave of the Roman emperors, following closely this model in his description of character. Cf. the already mentioned article by Zaunert on p.17 of "Volk und Rasse", Jan. 1933.
- 115) For example, by Dahn and Hampe.
- 116) Who, on behalf of his son, wooed for the hand of Pepin's daughter, Gisela! Cf. Dahn, part II, p.272.
- 117) Think, for instance, of the territorial crumbling and the ensuing lack of cohesion in this kingdom; its continual struggle against Popery; its earlier defeats at the hands of the Franks; its mixed population and also the demoralisation which must needs have followed the transition of its nationals from Arianism to Catholicism. Cf. Dahn, part II, p.284.
- 118) Where the brave *Hruodland* (= Roland), margrave of the Bretonic March, fell. This formed the basis for the famous Song of Roland which arose later.
- 120) Naturally, this should be understood in a relative sense; the siege of Pavia, the Langobard capital, lasted after all six months.
- 121) An assertion made, among others, by Hampe.
- 122) Cf. Dahn, part II, p.378.
- 123) According to Brackmann, the word "*imperium*" first crops up in Frankish tradition in the year 798, thus in that year when the founding of the bishopric of Salzburg gave the signal for the enforced conversion of the Avars and Slavs.
- 124) According to Timerding, the mission was an essential basis for the creation of the empire, cf. part II, p.50.
- 125) Probably adherents of the so-called Adoptionism, the teaching that Christ, as a human being, was only an "adopted" son of God. Cf. Dahn, part II, p.284.
- 126) Part II, p.382.
- 127) For the facts here given, compare Dahn, part II, p.376 onwards.
- 128) Cf. Brackmann, p.86.
- 129) It is of significance here that special emphasis is laid on sodomy; the episcopal candidate must declare that he has never been guilty thereof. While to Charles, according to the wording of the letter, unnatural vice was unknown, it had thriven frightfully for 500 years already in the monasteries and among the priests in general, and was never strongly combated until the Reformation. Cf. P. M. Schwartz: "1600 Jahre Klosterprozesse", in "Nordische Stimmen", 1937, No. 9, from which the quotation that follows in the text is taken.
- 130) Cf. Dahn, part II, p.724.
- 131) In any case, from the year 794, before the imperial crowning. Cf. Dahn, part II, p.350.
- 132) The already named Adoptionism.
- 133) Dahn, part II, p.349 onwards.
- 134) These promises which, among others, affected the dukedoms of Beneventum and Spoleto, were made by Charles before the fall of Pavia, but were no more held by him afterwards than were those he made later to the Pope. Cf. Dahn, part II, pp.279 and 348.
- 135) Brackmann leaves these facts out of account in his already mentioned article. Instead of deriving the birth of the imperial crowning idea from the political stage of development, from which it logically flowed, he attributes it here to papal power-striving; the Pope is supposed to have hit on the notion of crowning Charles as emperor in order to be able to loom forth himself later as master of the Western world. This explanation is too contrived to be true.
- 136) Cf. the article of Brackmann on p.81.
- 137) The detailed proofs of this are to be found in Dahn, part II, note on p.356.
- 138) Which seemed present at that moment.
- 139) Ever since the downfall of the Ostrogoths, the East Roman emperor was, at least nominally, sovereign over Rome.

- 140) Cf. Burkhard von Bonin: "Vom nordischen Blut im Römischen Recht", Leipzig, 1935, p.22. It is further pointed out by this writer that the revival of the Roman emperorhood promoted the infiltration of Roman law into Germany.
- 141) Or did Charles, by this partitioning, regard his empire as a worldly state? This interpretation is at variance with his entire subsequent conduct, since he always identified his empire with the "God-state". Nor can it have been his intention – the while his "world-state" was being divided up – to leave the "God-state" without a head. However one looks at it, contradictions remain.
- 142) Hampe too, an admirer of Charles, acknowledges that this circle sought to revive, with a conscious classicism, the spirit and form of the Christian late-Roman culture, cf. his article on p.24.
- 143) Zauert, p.16.
- 144) Dahn, part II, p.384; the italics are ours!
- 145) Think of the enforced conversion of Saxons and Avars and of the attendant endeavours to wipe out heathen customs. What could not be understood by that!
- 146) Dahn, part II, p.391.
- 147) For the derivation of this word, see p.88 of the *Dutch original* of this book (p.00 of this edition).
- 148) The word appears to have been first used in the trial against Tassilo. Cf. Erdmann, p.102.
- 149) According to Hampe – a reliable source! – Latin had the same significance for Charles' kingdom as Arabic had for the califate.
- 150) Cf. Erdmann on p.100.
- 151) Cf. Naumann's article on p.35 and that of Erdmann on p.98.
- 152) Cf. Erdmann, p.100 onwards.
- 153) The awakening of the German national feeling was thus – as it was later under Napoleon – an unintended consequence of Charles' politics. Why then should Charles be honoured for something which he unintentionally brought about?
- 154) Cf. Prof. F. Baethgen: "Die Front nach Osten", in "Karl der Grosze oder Charlemagne?", p.72 onwards.
- 155) The presence of these Germanic folk-remnants is often overlooked. And yet they were not unimportant. Think only of the Silingians who have given Silesia its name, and of the Varns in present-day Mecklenburg. Compare in this respect the article of Leonhard Franz: "Germanen und Slaven in den Sudetenländern", in "Germanien" of Nov. 1938.
- 156) Think of Henry I, Otto the I, the Great, Frederick Barbarossa and many others!
- 157) Cf. Wolf: "Angewandte Kirchengeschichte", p.343.
- 158) Compare the anthology taken from the sources which Dr. F. Knöpp has edited under the title "Karl und Widukind", Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, Frankfurt, 1935 on p.6.
- 159) Zauert.
- 160) Pepin the Short had already conquered several Saxon districts lying between the rivers Unstrut and Bode.
- 161) Cf. Dahn, part II, p.317.
- 162) In his article on "Die Sachsenkriege" in "Karl der Grosze oder Charlemagne?", Prof. M. Lintzel gives the impression as if in Saxony a revolution was nigh, for which reason the nobility, with the aim of keeping their "mastery", sought the support of Charles.
- 163) Almost one and a half centuries after the landing of the Lower German tribes, the first emissary came from Rome to Kent (595), where Hengist also had landed. The Frankish wife of King Aethelbert of Kent was already a Christian.
- 164) So named from the colour of their hair, cf. Timerding, part II, p.12.
- 165) Timerding, part II, p.185.
- 166) And not of Liafwin, as Timerding wrote, undoubtedly by mistake.
- 167) Timerding, part II, p.203.
- 168) Namely of Timerding, from whom we take our data.
- 169) Cf. Knöpp: "Karl und Widukind", p.24.
- 170) The exact whereabouts of this tree is not known with certainty. Apart from the Extern-Stones near Detmold, Altenbeken has also been named.
- 171) Cf. Knöpp, p.8.
- 172) Knöpp, p.8, and thus in agreement with Reche: "Kaiser Karls Gesetz", p.24. The italics are ours.
- 173) Baldamus in his "Weltgeschichte".
- 174) Part II, p.301.
- 175) To be found in Hermann Guthe's: "Die Lande Braunschweig und Hannover", 1867, p.314.
- 176) We owe the concise summary of these laws to the afore-named work of Reche

- who gives the main provisions in literal translation.
- 177) As Reche observes.
 - 178) Think of the mummifying of corpses which is linked up with this conception. Moreover, the Teutons had, in many periods of their history, not only cremation but also burial, while the Christians of the first centuries may well have burned their dead too.
 - 179) Cf. Dahn, part II, p.305 and Knöpp, p.18.
 - 180) A fact referred to by H. Amberger in his article "Karl und Widukind" in "Die Sonne" of Nov. 1935.
 - 181) The former were usually elected from the ranks of the latter. Cf. Dahn, part II, p.306.
 - 182) Compare the article of Dr. Werner Petersen: "Das Blutbad von Verden ein Geschichtsirrtum?" in "Germanien" of Jan. 1938, where close attention was given to this source.
 - 183) According to Knöpp, from whom we take the following quotation, these "*Annales Einhardi*" did not originate with Einhard. The italics are ours.
 - 184) A landstretch on the left bank of the Lower Elbe, in the neighbourhood of Lüneburg, which can be looked upon as the cradleland of the Langobards.
 - 185) Meanwhile, it is by no means definite that this report on Widukind's baptism is based on truth; compare the article by Edmund Weber: "Ist Widukind ermordet worden?" in "Die Sonne", No. 7/8 of 1937.
 - 186) The "*Annales Petaviani*", for instance, report this emphatically for the year 782, cf. the afore-mentioned article by Werner Petersen in "Germanien".
 - 187) Cf. Dahn, part II, p.299.
 - 188) For the letters mentioned, compare Knöpp, p.36 onwards.
 - 189) Luke 10:4.
 - 190) Judith 13:17.
 - 191) Namely, the "Overbrenging van den Heiligen Liborius", cf. Knöpp, p.29.
 - 192) Cf. Dahn, part II, note on p.303.
 - 193) Knöpp, p.28.
 - 194) These settlements can still be recognised mostly by their names, e.g. Sachsenhausen near Frankfurt. Perhaps the Dutch village of Sassenheim (south of Haarlem) can also thus be explained; this explanation is in any case possible.
 - 195) Knöpp, p.27.
 - 196) Namely, by the Avar War as well as by a dangerous invasion of the Saracens, cf. Dahn, part II, p.309 onwards, from which we take our data for this part of the war.
 - 197) A region to the North of the river Lippe in which, it appears, rebellion was also rife. Cf. Dahn, part II, p.307 and 311.
 - 198) This district lay to the right of the Lower Weser, and bordered on the above-named Bardengau.
 - 199) Used in this connection, the name, which had a relative meaning, betokens the more Romanic parts of the Frankish kingdom, roughly those of the later France.
 - 200) This is seen in a still extant petition wherein a Christian Saxon requests Ludovic the Pious to give him back his paternal heirloom. Cf. Knöpp, p.23.
 - 201) Cf. Baethgen at the end of his article.
 - 202) Paderborn and Minden for the Engrians, Verden and Bremen for the Eastfalians, and Münster and Osnabrück for the Westfalians.
 - 203) It is common knowledge that the Thirty Years' War robbed Germany of roughly 2/3 of its population!
 - 204) By Reche, who points to the texts which are, in this respect, most enlightening: Deut. 7:16, Jer. 48:10, Deut. 32:42, and the book of Esther; cf. his "Kaiser Karls Gesetz", p.25.
 - 205) Rosenberg!
 - 206) It can be taken as known that the indwellers of Denmark and Scandinavia, as Germanic peoples, went under this name in the Frankish kingdom.
 - 207) Thus Dr. B. Kummer, from whose work, which is based on an extensive study of sources, much of the data in this chapter have been drawn. We have consulted his latest work: "Der Machtkampf zwischen Volk, König und Kirche im alten Norden", Leipzig, 1939.
 - 208) Large wind-instruments of between 1.51 and 2.38 metres in length. It remains to add that Jutland, the centre of the Bronze Age culture, was at that time rich through its trading in amber. Cf. H. Laagland: "Beknopte geschiedenis van het Noordras", p.121.
 - 209) Viz. in the district of Bohus to the north of Gothenburg.
 - 210) The landship to the North of Lake Mälär, whence, in connection with the age-old halidoms of Uppsala and Sigtuna, the political unity of Sweden emerged.

- 211) According to Kummer on p.137 of the work named.
- 212) Probably Norway which is called "Norrigen" in Swedish.
- 213) The oldest of these stones date back to the beginning of our timereckoning.
- 214) Cf. Kummer, p.240.
- 215) These Goths dwelling in Sweden, also called *Gōtar* or *Gauts*, were the left-behind remnants of the Ostrogothic and Visigothic tribes who, during the Folkwandering, thrust out from Southern Russia into the Roman Empire.
- 216) The name may mean "warriors", but could also be derived from *vik* = gulf, inlet.
- 217) North Teutons and Saxons belonged to the stem of the Ingvaeones, one of the three tribes into which, according to the Tuisto-Saga told of by Tacitus, the West Teutons were divided. For this reason, the Swedish royal house of the Ynglinga takes its origin from Ingvi, the mythical kinfather of this tribe.
- 218) By K. Rosenfelder on p.31 of Kummer's: "Der nordische Mensch der Wikingerzeit", Leipzig, 1935.
- 219) The region around Bergen.
- 220) Cf. Dahn, part I, p.319 onwards.
- 221) Both tribes dwelt in the area to the East of the Lower Elbe.
- 222) The site of this town is unknown.
- 223) Compare the grandiose plans cherished by Gustav Adolf after his victories over Tilly, and his alleged aim of having himself crowned emperor. The attitude of this Swedish monarch forms a striking historical parallel.
- 224) Writer of a "Church History of Hamburg" ("*Gesta Pontificum Hammenburgensium*") in which much is told about the folkdoms of the North (d.after 1076).
- 225) The expression is by Saxo Grammaticus (d.1204), the writer of the oldest history of Denmark. Cf. Kummer, p.196.
- 226) So named after their strength; the Jomsburg, situated on the island of Wollin at the mouth of the Oder.
- 227) Cf. Kummer, p.200.
- 228) Constantia, the heiress of the Norman princes of Southern Italy and Sicily.
- 229) With regard to the Teutons who were converted to Arianism, it should be noted that the Goths were christianised, after a stout struggle against Constantinople, by the force of circumstances. We know very little about the christianisation of the other Arianistic Teutons and, in many cases, nothing at all.
- 230) Cf. Wilhelm Erbt: "Weltgeschichte auf rassischer Grundlage", Leipzig, 1936, p.308. We based our concluding thoughts on this profound and grandly conceived book.

... Boundary of the Fran-
 kish kingdom in 768
 +++ Ditto at the death
 of Charles the Frank
 (814)
 ||||| Canal planned by
 Charles



II The Empire of Charles the Frank

COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF THE FRANKISH KINGDOM AND OF THE CHRISTIANISATION OF THE WEST-TEUTONS

FIRST PERIOD (c.500-c.600)

RISE AND DOWNFALL OF THE MEROVINGIANS

- 481-511 **Chlodwig**
 486 Syagrius defeated at Soissons.
 500 The Burgundians beaten at Dijon; they become tributary. Forming of the Greater Frankish Kingdom.
 507 The Visigoths beaten at Vouglé; the kingdom extended to the Garonne.
 511 Partitioning of the Kingdom among Chlodwig's four sons.
 532 Total subjection of the **Burgundians**.
 558-561 Re-unification of the Kingdom under Lothar I, followed by a new partitioning.
Austrasia (=Eastland), **Neustria** (=New Austria) and **Burgundy** are from now on the foremost parts of the kingdom, while **Aquitania** becomes a separate and half-autonomous dukedom.
 561 With the death of Lothar I, the decline of the Frankish kingdom begins as a result of:
 1. the repeated partitionings;
 2. continual and bloody family feuds;
 3. the increasing might of the serving-nobility;

SUBJUGATION OF THE FREE TEUTONS

- 496 Chlodwig defeats the **Allemands** and partly subjects them.
 531 Theoderic and Lothar, his sons, defeat the **Thuringians** and annex their territory.
 536? or 538? Theodebert, his grandson, completes the subjection of the **Allemands** (in Rhaetia), and probably also of the **Thuringians**.
 Round about the same time, the **Bavarians** are made tributary.
 From now on, Bavaria and Thuringia come under Christian dukes. (In Bavaria the Agilolfings, most likely a Frankish dynasty).

SALIENT FACTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE WEST-TEUTON CONVERSION

- 1. The Conversion of the Franks themselves.**
 496 Chlodwig has himself baptised by Remigius. **Political considerations** overweigh in his conversion to Roman Catholicism. (Backing from the Church in his founding of the Great Frankish Kingdom. Treachery of the Roman Catholic bishops towards their Burgundian and Visigothic Arian masters).
 In order to break the resistance of the free yeomen and of a part of the nobility, Chlodwig gives the priests leave to wipe out heathendom and assists them therein by endowment of land. Even so, Christianity had still made little progress at his death.
 511 Under the reign of his sons begins the **savage destruction of all Germanic halidoms and symbols** in which the State supported the priests with armed might.
 535 The 2nd Synod of Orleans forbids the baptised to consort heathens, and brandmarks as work of the devil all things recalling the Germanic Age.

4. the frightful moral degeneration. Long-lasting rivalry between Sigibert I of Austrasia, Brunhilda's husband and Chilperic of Neustria, husband of Fredegunda.

- 575 Just as Sigibert seems to be winning in the brother-strife, which is breaking out, he is murdered by one of Fredegunda's henchmen. Brunhilde has then to continue the struggle against the mighty Austrasian serving-nobility.

c.550 Erelong, a royal edict puts an end to the officially still recognised freedom of religion. The Germanic beliefs and its upholders are outlawed; the destruction is ordered of all heathen symbols and hallidoms, while pagan songs, holidays and dances are forbidden under pain of severe punishment.

By dint of these measures, the Frankish kingdom loses more and more its Teutonic character. It has to rely increasingly upon its Romanic element – put on an equal footing by law with the Germanic! – while it becomes more and more a menace to its Germanic neighbours.

c.650 Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that heathendom only went out in Neustria round about 650, while it lasted on for centuries in Austrasia.

SECOND PERIOD (c.600-c.700)

DOWNFALL OF THE MEROVINGIANS AND RISE OF THE CAROLINGIANS (Arnulfings)

- 613 Arnulf of Metz and Pepin the Elder treacherously deliver their queen, Brunhilda, over into the hands of her arch-foe Lothar of Neustria.
- 613-628 Entry of the Carolingians into History. Lothar II reunifies the whole kingdom. His victory is essentially a triumph of the serving-nobility, to whom at the diet of Paris he is forced to grant far-reaching privileges.
- 614

SUBJUGATION OF THE FREE TEUTONS

- In connection with the weakening of the Frankish kingdom, it is not until towards the end of this period that a revision of the frontiers takes place. For the time being, it calls for the greatest endeavours to keep the border-lands under control.
- c.630 Dagobert sustains a defeat at the hands of the Slavs, so forcing him to make renewed concessions to the Austrasian serving-nobility (the nomination of Ansegisil!).

SALIENT FACTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE WEST-TEUTON CONVERSION

2. The Irish-“Frankish” mission
The Frankish brand of Christianity is so lukewarm and superficial that the work of conversion among the heathens is soon taken over by aliens – the Irish. The secularisation of the Frankish priesthood causes their preaching to be directed in the first place towards those Christians dwelling within the kingdom; only later do the Irish turn towards the heathens in

622 **Dagobert**, king of Austrasia; Pepin the Elder his majordomus.

628-638 **Dagobert, in complete power.** As the last deed-mighty Merovingian, he banished Pepin from his court. Some years later, he appoints the latter's son-in-law, Ansegisil, majordomus of Austrasia.

After Dagobert's death, begins for the Carolingians a time of vicissitude. The house-mayors of the three provinces feud among each other to the death, appearing now as the representatives of kingdom and now as the tools of the serving-nobility. For a time the Carolingians fade, even completely, into the background.

687 **The battle of Tertri;** Pepin of Heristal, a son of Ansegisil, defeats the house-mayor of Neustria and then has him put to death. **Re-establishment of imperial unity.**

687-714 **Pepin of Heristal** becomes house-mayor over the entire kingdom. He calls himself "duke and prince of the Franks", and names his grandson of tender years as his successor, which gives rise to a new civil war.

689

The battle of Dorestad.

Radbod (679-719) has to yield Western Frisia from the Sincfal to the Flie.

Pepin carries on the struggle against the **Allemans.**

the off-lying lands. The so-called "Frankish" helpers, whom they find, are, for the greater part, native Romanics from Gaul.

Further characteristics of this mission are:

1. It does not emanate from Rome, but from a monkhood, independent of Rome, which has its base in Ireland.

2. It forgoes thereby the support of the mighty Roman Catholic hierarchy, with which it at length clashes.

3. Nonetheless, it preaches asceticism and penance and deviates only on minor issues from customs and teachings of Roman Catholicism.

4. Although not averse to the use of force, it was supported less powerfully by worldly authority than the later Anglo-Saxon mission, and meets thus with less resistance.

In the Frankish kingdom, the Irish monkhood reaches its peak of power at the **Synod of Chalon** which adopts certain basic principles of the Irish mission, such as penitence, confession and celibacy.

In the dependent Germanic lands, Allemania, Bavaria and Thuringia, the preaching of these monks finds support among:

1. The Romanic folk-remnants (in Bavaria called "Walchen"), who had been left behind in the first two above-named lands;
2. the bishoprics which had persisted in these lands from Roman times and
3. the ruling ducal families (in Bavaria, the Catholic Agilolfings).

- In Thuringia, their evangelism is facilitated, moreover, by the moral aftermath of a crushing defeat (at Burgscheidungen, 531).
The most outstanding of these Irish or "Frankish" gossellers are:
- c.615 **Columba** (the Younger), and **Gallus**, who preach among the Allemans around Lake Constance.
- c.630 **Amandus**, who, with the powerful backing of Dagobert, converts the Flemings.
- c.640 **Eligius** who, as bishop of Noyon, preaches among Saxons and Swabians.
- c.680 **Kilian**, who appears in the Main region, and perhaps also in Thuringia.
- c.700 **Rudbert**, **Emmeram** and **Corbinian**, who work in Bavaria.
- c.700 **Landibert**, who lays waste halidoms and idols in Toxandria (= Brabant), and
- c.730 **Pirmin** who preaches, at a somewhat later period, among the Allemans.

THIRD PERIOD (c.700-768)

DOWNFALL OF THE MEROVINGIANS AND RISE OF THE CAROLINGIANS (Arnulfings)

- 714-717 **New civil war.** Raginfried instals himself as house-mayor of Neustria; the borderlands become independent. Meanwhile, the regent Plectrudis and her stepson Karl vie for power.
- 717-741 **Charles Martel as house-mayor.** He rules for the time being without a king. Longlasting quarrel with Eudo, Duke of Aquitania. The smashing of many local despots.

SUBJUGATION OF THE FREE TEUTONS

- 714 **Radbod** joins up with the Saxons and Raginfried and reconquers West Frisia.
- 726 He defeats Charles Martel at Cologne.
- 719 **Aldgisil II** is forced to cede West Frisia for a second time. From there, ravaging raids into the rest of Frisia. Warmarches into Swabia.
- c.720 *Lex Alamannorum.*
- 723-730 Fresh resistance of Swabians or Allemans.

SALIENT FACTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE WEST-TEUTON CONVERSION

- 678? The preaching of **Wilfried** and **Wigbert** in the territory of the Frisians is fruitless. The first missionary journey of **Willibrord** is a failure. Hereafter, Willibrord is transferred by Pepin of Heristal to Antwerp. After a second misfallen mission into free Frisia and into Denmark, he confines his preaching to the subjected territory. Perhaps at this point, Boniface is already his fellow-worker.
- 690?
- 690-714

- 732 **The Arabs defeated at Poitiers.** Charles refuses the Pope help against the Langobards and assumes an independent attitude towards the Church. Towards the end of his reign, the Pope strikes up an alliance with the Bavarians, whom he incites to apostasy. This betokens a temporary divergence from the Frankish-minded papal policy.
- 741-747 **Carloman** (enters a monastery after 746).
- 741-768 **Pepin the Younger (the Short).** They quarrel ere long with their step-brother Grifo which leads to a new falling-away of the borderlands – for instance Aquitania – (cf. 714).
- 741 **Close co-operation with the Pope.** The reform of the Frankish church under the leadership of **Boniface** strengthens the papal authority. In Germany too, both powers work together.
- Attempt to introduce celibacy.** The Frankish church remains a state church.
- 751 **Pepin the Short anointed king** by Boniface with the Pope's consent.
- 754 **Intervention in Italy** to the Pope's advantage. The founding of the Church State makes an Italian unified state impossible.
- 759 **Pepin drives the Arabs** out of Gaul (Narbonne).
- 760-768 **He subdues Aquitania.**
- 734 **Duke Boppo defeated near the Boornzee.** Frisia subjugated as far as the river Lauwers.
- 741 **Uprising of Bavarians and Allemans,** assisted by Saxons and Slavs.
- 743 **Battle by the river Lech;** the Bavarians make peace, but the Allemans continue the struggle.
- 746 **The Massacre of Cannstatt;** many thousands of Allemans murdered.
- 749 **The dissolution of their tribal dukedom.**
- 757 **Tassilo of Bavaria swears the vassal oath.**
- 763 **Tassilo breaks away from Pepin.**
- 714-719 **Heathen reactions.** Radbod drives off the Christian priests and has their churches laid waste. Willibrord withdraws to Echternach.
- 719 **The gospel-work is reassumed,** whereupon the free part of Frisia is reaved by fire and sword. Willibrord preaches, among other places, on the island of Walcheren. From Charles Martel he receives Trecht (= Utrecht), Vechten and many other endowments. **The enforced "conversion" always runs abreast the cementing of Frankish authority and the claim to supremacy of the Pope.** **Boniface** works more in the capacity of a church organiser and reformer than as an evangelist among the heathens. In the already half-converted parts of Germany he wipes out, with the backing of Frankish authority, not only the remnants of heathenhood but also the customs of the Irish Christians. He subjects by force the Irish prelates to the supremacy of the Pope.
- Review of his career.**
- 719 **The Pope entrusts him with the reformation of the Christian church in Thuringia.** It is impossible to carry out this task without the support of worldly authority. Therefore, Boniface goes to join Willibrord in Utrecht, sojourns there for three years, and then sets out again for Rome where the Pope consecrates him **bishop of Thuringia.** In Thuringia he comes up against a solid ecclesiastical community, and is quite
- 722

- unable to achieve anything without the use of force.
- 732 He preaches in Hesse (Donar's Oak), becomes **archbishop** and, in 738, is given the task of reforming the Bavarian church. in his office of papal ambassador. With the mighty support of duke Odilo he is able to fully suppress not only heathendom but also the Irish confession. The death of Charles Martel enables him to accomplish the same in **Thuringia**. Celibacy and the recognition of papal supremacy were introduced by force, and a so-called "Germanic" synod quells religious freedom in Southern and Central Germany. Therewith Boniface's life-goal is reached! **The Roman Empire is factually reinstalled and this renescent imperium forms a deathly menace for Germany.**
- 738

FOURTH PERIOD (768-814)

SURVEY OF POLITICAL EVENTS

- 768-814 **Reign of Charles the Frank.**
774 **Overthrow of the Langobard Kingdom.** Their king, Desiderius, together with wife and daughter, is imprisoned in a Frankish monastery. Charles, king of the Franks and Langobards.
778 **March on Spain.** Charles conquers Pampelona, but is brought to a halt at Saragossa. His rearguard is wiped out in the pass of Roncevalles (Lay of Roland!). His great plans misfire.

SUBJUGATION OF THE FREE TEUTONS

- 772 **First campaigns against the Saxons.** Fall of the Eresburg.
774 **Reprisal march of the Saxons into Hesse.** Charles subjugates them anew.
777 **Imperial diet at Paderborn.**
778 **Widukind unleashes, with the help of Frisians and Danes, a new uprising.**
779 **Battle of Bocholt.** New subjection.
782 **Annexation arouses a fresh rebellion.** Battle of the Süntelgebirge. **The Bloodbath of Verden.**

SALIENT FACTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE WEST-TEUTON CONVERSION

The Anglo-Saxon **Liafwin** (Lebuinus d.775) preaches among the Saxons in the neighbourhood of Deventer from the beginning of Charles' reign onwards. **Willehad** (b. roughly 735 and d.789), likewise an Anglo-Saxon, preaches at the same time, first among the Frisians in the Dokkum neighbourhood, later around Drenthe. **Liudger** (b. roughly 744 and d.809), hailing presumably from Zuilen,

782 Struggle against the Slavonic Sorbs in the Elbe region.

FIRST CLIMAX OF THE SAXON WARS

787 Norse inroad on Wessex. **Outset of the Viking raids.**

788 **Incorporation of Bavaria.** Duke Tasilo, together with his two sons, has to take the monk's tonsure.

791-795 **The Avar War.** Abortive plan for the laying of a Main-Danube canal.

793 Norse invasion of Northumberland. Lindisfarne laid waste. Followed by raids on Ireland.

795 Overthrow of the Avar ring. Establishment of the Spanish March.

SECOND CLIMAX OF THE SAXON WARS

800 Norse raids on the coast of Gaul. **Imperial crowning.**

804 Fruitless negotiations with the Danish king Göttrick lead to a break-off of relations.

808 **Göttrick's conquests in the land of the Obotrites.** After his withdrawal, building of the "Danewirk".

809 Unsuccessful peace negotiations. Danish invasion of Frisia.

810 **Göttrick meets Charles at Verden. His death.**

811 Peace with Denmark.

813 Iona laid waste by the Vikings.

783 **General uprising.** Battles at Detmold and by the river Hase.

784 Systematic destruction. **Submission of Widukind.**

792 **A new and almost general uprising.**

794 Partial reduction.

795 Devastation and partial depopulation of the Bardengau.

796 Punitive expeditions in Lower Saxony.

797-798 New plundering raids and deportations, continued right into the winter.

798 Fresh rebellion. Laying waste of a wide area. Deportation of about 1600 athelings.

799 Renewed depopulations.

804 **The last uprising.** Wigmodia and North Albingia completely depopulated; the latter region given over to the Obotrites.

begins his missionary work in Deventer in 775, preaches in West Frisia, and is sent to Dokkum in 778 as successor to Willehad. All these evangelists limit their activities to Frisia and the fringes of Saxon territory, where they operate under Frankish protection.

772 **The Reaving of the Irminsul. Beginning of the enforced conversion of the Saxons.** Charles converts partly by the sword, partly by persuasion, and partly by gifts.

Jan. 774 He resolves to underyoke the Saxons to Christianity, or failing that, to wipe them out.

777 At Paderborn, the Saxons are compelled to swear allegiance to the new teaching.

780 After the battle of Bocholt, Willehad moves to East Frisia and Dithmarschen at the king's behest. At Ohrum, after having been baptised, the Saxons straightway throw their leaden crosses into the stream. The established bishoprics are given to Frankish church dignitaries, who in turn pass them on to former Saxon prisoners brought up in Frankish monasteries. The "*Capitulatio de partibus saxoniae*" exacts the death penalty for those failing to become baptised, for failure to keep festivals, for the burning of the dead, for hostility towards Christians etc. etc. Churchgoing and the baptism of infants are commanded, whereas all heathen practices are forbidden. The handing over of heathen priests and skalds is ordered. Introduction of church tithes.

- 782 The uprising under Widukind makes conversion at times impossible. Willehad has to flee out of East Frisia, Liudger out of Dokkum.
- 785 After Widukind's downthrow, the work of conversion is reassumed. Willehad returns to East Frisia and, soon after, becomes bishop of Bremen (787). Liudger preaches in Groningen, afterwards in Westfalia, and in 804 becomes Bishop of Münster. Both men devastate and rob heathen halidoms.
- 792 Return of the Saxons to heathenhood. Churches burnt down, priests killed or driven away. Before this, converts have already been shunned by their kinsmen.
- 793 Start of the Norse raids on the centres of Christian missioning. Lindisfarne laid waste. Erelong followed by inroads into Ireland.
- 795 Beginning of enforced evacuation, whereby, among others, the *gau* of Wigmodia, where Willehad has worked, is sorely stricken for a second time.
- 797 Alkwin writes that the Saxons are loth to baptism and crave preachers instead of plunderers (*praedicatores sed non praedatores*). In the "*Capitulare Saxonicum*" the ruthless legislation of 780 is mildened in some respects.
- 799 Alkwin still doubts whether Saxony was ever meant for Christianity.
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