

ВСЕОБЩАЯ ИСТОРИЯ

Political Byzantinism in the Legal History of Franks

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The article is concerned with the formation of the Frankish political organization in the context of adopting the Romanic and Byzantine identity. It has been suggested that the main factors of the Romanization of the ancient Franks be considered not only the commonly used trading and economic system along the defensive structures *limes*, but also the practice of providing *lex foedus* by the western Roman emperors. Federalization principles of relations between the autochthonous Romans and barbarians contributed to the formation of separate political structures (“chiefdoms” or “early medieval barbarian kingdoms”) of the Ostrogoths, the Burgundians, the Vandals, the Alans, the Visigoths. The ancient Franks were less affected by the principles of federalism, but they adopted the structures of the Visigoths and the Burgundians. Maneuvering between two parties, Emperors Zeno (476–491) and Anastasius (491–518) achieved recognition of their *suzerainty* over the majority of the barbarian kingdoms in the Great Mediterranean region. However, this recognition was too ephemeral and, in the end, did not lead to the revival of fully valid East Roman (*Pars Oriens*) power in all western provinces (*Pars Occidens*). The article describes the genesis of the Frankish political eminency, suggests a fresh approach to the problem of the legal status of Domain of Soissons (Gall-Roman Domain), analyzes the geopolitical competition of the Frank Clovis (481–511) and the Ostrogoth Theodoric the Amal (489–526). All these problems, well-known among the medievalists, are presented in the original political science and legal interpretation.

Keywords: Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium), Byzantinism, Legal History, Frankish Kingdom.

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Статья посвящена становлению франкской политической организации в условиях рецепции романской и византийской идентичности. Главными факторами романизации франков предложено считать не только общепринятую торговую и экономическую систему вдоль оборонительных сооружений *limes*, но и практику предоставления западными римскими императорами *lex foedus*. Таким образом, принципы федерализации отношений между автохтонными римлянами и пришлыми варварами способствовали формированию самостоятельных политических структур остготов, бургундов, вандалов, аланов, вестготов, получивших в дальнейшем название «варварских королевств раннего Средневековья». Соглашаясь с ведущими французскими исследователями, считаем: франки подверглись влиянию принципов федерализма меньше, но восприняли структуры вестготов (после оккупации Аквитании в 507 г.) и бургундов (после оккупации Лиона в 534 г.). Дипломатическое и военное противостояние франков и остготов после падения Западной Римской империи в 476–480 гг. н. э. способствовало сохранению политических и культурных позиций Восточной Римской империи (Византии) в Западной Европе. В частности, раннее королевство Меровингов (476–534 гг.) считалось «вотчиной» восточных императоров согласно действующим договорам о предоставлении франкам *lex foedus*. Лавируя между двумя сторонами, императоры Зенон (476–491) и Анастасий (491–518) добились установления своего *сюзеренитета* над большинством варварских королевств Средиземноморья. Руководствуясь принципом политической целесообразности, первые меровингские короли франков неоднократно признавали себя подчиненными официального Константинополя. Впрочем, признание это было слишком эфемерным и в конце концов не привело к возрождению полноценной римской власти на просторах западных провинций. Статья описывает генезис франкского политического возвышения, предлагает новый взгляд на проблему юридического статуса Суассонской области (Галло-романского домена), анализирует геополитическую конкуренцию франка Хлодвига (481–511) и остгота Теодориха Амала (489–526). Все эти проблемы, хорошо известные в среде медиевистов, подаются в оригинальной политико-юридической трактовке.

Ключевые слова: Восточная Римская империя (Византия), византизм, юридическая история, Франкское королевство.

Comparative legal history of Eurasia of the 5th–6th centuries AD is remarkable for the fact that it allows us to trace the main stages of the political development of other barbarian peoples in each regional example. For example, most information about the Vandals or the Visigoths in the era of Theodoric the Great (493–526) is incomprehensible without a chronology of Italian (more widely — Ostrogothic) events: in 500, Theodoric secured his political control over North Africa by introducing an impressive military contingent, and in 507–511, he established the dictate of the Amal dynasty over land neighbors — the West Goths and the Burgundians¹. The military-political power of Theodoric the Great, the actual (political) and formal (legal) ruler (rex) of the Western Provinces of the Roman

¹ Cassiodorus. *Variae* / Transl., introd., notes by S. J. B. Barnish. Liverpool; Glasgow, 2006, Translated Texts for Historians. Vol. 12. P. 35, 39, 43–44.

Empire (Imperium Romanum Pars Occidentale) in the first quarter of the 6th century AD, was opposed by only one antagonist². Savage Franks (barbari-franci) interfered with full Ostrogoth control over the modern lands of Western Europe³.

Climate changes (cooling) that had transformed the structure of economic development of Germans, imposing serious constraints on social and demographic growth, pushed the majority of German ethnic groups into the arena of active historical action⁴. The catalyst of this process, which had climatic and geographical roots, was the raids of the Huns who in 375–454 captured lowland areas of Central-Eastern Europe⁵.

The fact that Attila (ruled in 434–453) founded the Hunnic confederative military-political association guided by the classical principles of the hierarchical nomadic chiefdom⁶ forced the Germanic tribes to take actions⁷. Some joined the nomadic army and took part in the confrontation with Rome/Constantinople⁸. Others, on the contrary, crossed the border of the Empire and formally committed themselves to protection of Rome/Constantinople by accepting contractual terms according to *lex foedus*⁹.

Lex foedus formed the political and legal principles of organizing many tribal confederations among the barbarians of the “first wave of the invasion”: Vandals, Alans, Suevi, Visigoths, Burgundians, Ostrogoths¹⁰. It assumed that new settlers actually got the territories “for feeding” in the framework of the Roman Empire, together with the legal recognition of the supreme authority of the emperor (western — in Ravenna and/or eastern — in Constantinople)¹¹. This *lex* emerged in the republican period of Roman history and was actively developed during the time of the Principate (27 BC–284 AD)¹². The practice of “federative” contractual relations became a peculiar constitutional norm of Roman public law during the late Dominate era (395–480)¹³.

The Frankish tribe in question appeared on the political map of Europe later than other Germans¹⁴. Their organizational evolution was hardly concerned with *lex foedus* as they had the least contact with Attila’s chiefdom¹⁵. Consequently, the Franks managed

² Heather P. Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii. Reformatory tserkvi i pretendenty na vlast'. Moscow, 2015. P.78–79.

³ Melnyk V. Vizantiia, Germantsy i Slavyane u istokov mezhdunarodnoi pravosub'ektnosti gosudarstv: rimskoie iuridicheskoe nasledie i problema istoricheskogo neravenstva vozmozhnostei // The Annals of Legal History = Annali iuridicnoi istorii. 2017. Vol. 1, no. 2. P.59–92.

⁴ See hypothesis: Gumilev L. V poiskakh vymyshlennogo tsarstva. St. Petersburg, 2014.

⁵ Vernadskiy G. Nachertanie russkoi istorii. Moscow, 2008. P.32–33.

⁶ Ukrainian historiography about “chiefdom-theory” and Scythian case of this problem: Murzin V. Yu. Skifskaiia problema glazami avtora. Kiev, 2014. P.39–53. — Contemporary notion of “chiefdom-theory”, see: Wydra H. Politics and the Sacred. Cambridge, 2017.

⁷ Shuvalov P. V. U istokov srednevekovii: dvor Attily // Problems of social history and culture of the middle ages and early new time. 2001. No. 3. P.130–145.

⁸ Luttwak E. N. Strategiiia Vizantiyskoi imperii. Moscow, 2016. P.65.

⁹ Musset L. Varvskie nashestviia na Evropu: germanskiy natisk. St. Petersburg, 2008.

¹⁰ Ibid. P.35–36.

¹¹ Ryabtseva M. L. Federaty Pozdnei Rimskoi Imperii // Nauchnye vedomosti Belgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Serii: Istoriia, politologiiia. 2016. Vol. 40, no. 22 (243). P.62–66.

¹² Iashchenko A. S. Teoriiia federalizma. Opyt sinteticheskoi teorii prava i gosudarstva. Vol. 2. Moscow, 2012. P.409–410.

¹³ Kulakovskiy Yu., Soni A. Vvedeniie // Ammian Marcellin, The History. Part 1. Kiev, 1906. P.32.

¹⁴ Musset L. Varvskie nashestviia na Evropu... P.84.

¹⁵ Claessen H. J. M. From the Franks to France — the Evolution of Sociopolitical Organization. Development and decline // The evolution of sociopolitical organization / eds H. J. M. Claessen, P. van de Velde, M. E. Smith. South Hadley, 1985. P.196.

to retain their physical and moral strength for a powerful geopolitical “breakthrough” made in the second half of the 5th century although they did not taste federative cohabitation with the Empire. While all other Europeans (traditional Romans and newly-appeared barbarians), with continuous persistence mutually weakened one another, the Franks only occasionally interfered into the distribution of booty and just observed. For example, the Franks, during the invasion of Attila in 451–452 were involved in the military contingents of both warring armies (Hunnic and Roman)¹⁶.

When the Western Roman Empire collapsed in a political sense (it happened within four years, 476–480), the Franks embarked on the great geopolitical road of history in an orderly manner and cohesive way¹⁷. Around 481, Clovis became rex Francorum (481–511)¹⁸. In 507, Clovis destroyed the Visigothic army and conquered for the Franks most part of the Kingdom of Toulouse (existed in 418–507) known as Aquitaine¹⁹. By this victory, the Franks laid their claims to the former Gallic provinces of Rome putting the power of the Italian Ostrogoths at risk. The Franks were at an advantage by letting their other German neighbors go ahead. They began political construction later than the Vandals, Suevi, Ostrogoths, therefore their structures were less depleted and more enduring, which eventually led to the creation of the Frankish state²⁰.

Together with their situational allies (the Bavarians and the Alemanni), the Franks constituted the backbone of the “second wave of invasions”. This wave is characterized by L. Musset in the following way: “Following the first wave of invasions that swept through Europe from end to end, there was a group of less well-known peoples, formed at a later time and less energetic. They went forward very carefully trying by any means not to break the ties with their bases on the other side of the limes. In their history there was not a single spectacular raid, very few major battles and even fewer notorious robberies of Roman cities. On the other hand, this group was much more homogeneous than those that preceded or followed it; they were exclusively Germans who spoke a West German dialect and they were culturally interrelated. Perhaps there were more of them: in any case, instead of gangs performing catchy operations, one can observe mainly crowds of agrarian settlers who managed to take firmly in hands the land in vast areas”²¹.

The Franks were first mentioned in the source “History of Augustus” (241), and already in 257, during a large-scale political crisis in Rome, the Franks reached the Iberian Peninsula. There are facts about pirates-Franks who carried out operations in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean region, and even at the Black Sea (Musset, 2008). In 286, during the authoritarian reforms of the Emperor Diocletianus (284–305), the Franks attacked the major port of Pas-de-Calais²².

Apparently, under the name of the Franks, the Romans mentioned a conglomerate of various West Germanic tribes and nationalities living along the lower and middle reaches of the Rhine River: the Bructeri, the Chatti, The Chamavi, The Ampsivarii, the Hattuaria,

¹⁶ Luttwak Edward. *Strategiia Vizantiiskoi imperii*. P. 70–76.

¹⁷ Le Goff J. *Rozhdenie Evropy (L'Europe est-elle née au moyen âge)*. St. Petersburg, 2014. P. 39–43.

¹⁸ Dates according to J. Le Goff, see: *Le Goff J. Rozhdenie Evropy...* P. 40.

¹⁹ Starostin D. The Frankish conquest of Gaul: From the Byzantine Perspective // *Byzantinoslavica- Revue Internationale des Etudes Byzantines*. 2016. Vol. 74. Iss. 1–2. P. 153–155.

²⁰ *Ibid.* P. 39–43.

²¹ Musset L. *Varvarskie nashestviia na Evropu...* P. 74.

²² *Ibid.*

The Sicambri, the Tenkterer, the Usipetes, the Tubantes, the Batavi²³. These peoples had always lived in close proximity to the Rhine limes, participating in trade exchanges at the markets in Xanten and Cologne.²⁴ The consociation of these Rhine tribes occurred not before the crisis in the 3rd century AD, under pressure of social and demographic development of Barbarian Europe. As usual, geographical factors determined changes in the organizational structure of socio-ethnic groups: the most prominent role was played by climate and demography²⁵: on the one hand, the expected cooling and soil depletion, and on the other hand — increase in the number of inhabitants of non-Roman Europe. The Rhineland was susceptible to the Roman way of life due to the proximity of the border. Besides, Roman influence contributed to the unification of separate border tribes and groups into a kind of chiefdom. The Franks were aware that only an organized way of existence and life-sustaining activity (including trading) would enable them to resist the onslaught of people from Eastern Europe (the Goths, the Alani, the Huns, the Slavs)²⁶.

The biogeographical consistent pattern of the explosive population growth is definite: the number of the Alemanni increased, which required new fertile lands for farm management; since their land was exhausted, it was necessary to acquire immediately someone else's; it was impossible to take foreign lands without war; the aggressive perception of one another gave rise to an endless war in overpopulated Germany: some nations died out, others took their place, new peoples were created from the remains of the former ones. As a result, the constant war made the next tribal confederations consider the need of breaking away from the vicious circle; the only way out could be the seizure of lands of the Roman Empire. The practice of granting and receiving foedus rights, along with the political crisis of the Western Empire, provided new lands and another fate for most Germanic peoples. But, in order to move to Roman territory, barbarian tribes had to force the border, conduct negotiations, show their military power. In the northwestern limes, it brought about the situation when the Alemanni and other tribes had to get through the Frankish lands. This fact is also important as the reason for the consolidation of the Frankish tribal confederation. Firstly, the Franks needed a general military structure in order to defend themselves against murder, robbery and looting, which invariably accompanied the migration of a huge number of armed people. Secondly, the Franks needed a common political structure for diplomatic activities aimed at avoiding clashes and victims²⁷.

The location of rivers and forests preserved many tribal differences within the Frankish community²⁸. This is one more confirmation of the fact that the Franks were formed on the basis of the unity of military-political interests (the principle of chiefdom). Within the tribal confederation, the existence of two sub-ethnic groups is evident: Salian and Rhenish Franks. L. Musset believed that the Salian and Rhenish Franks formed kind of a

²³ Heather P. Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii. P. 77–79.

²⁴ Melnyk V. Lex Foedus, Pravovaia Kommunikatsiia i Politicheskaia Desintegratsiia Zapadnoi Rimskoi Imperii // Geografiia v sovremennom mire: vekovoi progress i novye priorityety. Sbornik statei XIV Bol'shogo geograficheskogo festivalia. St. Petersburg, 2018. P. 1011–1017.

²⁵ Gumilev Lev. V poiskakh vymyshlennogo tsarstva. P. 26–36.

²⁶ Engels F. Proiskhozhdenie sem'i, chastnoi sobstvennosti i gosudarstva. Kiev, 1951. P. 135–146.

²⁷ Description of the discussion about the origin of Franks Chiefdom: Melnyk V. Smena epokh: ocherk formirovaniia rimsko-vizantiiskoi doktriny mezhdunarodnogo prava (3–6 veka) // The Annals of Legal History = Annali iuridicheskoi istorii. 2018. Vol. 2, no. 1–2. P. 63–108.

²⁸ About the importance of rivers in European cultural history, see: Kliuchevskiy V. O. Sochineniia: v 9 tomakh. Tom 1. Kurs russkoi istorii. Ch. 1 / ed. by V. L. Ianin. Moscow, 1987. P. 76.

political union between themselves but only during active military campaigns. At all other times two sub-ethnic groups lived separately.

The entire early history of the Franks is aptly expressed by the citation of the Merovingian historian Gregory of Tours: “Many do not know who the first king of the Franks was”²⁹. Some names of the first leaders are mentioned in the lost Chronicle of Sulpicius Alexander edited by Gregory of Tours: in 287–288, the Chamavi leader Genobaud and his detachment obtained the right foedus as part of the Roman army of Diocletian (284–305)³⁰. In the process of the Great Migration of the Nations, the Franks underwent a known unification stage as a result of which the Salian Franks took control over the Rhenish people. The formation of the Merovingian dynasty refers to this period of time³¹.

The image of King Merovech is mythologized. Musset even believes that “this is more a mythical eponym of the dynasty than a true-life character”³². However, as the experience of comparative analysis of folkloric sources shows, any character from folk mythology always depicts a true-life person, whose positive or negative personality traits are brought to the extreme by the imagination of the narrators³³.

We have an actual factual basis from the political history of the Franks only during the reign of King Childeric (died in 481)³⁴. In the 17th century, the real tomb of Childeric was found in the Belgian Tournai, which is confirmed not only by rich treasures but also by a special ring with a seal³⁵. It is known that in 450–470 rex Childeric, with his Frankish squad, took part in the civil war on the territory of Gaul. The Western Roman Empire, with its center in Ravenna, experienced its downfall³⁶. Many tribal leaders hired themselves out, to one or to another claimant to the throne of the West, in order to get profit, regalia, titles, lands for their soldiers³⁷. Childeric was just that kind of a mercenary leader. Peter Heather gave a brief but comprehensive description of the political image of Childeric: “Historical documents and the contents of the tomb together suggest the idea that he was a military commander, strong enough to define his position, to mobilize and reward, while the last generation of Western Roman leaders tried their best to keep the country from downfall. But afterwards, like most of the other players in this complicated game, he finally realized that it was time to draw a line under his service to the empire and to act on his own authority as the Roman center ceased controlling any assets that were worth worrying about”³⁸.

The Childeric’s tomb, as the most important archaeological finding, enables to make two conclusions³⁹.

²⁹ *Cregoire de Tours*. A History of the Franks. London, 1976. P. 8.

³⁰ *Musset L.* Varvarskie nashestviia na Evropu... P. 87–88.

³¹ *Heather Peter.* Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii. P. 79.

³² *Musset L.* Varvarskie nashestviia na Evropu... P. 87.

³³ *Gumilev L.* V poiskakh vymyshlennogo tsarstva. P. 12–17.

³⁴ *Renard E.* Merovech’s Blood. “Prehistory” of the Merovingian Dynasty and Kingdom // *Revue Belge de Philologie et D’Histoire*. 2014. Vol. 92, iss. 4. P. 999–1001.

³⁵ *Werner J.* Gold Bracelet of the King of Franks Childeric and German Bracelets of Late Roman Time // *Stratum Plus: Archeology and Cultural Anthropology*. 2013. No. 3. P. 315–348.

³⁶ *Heather P.* Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii. P. 79.

³⁷ *Lot F., Pfister C., Ganshof F.L.* Histoire du Moyen Âge, T. 1, Les destinees de l’Empire en Occident de 395 à 888. Paris, 1928.

³⁸ *Heather P.* Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii. P. 265.

³⁹ *Kazanskii M., Peren P.* “Korolevskii” i “vozhdeskie” pogrebeniia rannemerovingskogo vremeni v Gallii // *Kratkie soobscheniia Instituta archeologii*. 2014. No. 234. P. 262–286.

Firstly, Childeric was very rich. The wealth acquired by the Frankish leader in the process of the collapse of the Western Empire would be quite enough for a representative of the senatorial class to live on. It is thought that Clovis, Childeric's son, began his political career "just as one of several leaders of the Franks of the same status"⁴⁰. However, it is hard to believe that Childeric did not pass on the most part of his wealth to his sons. Accordingly, the idea of his treasures should be considered alongside the family factor, the factor of financing military units. Among all known archaeological findings of the north-eastern Gaul, the Childeric's tomb testifies that he was the richest man during the period of the downfall of the West.

Secondly, the amount of buried treasure shows that Childeric's dynasty and military squad could afford to bury such part of the wealth. This not only indirectly confirms Childeric's wealth, but also gives evidence to the general growth in prosperity of the Franks. Besides, the tomb itself, found in 1653, is located on the territory of the town of Roman legionnaires. This points to the fact that Childeric became the first leader of the Franks who began expansion into the lands of Roman Gaul.

The initial political core of the Frankish Tribal Union was formed on the territories of the modern Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. It covered the territory on both sides of the Rhine River. L. Musset believed that the first mass appearance of the Franks in the northeastern Gaul should be referred to the second half of the 3rd century AD⁴¹. In particular, based upon the data of Ammianus Marcellinus, Musset points out a massive involvement of Frankish soldiers in the imperial army. One of such warriors was Ricimer who received the title of consul in 384. Indeed, the "flood" of the army was recorded by the sources. However, archaeological data do not enable to make such conclusions with regard to the northeastern Gaul.

Modern French historiography is guided by the absence of obvious traces of the Roman presence along the line of the old limes — Cologne-Tongern-Bavay-Boulogne⁴². In the 350–380, Ammianus Marcellinus, St. Jerome and Sulpicius Alexander mentioned the fight between the western Romans and the Franks. Nevertheless, after the information of Sulpicius Alexander about the battle between the Franks and the Romans near Cologne (in 388), there is no reference to the Frankish expansion in the northeastern Gaul until the end of the 5th century AD. The period between the years of 388 and 450 is the time when the Franks peacefully settled in this part of the empire. It is noteworthy that on December 31, 406, the Franks didn't show their worth in any way during the invasion of the Vandals, the Suevi and the rest of the Germans (Rhenish Breakthrough)⁴³.

The large-scale emergence of the Franks on the historical arena took place only in 428 and was apparently related to the pressure of the Huns⁴⁴. At the time, the Franks made an attempt to bring the Rhine Province under their control by force of arms, but were totally defeated by Flavius Aetius. In 432, the Franks again attacked the Roman settlements. Gregory of Tours points out that at that time they seized the lands up to the Somme. Their strength and aggressive behavior in 440–450 are related to the formation of the Hunnic

⁴⁰ Heather P. Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii. P. 266.

⁴¹ Musset L. Varvarskie nashestviia na Evropu... P. 88.

⁴² Kim H. J. The Huns, Rome And The Birth of Europe. Cambridge, 2013.

⁴³ Pamiatniki srednevekovoi latinskoi literatury 4–9 vekov / eds M. E. Grabar-Passek, M. L. Gasparov. Moscow, 1970.

⁴⁴ Luttwak E. Strategiiia Vizantijskoi imperii. P. 65–72.

confederative political association. In 440, there was a clash between Aetius' army and the Sali. It is surprising that the majority of specialists in the Frankish history deny or simply ignore the obvious correlation between the Frankish expansion and the military-political growth of Attila's regnum (state)⁴⁵.

The spread of the Huns across the Rhine must have greatly affected the Frankish self-consciousness. Conducting an attack on Orleans and sending troops throughout Gaul, the Huns can't have passed the Franks. It is impossible that only the Franks, being on the way of the Hunnic army, refused to pay tribute to Attila or put rebels in exchange. No matter how regrettable it sounds for patriotic French historians, but the founders of their state did pay tribute to the Huns, and their political system arose on the ruins of the Hunnic Association.

Attila's invasion in 451–452 finally destroyed the Roman border along the entire perimeter of the Western part of the empire. The Huns undermined the military power of Ravenna: the army was blooded; the population was starving; officials stole and fled to the federates⁴⁶. The Visigoths did not see the point of paying taxes, and the Vandals prepared a 14-day pillage of Rome (455). Afterwards Flavius Aetius was killed by Valentinianus III (425–455), and then came the crash. The situation was completed by the Vandals with their economic and naval blockade (there was no delivery of bread from the North Africa, and the Mediterranean region was filled with pirates). Rivers of trade ran out — the Roman Empire disappeared⁴⁷.

In anticipation of the end, the Court of Ravenna attempted to maintain control over the north of Gaul, where there were parts of the Rhine Field Army (comitatenses), and which was formerly considered to be one of the most effective subdivision of the Roman forces of the Dominate (284–480). The Emperor Majorian (457–461), having taken power, appointed Aegidius Afranius Syagrius its commander (died 464). The territory under the control of Aegidius covered the north of Loire river (between the Somme and the Maas), with access to the North Sea. Only Armorica (present-day Brittany) was not taken under the control of the Rhineland army.

Aegidius Afranius Syagrius received the title of magister militum per Gallia from Majorian, and all the land to the north of the Loire was proclaimed the "Gaul-Roman domain"⁴⁸.

Majorian decided to take that step in connection with the complete decentralization of the Western Roman Empire. Africa (food base of Rome) was already lost, as well as the most part of Gaul and Spain. Sicily was attacked by the Vandals. Under the rule of Ravenna, Majorian tried to keep Provence, Italy and Dalmatia. The exhaustion related to the Hunnic campaign and predatory expansion of the Vandals did not allow financing remote areas. There was no direct communication between the Gaul-Roman domain and Ravenna. The appointment of Aegidius Afranius Syagrius was meant to ensure formal subordination of the northern Gaul to the Western Empire, but apart from that Aegidius was committed to restoring the tax base.

⁴⁵ For example: *Kim H. J.* The Huns, Rome And The Birth of Europe. 2013.

⁴⁶ *Braccini T.* Late Ancient Italy and the so-called End of the Ancient World // *The History of European Civilization*. Rome. Kharkiv, 2017. P. 211–214.

⁴⁷ *Kulikova Iu. V.* Kharakternyie cherty vneshnei politiki Zapadnoi Rimskoi Imperii nakanune ee padenia // *Semenovskie chteniia: Trudy XI Vserossiiskoi nauchnoi konferentsii s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem pamiati professora V. F. Semenova* / eds T. N. Loshchilova, E. S. Nosova. Moscow, 2018. P. 49–57.

⁴⁸ *Melnyk V.* Smena epokh... P. 106–107.

Majorian provided Aegidius with broad powers and helped the commander with a military strike against the Visigoths. Apparently, there was a serious danger of the seizure of territories to the north from the Loire by the Toulouse Visigothic king Theoderic II (453–466). Majorian destroyed the Visigothic army in a bloody battle near Arles, which enabled Ravenna to retain control of the Mediterranean region of Gaul. After the battle of Arles, the emperor acclaimed Aegidius as the ruler of Gaul⁴⁹.

Soon afterwards Majorian was killed according to the order of his comrade Ricimer (405–472). Owing everything to Majorian, Aegidius refused to recognize the formal “emperor” Libius Severus (461–465)⁵⁰. Ricimer took power into his hands over the remnants of the West, and actually ruled the Western part of the empire until he died of the plague in 472. He was Suevi (on his father’s side) and Visigoth (grandson of King Wallia (415–418) on his mother’s). His background can be an example of depicting the ethnic composition of the Late Roman army. When he entered into conflict with Ricimer, Aegidius understood perfectly well that he was cutting off the possibility of military assistance from Italy. Strangely enough, but it was the fact that Ricimer killed Majorian and Libius Severus came to the throne, which was not recognized by the northern Gaul controlled by Aegidius, that ensured further historical success of the Frankish tribe. Deterring Visigoth attacks, Burgundian and Ricimer’s aggressive actions, Aegidius was forced to seek help from the Salic leader Childeric⁵¹.

In 463, Childeric was in command of the auxiliary squads of the Franks. Aegidius was able to enlist their support in addition to the loyalty of the Alanian cavalry long established in Orleans. (It is interesting that it was Iranian Alans who defended Orleans from the Hunnic invasion in 451). Aegidius defeated the troops of Theoderic II (453–466) near Orleans, entered into negotiations with the Vandals, planned to seize Italy and destroy the Visigoths. We assume that the Alans from Orleans acted as mediators in the Frankish-Vandal negotiations.

At that time, a powerful force appeared in the west — the Saxons⁵². Taking into account that the Franks moved westward, the Saxons, driven out from their homes by the Huns and Slavs, also decided to migrate. The downfall of the Huns was accompanied by their mass murders (in fact, genocide) by former subordinates, the Gepids and the Ostrogoths. The Ostrogoths received the status of federates and were given Western Pannonia for settlement by the Eastern (Byzantine) Emperor Marcian (450–457). Consequently, from 455, they aspired to superiority in non-Roman Europe⁵³. Waging ruthless wars against the Herulians, the Scirii, the Gepids and the Sarmatians, the Ostrogoths could conduct campaigns in the north quite well. Besides, the Saxons were oppressed by the Slavs who were trained in military affairs during the Hun campaigns.

⁴⁹ Kulikova Iu. V. Kharakternye cherty vneshnei politiki Zapadnoi Rimskoi Imperii nakanune ee padenia. P. 54.

⁵⁰ *Gregoire de Tours*. A History of the Franks. II. 12.

⁵¹ *Valentinova D.* Leges Barbarorum: between Rome and Barbarians // *Istoricheski pregled*. 2018. Vol. 68. No. 3–4. P. 3–26.

⁵² *Starostin D.* The Emergence of the Kingdom of the Franks in the Context of the Relationship between the Roman Empire and the Barbarians: Childerik and the Problems of the Legitimacy of the Merovingian Rulers // *Problemy sotsialnoi istorii i kultury Srednikh vekov i rannego Novogo vremeni*. 2015. Vol. 12. P. 70–84.

⁵³ *Heather P.* Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii. P. 265.

In 464, the Saxons entered into the first documented confrontation with the Franks. Aegidius helped the Franks and died shortly after the great battle⁵⁴. Paul of Angers, who commanded the field army in 465–469, took his place and died in the battle against the Saxons near Angers. Afranius Syagrius, the son of Aegidius (appr. 430–487) took control over northern Gaul. The North Gallic power of Aegidius, Paul of Angers, and Afranius Syagrius was not recognized by the emperors being under the control of Ricimer. In its turn, although Aegidius and his heirs refused to recognize the Court of Ravenna, none of them proclaimed independence. Until his very death in 487, Afranius Syagrius was called only *Dux per Gallia*⁵⁵ — the commander of Gaul.

When, on September 4, 476, the German Officer Odoacer captured Ravenna and dethroned minor Romulus Augustulus (475–476), Afranius Syagrius sent his embassy to the Eastern (Byzantine) emperor Zeno (476–491) with a request to recognize the Gallo-Roman domain controlled by him as legal Western Roman Empire. Odoacer was recognized by Zeno as commander of the West and *de facto* as a ruler. Legally, this recognition was realized to the full extent after the death of Julius Nepos in 480⁵⁶.

Afranius Syagrius *de jure* remained subordinate to the legal emperor Julius Nepos in 476–480. The murder of Julius Nepos (480) left emperor Zeno the only Roman in the world, whom Odoacer recognized as the supreme ruler⁵⁷. Consequently, Afranius Syagrius encountered a dilemma. His first option was to proclaim himself Emperor if he wanted to restore the Western Roman Empire. Arguments could be found for this purpose since Syagrius originated from the senatorial aristocracy. His father Aegidius was the first confidant of Emperor Majorian (457–461). The second option for Syagrius was to recognize his dependence on Odoacer, ensuring military assistance to defeat the Saxons.

But refusing to proclaim himself Emperor and to recognize the actual rule of Odoacer, Syagrius, nevertheless, called his Gallo-Roman domain (Kingdom of Soissons) the territory of the Roman Empire. We suggest that it was the secondary evidence that Afranius Syagrius recognized the sovereignty of the Eastern Roman emperor Zeno (476–491)⁵⁸. Indeed, it was the only right decision under the geopolitical and military-strategic conditions of the time. After all, only the formal recognition of Zeno could protect Afranius Syagrius from the attacks of Odoacer⁵⁹, who planned to unite the provinces of the West under his rule. Besides, the recognition of Zeno could somehow provide diplomatic assistance to the Byzantines in the case of a large-scale conflict with the Burgundians and Visigoths — the rulers of the Kingdom of Toulouse and Leon — just as they recognized *de jure* authority of the Eastern Roman Empire (as the only Roman Empire)⁶⁰.

The emergence of a 15-year-old rex Clovis on the historical arena seriously changed the geopolitical alignment of forces in Western Europe of that time⁶¹. Afranius Syagrius

⁵⁴ *Gregoire de Tours*. A History of the Franks. II. 18, 19.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 12, 18, 27.

⁵⁶ *Melnyk V. Smena epokh...* P. 94–96.

⁵⁷ *Shipilov D. F. O prinadlezhnosti Odoacru titula patriciia // Vestnik of the Russian State Pedagogical University*. 2015. No. 76, iss. 1. P. 402–407.

⁵⁸ *Melnyk V. Smena epokh...* P. 107.

⁵⁹ *Gregoire de Tours*. A History of the Franks. II. 18.

⁶⁰ For example: *Esders S., Reimitz H. After Gundovald, before Pseudo-Isidore: episcopal jurisdiction, clerical privilege and the uses of Roman law in the Frankish kingdoms // Early Medieval Europe*. 2019. Vol. 27, iss. 1. P. 106–111.

⁶¹ *Engels F. Proiskhozhdenie...* P. 141.

was in the first in the young king's "line of fire"⁶². A fair share of luck helped Clovis to win the Battle of Soissons (486)⁶³. According to Gregory of Tours, Clovis without any delay passed through the entire territory of the domain, up to Soissons. Not far from the capital, Clovis proposed that Syagrius should choose a place for the battle. Syagrius lost the battle, and the Franks acquired their homeland⁶⁴.

This is our assumption. To begin with, we place a special emphasis on the fact that the sources do not contain explicit references to contacts between the Gallo-Roman domain and Constantinople after 476. However, the available information, as stated above, suggests that Afranius Syagrius recognized himself *de jure* as a subordinate to the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium). We present a logical line of arguments. Firstly, Syagrius's contender Odoacer had already acknowledged himself as such a subordinate. Secondly, after Romulus Augustulus was dethroned (on September 4, 476), Afranius Syagrius sent the embassy from the northern Gaul to Constantinople declaring a request to Zeno to recognize the Gallo-Roman domain as the legitimate Western part of the Roman Empire. This fact already certifies that Syagrius regarded the Byzantine emperor not as a foreign sovereign or overseas ruler, but as an arbitrator entitled to intervene in the affairs of the Western Empire. Sending the embassy with a "request", Syagrius behaved as a subordinate to the leader. Even if such a leader existed in a technical sense, the fact that he sent the embassy testifies that Afranius Syagrius recognized his legislative primacy, his supreme legal authority. After all, he asked to arbitrate between him and Odoacer.

Having got a refusal from the political center of the Western Roman Empire to recognize the Kingdom of Soissons, Syagrius could obtain the confirmation of his provincial authority. If the Eastern Roman Emperor personally met the embassy from Soissons, it already meant that he was prepared to establish a dialogue. The fact that Syagrius did not call himself the king of some particular *regnum*, but namely, *Dux* (regional ruler, from the point of view of modern jurisprudence — the governor) of the Gallo-Roman domain (a domain means a province, not a kingdom!), can be interpreted as a confirmation of Syagrius' governorship on the part of Zeno⁶⁵. In this context, the Kingdom of Soissons might be as well considered *de jure* part of the Eastern Roman Empire. At least, calling the Northern Gaul the Gallo-Roman domain in 480–487, Syagrius, regardless of the actual nature of this connection, recognized himself as the subordinate of the only Roman Emperor. This is how the situation looks like if you think legally, that is, correctly and according to the laws⁶⁶.

We have stated herein before: there is evidence that the Visigoths and Burgundians also recognized the supreme power of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Emperor⁶⁷. For example, the Visigoths (and all the rest of the barbarians) did not mint gold coins, used the consular chronology (traditionally the years were called by the names of consuls appointed in Constantinople), and their orthodox clergy mentioned the name of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Emperor in the Holy Liturgy. The thaw in the relationship between the Visigoths and Syagrius should be associated with the supposed recognition of the supreme

⁶² Heather P. *Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii*. P. 266.

⁶³ *Cregoire de Tours*. *A History of the Franks*. II. 27.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Mousourakis G.* *Roman Law and the Origins of the Civil Law Tradition*. Basel, 2015.

⁶⁷ *Musset L.* *Varvarskie nashestviia na Evropu...* P. 80–82, 314.

power of the Eastern Roman Emperor and involvement of Byzantine diplomacy. In fact, when in 486 the Frankish king Clovis (481–511) initiated an attack against the Kingdom of Soissons and defeated the forces of Afranius Syagrius, the Dux of the Gallo-Roman domain ran away to Toulouse — to the court of the Visigothic king Alaric II (484–507)⁶⁸. Another thing is that the king actually sold Syagrius to the people of Clovis. On the one hand, the Visigoths settled a score with Afranius Syagrius taking into account the experience of many years of armed conflict. However, on the other hand, the Visigoths betrayed their ally, partner and a guest who trusted them. Afranius Syagrius could not escape to the court of Alaric II in Toulouse without having secured guarantees for the preservation of life⁶⁹.

By 486, Zeno had sufficiently strengthened the power in Constantinople to take thought of the western provinces. Already in 487, an agreement was reached with the Constantinople patrician, the consul and the Balkan magister militum, Theodoric Amal, the leader of the Ostrogoths-federates on the transfer of his people to Italy⁷⁰. It is possible to hypothesize that Zeno cast for the Kingdom of Soissons some role in a distant geopolitical perspective. In any case, the Visigoths paid for their actions very quickly. In 507, the Toulouse army of Alaric II suffered a defeat by the detachments of Clovis⁷¹. The Visigoths lost Aquitaine forever, and their Spanish and Narbonne possessions fell under the control of Theodoric Amal nicknamed “The Great”⁷². Only in 526, the Visigoths recreated a political entity (the Kingdom of Toledo), affected by Byzantine influence (in particular, after the military expansion of the 550s).

In 500–501, Clovis made an attempt to capture Burgundy similarly to Soissons. King Gundobad managed to stop the Franks. In an effort to regain authority⁷³, Clovis adopted Orthodox Christianity⁷⁴. L. Musset provides three possible dates for the baptism of Clovis (Christmas 496, 498 or 506)⁷⁵. If Clovis was really baptized before the war against the Visigoths (before 507), this may mean that being the only barbarian who at the time accepted the sacrament of Holy Baptism from the Orthodox bishop (the other kings were Arians), the Frankish rex counted on an uncensorious attitude of Byzantium toward the upcoming war⁷⁶.

Secret negotiations between Clovis and Visigothic Orthodox bishops, if they took place, were, without any doubts, controlled by Constantinople⁷⁷. Byzantium was at the crossroads. On the one hand, it was extremely necessary for it to give support to Clovis in order to return comprehensive church (and, consequently, political) supervision over the

⁶⁸ *Cregoire de Tours*. A History of the Franks. II. 27.

⁶⁹ *Konkov D. S.* Transformatsiia sotsialnykh sviiazei v Akvitanii v khode formirovaniia Vestgotского korolevstva // *Vestnik Kemerovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*. 2013. No. 2–3 (54). P. 76–80.

⁷⁰ *Prokopios*. The Wars of Justinian / transl. by H. B. Dewing, rev. by A. Kaldellis. 2014. BG. I. 9–11. — See also interpretation: *Melnyk V.* Rimskaiia imperiia v 5 veke: krushenie ili pererozhdenie? // *Science and Technology*. 2019. Iss. 7. P. 65.

⁷¹ *Cregoire de Tours*. A History of the Franks. II. 37.

⁷² *Cassiodorus*. *Variae*... V. 35, 39. See also: *Prokopios*. The Wars of Justinian. BG. V. 12. 33.

⁷³ About political aspects of authority and aristocratic ideologies: *Manukyan E. M.* Rod Apollinariiev i sotsiokulturnye strategii gallo-rimskoi aristokraticheskoi familii v 4–5 vekakh // *Nauchnye vedomosti Belgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*. Serii: istoriia, politologiiia. 2018. Vol. 45, no. 3. P. 415–426.

⁷⁴ *Kobylinский M. Yu.* Chlodvig — kreshchenie korolia. *Istoriia v podrobnostiah*. 2012. No. 7. P. 6–15.

⁷⁵ *Musset Lucien*. *Varvarskie nashestviya na Evropu*... P. 95.

⁷⁶ See the historical context: *Telminov E. A.* Christianskaia tserkov' i varvary v rimskoi Gallii v 5 veke. // *Izvestiia Altaiskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*. 2008. No. 4–3 (60). P. 241–245.

⁷⁷ *Heather P.* *Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii*. P. 268–269.

bishops and dioceses of Aquitaine and Spain⁷⁸. On the other hand, the Byzantines could not be content with the creation of large Francia. It was a potential threat to the emperor's power in the Western Mediterranean, which was recognized by the Arians-Visigoths by fits and starts⁷⁹. Moreover, the Frankish seizure of Aquitaine worsened the relations with Ostrogothic Italy where Theodoric the Great, the Byzantine Magister Militum, ruled.

Theodoric, as is commonly known, on the eve of the Frankish-Visigothic war wrote letters to Clovis, Gundobad and Alaric, in which he presented himself as the governor of Italy/West appointed by Zeno (476–491) and confirmed by Anastasius (491–518)⁸⁰. In the upcoming conflict, the Byzantines tried to take the advantageous role of an arbitrator. They moved forward the naval forces to Taranto (port in Apulia). However, in the actual fact, a comprehensive military confrontation between the Byzantines and the Ostrogoths did not happen. On the contrary, the presence of the Byzantine military-naval contingent in the south of Italy served a dual function. It balanced the forces. On the one hand, the Byzantines restrained the Ostrogoths from providing considerable assistance to the Visigoths. On the other hand, the Byzantines could transfer the naval forces to the south of Gaul to give assistance to the Ostrogoths against the Franks. In fact, the Byzantines gave assistance to Theodoric the Great, as his governor, to avoid involvement into active military actions and to achieve the maximum benefit, having prepared an excuse for him before the entire barbaric world⁸¹.

In the spring of 507, Clovis decimated the Visigothic army at the Battle of Poitiers⁸². King Alaric II died, after which the Ostrogoths began to act: they inflicted defeat on the Burgundians and the Franks, captured the south of Gaul and the major part of Spain⁸³. Aquitaine was lost, but the main task was unleashed — the Western Mediterranean, including Vandal-Alanian Africa, was under the control of the Ostrogoths led by Theodoric the Amal⁸⁴. This success was consolidated in 511. At the same time, Clovis died having adopted Christianity, and defeated Syagrius annexed Paris and Aquitaine, but did not gain access to the Mediterranean sea. That is why the year 511 was considered to be a wonderful year of Theodoric — *annus mirabilis*⁸⁵.

The regimen of Clovis (481–511) is associated with another interesting secret. Gregory of Tours reports that immediately after the victory over the Visigoths (507), Clovis was granted the title of consul from Anastasius I (491–518), the Byzantine Emperor⁸⁶. Musset writes: “To confer the rank of honorary consul to Clovis (it is obvious that there was no talk about the actual consulate) was not an extraordinary event; this title had already been

⁷⁸ *Konkov D. S.* Transformatsiia sotsialnykh svyazei v Akvitanii v khode formirovaniia Vestgot'skogo korolevstva. P. 76–80.

⁷⁹ *Shkarenkov P.* The Imperial Discourse “after” the Empire: Pax Romana and Socio-cultural Challenges at the Turn of the Antiquity and the Middle Ages // *Novyi Filologicheskii Vestnik = New Philological Bulletin*. 2017. Vol. 42. P. 25–38.

⁸⁰ *Cassiodorus. Variae...* III. 1. 2–3; III. 2. 3–4; III. 52–5.

⁸¹ See another opinion: *Udaltsova Z.* Italiia i Vizantiia v 6 veke. Moscow, 1959. P. 231–235.

⁸² *Cretoire de Tours. Histoire des Francs*. II. 37.

⁸³ *Cassiodorus. Variae...* V. 35, 39.

⁸⁴ *Heather P.* Vosstanovlenie Rimskoi imperii. P. 104.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* P. 100–109. — See some legal examples of Theodoric's Power: *Cassiodorus. Variae...* V. 43–44 (Burgundian case).

⁸⁶ *Cretoire de Tours. Histoire des Francs*. II. 38.

conferred to the barbarians before: it was a diplomatic step to congratulate the king on the victory over the Visigoths and to achieve the continued alliance with him”⁸⁷.

In fact, Musset offers us a perspective given by the great historian Francois Guizot (1787–1874): “The title of consul was not at all conferred to Clovis, he only wore the consular insignia often distributed by the imperial court in Byzantium. The real consulate was always recorded in Fasti and served as the designation of the year. The name of Clovis is not mentioned in Fasti”⁸⁸. We do not agree with Guizot’s point of view that the consular rank was conferred too often. It was conferred upon those who achieved significant results in the “actual service for the Empire”. Let us recall, for example, Theodoric the Great — the patrician and the official consul of the Eastern Roman Empire in 484, who became governor of Italy in 493. There is a lot of implicit data about the existence of Byzantine Western governorship led by Theodoric the Great. The well-known context of the relationship between Theodoric and Clovis may as well be of research interest in this case.

Concerning the Tours ceremony held for Clovis, there are contradictory assumptions. Some regard the Tours ceremony as a symbol of providing Clovis with the authority equal to the emperor. Others consider the events to be a legend (Guizot). In French historiography, Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges (1830–1889) was the greatest admirer of the approach, which perceived the Tours ceremony as the formal proclamation of Clovis as Byzantine governor of the West. An attempt to form an “interim opinion” was made by Musset: “Anastasius granted the title of honorary consul to the king of the Franks; the rest was staged by a local initiative originating from either Clovis himself or the Tours clergy who wanted to celebrate the riddance from the Goths”⁸⁹. Musset’s interim opinion goes back to the article by Pierre Courcelle who believed the usual theatrical performance was possible for the sake of public entertainment and internal support of the authority of Clovis⁹⁰.

So at first, the Franks annexed the Kingdom of Soissons, afterwards they conquered the Visigothic Aquitaine. The overwhelming majority of the population, on 80 % of the territory, were Gallo-Romans. This social environment should be taken into account. Clovis tried to prove to the Gallo-Romans that he was “a man of their people”⁹¹. Victories over Afranius Syagrius and Alaric II constituted the backbone of the political capital of Clovis. There was nothing left for him but conquer Burgundy. In the battle with King Gundobad, Clovis once suffered a defeat (approximately in 500). In order not to repeat mistakes, Clovis decided to take control over Burgundy “diplomatically”. On the Burgundian, as well as on the Frankish territory, the vast majority of the inhabitants were Gallo-Romans. Being an Orthodox Christian, Clovis used the administrative machine of the Gallic church and the propaganda capabilities of the clergy. The fact that the Kingdom of Lyon fell under the pressure of the Franks in 534 was the result of the said propaganda policy.

In the 507–511, Theodoric’s political success depended on the number of kinship, friendship, and diplomatic ties throughout Europe. Besides, Clovis made his way toward

⁸⁷ Musset L. Varvarskie nashestviia na Evropu... P.269.

⁸⁸ Footnotes by editor François Guizot in: *Gregoire de Tours. Histoire des Francs* / ed. by François Guizot. Clermont-Ferrand, 2011. P. 115.

⁸⁹ Musset L. Varvarskie nashestviia na Evropu... P.290.

⁹⁰ Courcelle Pierre. Le titre d’Auguste decerne a Clovis // Bull. Soc. Nat. Antiq. France. Paris, 1948–1949. P. 46–57.

⁹¹ The imperial idea continued to live among the people: Shkarenkov P. The Imperial Discourse “after” the Empire... P.25–38.

the establishment of political hegemony beyond any doubts. The creation of “Lex Salica”, reproducing to a great extent the imperial legal documents, including the Code of Emperor Theodosius II (408–450) and the codification of Majorian (457–461), proves the correctness of this kind of reasoning⁹². Clovis adopted Orthodox Christianity, established diplomatic contacts with Constantinople, published binding laws. Theodoric the Great, for example, issued his own Edict only in 512. It means that at some stage, there was a real threat of geopolitical dominance of the Franks. Nevertheless, this threat was interrupted by the death of Clovis on November 27, 511⁹³.

The Franks failed to achieve the Ostrogoths’ level of centralization. Moreover, the support of the Franks by the Byzantines never turned into open opposition to Theodoric’s ambitions. Based on, we suggest that the Tours ceremony was an advance received by Clovis from the Byzantine ambassadors in exchange for the strategic commitment of the Church of Constantinople. After all, the power of the Orthodox Franks over the Gallo-Romans attracted official Constantinople Patriarchate much more than the power of the Arian-Visigoths. Apparently, Anastasius I hoped that under the conditions of Frankish rule, the Byzantine clergy would receive direct access to the Gallic dioceses.

It is more likely that Clovis actually received the position of *dux per Gallia* from Anastasius I (491–518), having become the official Byzantine governor of Gaul and Francia after Afranius Syagrius. In connection with this assumption, which is not intended to establish a fact, it is interesting to suppose that the title of *Dux* (governor) was later transformed into a “consul and Augustus” by misinterpretation of Gregory of Tours. In this case, the Tours ceremony became a formal act of subordination of the Franks to the supreme power of the Byzantine Emperor. At the very least, we believe that our assumption is more realistic than the claims of Clovis against imperial power imagined by individual historians.

In 511, Theodoric consolidated in his hands political power over the most part of the former Western Roman Empire. Theodoric ruled over Italy, Dalmatia, Sicily, Pannonia, Noricum, southern Gaul, entire Spain; controlled the Kingdoms of Carthage and Lyon (Vandals and Burgundians), as well as the chiefdoms of the Suevi, Thuringi and Bavars. Due to Theodoric’s geopolitical talent, the Ostrogoths surrounded the *regnum Francorum* and gained access to the Amber Trade Road on the Baltic Sea (through the Thuringian-Saxon border). The following fact was very meaningful for the Western European in the 6th century AD: the contradictions with Constantinople in 524–526 did not prevent Theodoric from repeating the following words to the heir and the entourage before his own death: “consider the Eastern Roman Emperor second after God”⁹⁴.

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⁹² Palmer J. T. Sinnstiftungen eines Rechtsbuchs: Die Lex Salica im Frankenreich // German History. 2017. Vol. 36, iss. 2. P. 271–272.

⁹³ *Cregoire de Tours*. Histoire des Francs, II. 43.

⁹⁴ The Gothic History of Jordanes: in English Version with an Introduction and a Commentary by Charles Christopher Mierow. Merchantville (N. J.), 2006. Getica, 304.

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