THE DUKES IN THE REGNUM FRANCORUM, A.D. 550–751

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During Merovingian times a group of powerful officials called dukes (duces) are to be found in the Regnum Francorum.¹ They exercised considerable power in Merovingian realms and often ruled over extensive districts known as ducati. Although a number of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars such as Waitz, Fustel de Coulanges, and Kurth devoted considerable attention in their writings to these dukes, in recent years most British, French, and American scholarship has tended to ignore them and to concentrate attention upon another set of officials, the counts, who have seemed more rewarding as a subject of scholarly study. Typical of this attitude is Ferdinand Lot. In a last book which summed up his views in scholarly form (La Naissance de la France, new ed., 1970), Lot devoted three pages to Merovingian counts and their duties while allotting only a few scant sentences to dukes, patricians, and rectors.² Or we might note the remarks of François-Louis Ganshof in his otherwise excellent recent Frankish Institutions under Charlemagne: “as under his Merovingian and Carolingian predecessors, the territorial official par excellence of his [Charlemagne’s] authority was the count.”³ One need only examine most recent textbooks in medieval history, the popular “vulgarisations” of French, British, and American historians, to find this assessment of the relative importance of these officials repeated again and again.

Recently, however, a number of scholars, largely German and Austrian,

¹ In this article the term Regnum Francorum is used in the same way that historians refer to the Imperium Romanum when dealing with the frequently divided late Roman Empire down to the death of the Emperor Maurice in 602. It connotes the entire area which the Franks controlled or dominated until 751 when the Merovingians were replaced as rulers by the Carolingians. For use of such a term see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, The Long-Haired Kings and Other Studies in Frankish History (New York, 1962), pp. 190, 198, 206, and 236; and H. Wolfram, “The Shaping of the Early Medieval Principality as a Type of Non-royal Rulership,” Viator 2 (1971), 38–41, 45.
have begun a re-examination of the dukedoms and the somewhat similar rectors, patricians, and other officials of Merovingian and early Carolingian times before the mid-eighth century, attempting to reassess their importance, as well as their long-range significance to European history as a whole. Though this school of historians has deep roots in the scholarly past, it perhaps owes most to the research of Gerd Tellenbach and especially to his pioneering study of Austrasian and other German noble families — a work which appeared in 1939.\textsuperscript{4} Since the Second World War his work has been continued and amplified by a number of talented historians such as Bergengruen, Brunner, Claude, Ebling, Ewig, Irsigler, Kienast, Schlesinger, Sprandel, Werner, Wolfram, and Zöllner, who have done much to increase our understanding of the Merovingian nobility and their political and social importance.\textsuperscript{5}

Now, while it is true that the work of these historians has opened up new vistas in scholarship, it should be emphasized that the prosopographical interest which they have displayed has had two less rewarding results. First of all, it has led many of them to a concern about family relationships which has been so speculative that it has distracted their attention from the sources and drawn them into a thicket of sterile secondary controversy — something

\textsuperscript{4} G. Tellenbach, \textit{Königtum und Stämme in der Werdezeit des deutschen Reiches} (Weimar, 1939), which sums up his view on these matters.


this article will attempt to avoid by emphasizing primary sources wherever possible.\textsuperscript{6} And secondly, many of these same authors, thanks to their interest in prosopography, have been so concerned with who the dukes, rectors, patricians, and other Frankish officials were, that they have tended to lose sight of what they were and how their offices changed and developed through the years. This again is something this article will attempt to avoid by emphasizing the latter two elements rather than the former whenever possible.

With all this in mind, we might best begin by emphasizing that we will not concern ourselves here with any exhaustive study of the origins of Merovin-
gian dukes, rectors, patricians, and counts prior to about 550 a.d., important though such a study may be.\textsuperscript{7} Instead, for a number of reasons, we begin

\textsuperscript{6} It is precisely the speculative character of much of this secondary literature that causes Eblung in his fine prosopographic study referred to in note 5 to eliminate references to it almost entirely and stick to primary sources.

\textsuperscript{7} Like much else in the \textit{Regnum Francorum}, dukes had a joint or dual German and Roman origin much like early feuodalistic practices. In the second century Tacitus mentions that the Germans made use of war chiefs whom he calls \textit{duces}. Tacitus, \textit{Germania} 7; and K. Bosl, "Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute summun," in \textit{Frühformen der Gesellschaft im mittelalterlichen Europa} (Munich, 1965), pp. 62–73. Gregory of Tours mentions that, prior to Clovis, the Franks were led by \textit{duces}. Gregory of Tours, \textit{History of the Franks} 2.8, ed. Dalton (Oxford, 1927), p. 89. For this title given to \textit{duces} of other Germanic peoples prior to 550 see Zöllner, \textit{Geschichte der Franken}, pp. 141–42. Even more decisive is the fact that that mixture of Germanic people whom we call the Lombards were led by military leaders called \textit{duces} at the time of their entry into Italy. See Wolfram, \textit{Institutatio}, 1, pp. 185–194 (with full bibliography); and Musset, \textit{Les Invasions}, pp. 140–210.

On the other hand, the \textit{Notitia Dignitatum}, which dates from 423, reveals that a number of military officials called \textit{duces} commanded the military forces along the land and sea frontiers of the Roman Empire in regions which were later to be included in the \textit{Regnum Francorum}. For these \textit{duces} see A. H. M. Jones, \textit{The Later Roman Empire}, 284–602 (Norman, Okla., 1964), 2:1432–33; and Map IV. Later on after Justinian had reconquered the Vandal West, he established \textit{duces} in conquered territory as officials who appear to have been in charge of \textit{both} military forces and the civil administration in Africa and Sardinia. Ibid., 2:1159. After his final reconquest of Italy, similar \textit{duces} were given commands along the northern frontiers of this province. Ibid., 2:656 and 1126, note 5.

The title and office of patrician, on the other hand, seems to have been completely Roman in origin. It was one first given to Western Roman field commanders like Stilicho. See Jones, \textit{Later Roman Empire}, 1:175–76 and 245. Theodoric assumed this title later on and so did subsequent Ostrogothic kings. Ibid., 1:247 and 256. It seems to have denoted an overall military commander prior to 550 with civil authority as well, and that is perhaps why Clovis seems to have been called patrician after he secured recognition from the Eastern Emperor Anastasius. On the other hand, the title of patrician was given to Narses when he acted as commander-in-chief and virtual governor general of Italy during the last years of Justinian's reign, and similar officials bearing this title were to be found in North Africa after its reconquest. Ibid., 2:292–95. It was Ostrogothic conquest which was responsible for introducing this office into Provence where counts disappeared, and this region was governed by a certain Patrician Liberius until 534. E. Baratier, \textit{Histoire de la Provence} (Toulouse, 1969), pp. 90–91. Patricians were probably not to be found in the Burgundian realm until after its conquest by the Franks. Then such an official was established there, perhaps copying the practice in Provence, one who may have been an overall military commander. O. Perrin, \textit{Les Burgundes} (Neuchatel, 1968), p. 542. The origin of the title
our narrative at about the middle of the sixth century. First of all, it was at
about this time that the *Regnum Francorum*, after having absorbed the Bur-
gundian kingdom and Provence to the south and after having established an
hegemony to the east over the Thuringians, eastern Allemanii, and Bavaria,
reached the approximate frontiers it was to maintain down to the time of
Pepin III. It was also at about this time that its frontiers with the Visigoths in
Septimania and with the Lombards in Italy became fixed, despite consider-
able later efforts to extend them. In short, by about 550 or 570 we can view
the *Regnum Francorum* as having a territorial basis which it previously lacked,
making possible a considerable degree of institutional organization.8

Secondly, it was precisely during the second half of the sixth century that a
considerable fusion took place between the Roman landed aristocracy and
the German and Frankish noble class in Frankish domains. Now we can
begin to regard Frankish officialdom and its higher clergy as a group which
can be examined as a whole from an institutional point of view. This
certainly was not so when the Franks were in the process of extending their
domains in all directions.9

And finally, it is only about 550 that we begin to find extensive reliable

and office of *rector* is more difficult to trace. It was obviously of Roman origin and seems to have
meant the governor of a province. This seems true even though such titles were given church
officials who managed the patrimony of the Roman see in Gaul, Italy, and Spain at the time of
Gregory the Great. Ibid., 769, 789, and 1322–23. In Visigothic Spain governors of provinces
were at first generally called *rectors*. Ibid., pp. 257 and 1120. Whether or not it was used in Gaul
prior to 550 is uncertain.

As for the office and title of count, it too was definitely of Roman origin and meant either
the governor of a *civitas*, a commander of troops (generally of the interior striking army, not the
frontiers), or an official of the *palatium*. For references to a continuation of such officials in
Visigothic Spain, Italy, and the late Roman Empire see ibid., pp. 104–05, 253–71, and 1492–35.
Interestingly enough, such *comites* disappear completely in Italy, except in Rome, after its
reconquest by Justinian. We also do not find them in Provence after its conquest by the
Ostrogoths. Ibid., p. 1126, note 5. This is not true in Gaul, however, where they continue to
exist in what had been former Roman territory prior to 550. For Frankish Gaul see Gregory of
Tours, *Hist. Frank*. 4.4; and especially Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, pp. 139–40. In the
Burgundian kingdom Burgundian law tells us of *comites* who ruled *civitates* in pairs; one a
Roman, one a Burgundian. See *Constitutiones*, 5, in *Legas Burgundiones*, ed. de Sales in *MGH Leges*
regions which had a Roman population which accounts for the mention of those counts who in
610 were defeated by the Alemans in the district of Avenches according to Fredegar. *The Fourth
Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with its Continuations* 37, ed. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (London,
1960), pp. 29–30 (hereafter referred to as *Fredegar*); and Musset, op. cit., p. 175, for Romanized
Alpine regions.

8 This Frankish expansion has been especially well covered in Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*,

9 For an extensive treatment of this fusion see P. Riché, *Éducation et culture dans l'occident
and Wolfram, “The Shaping of the Medieval Principality,” p. 35. For a similar fusion going on
in Visigothic Spain at this same time see *Historia de España, 2, La Alta Edad Media*, rev. ed. F.
contemporary information from our two principal sources for sixth-century Frankish history, Gregory of Tours and Fortunatus, whose writings provide us with some basis for an analysis of how the dukes and the somewhat similar rectors and patricians, and the counts as well, tended to function in the *Regnum Francorum*.  

With this in mind, let us proceed to divide the two centuries after 550 into eras which are meaningful for our analysis. Perhaps it would be best to set up three general periods: a formative one between 550 and 592 which is the time of Gregory of Tours and Fortunatus; a middle period from 592 to 643, the time of Fredegar; and a later post-Fredegar age which extends from 643 to 751. Each of these periods provides us with some distinct features concerning these officials which seem to merit special examination.

During the formative period, between 550 and 592, our information concerning these officials is relatively full, in one sense, thanks to the writings of Gregory of Tours and Fortunatus and the portion of Fredegar’s *Chronicle* covering the years between 584 and 592. This is true despite the fact that we possess little other evidence in the form of charters and diplomas or even saints’ lives which throw much light upon Frankish officialdom in general or on dukes, patricians, rectors, and counts in particular.

During the middle period, between 592 and 643, our only really satisfactory narrative source is Fredegar’s *Chronicle*, though additional information can be found in a number of saints’ lives like Jonas’s *Vita Columbani*. On the other hand, it is precisely during this period that our non-narrative documentation begins to become rather full, especially that found in Mar-

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10 Both Gregory of Tours and Fortunatus are especially reliable when reporting events which took place during their lifetimes. The same cannot be said of Paul the Deacon’s *History of the Lombards* which, because it was written two centuries after many of the events it records, can hardly be used with assurance concerning matters which occurred in the late sixth or early seventh centuries.


14 Gregory of Tours and Fortunatus, however, only deal with the more Romanized parts of the *Regnum Francorum* of which they had more personal knowledge. They tend to neglect the rest in their writings.

15 Fredegar’s *Chronicle*, since he was probably a Burgundian, is particularly reliable when it deals with Burgundian and Austrasian affairs. To help cover other areas of the *Regnum*, I am therefore making use of narratives found in Jonas, *Vita Columbani*, ed. B. Krusch, in MGH SS rerMerov 4 (for Burgundy and Northeastern Gaul); in the *Vita Eligii*, ed. B. Krusch in MGH SS rerMerov 4 (for the area of Paris and Central Gaul); and the *Vita Desiderii of Cahors*, ed. B. Krusch, in MGH SS rerMerov 4 (for Aquitaine).
cull’s *Formulary*,\textsuperscript{16} Chlotar II’s well-known *Edict of Paris* of 614,\textsuperscript{17} Dagobert’s list of officeholders and their functions (known to us from a tenth-century manuscript),\textsuperscript{18} and a number of royal charters which begin to appear about 625.\textsuperscript{19}

During our final period, narrative sources become much scantier, more localized, and less satisfactory, consisting mainly of the *Continuators of Fredegar* and the *Liber Historiae Francorum*. On the other hand, we can add to our information by making use of a considerable number of charters and *diplomas* and a corpus of saints’ lives which make reference to the officials in question and the way in which they functioned.\textsuperscript{20}

With this in mind, let us begin an attempt to form some idea of the importance of Merovingian dukes, *rectors*, and patricians in relation to the counts by examining the principal narrative and other sources of the above periods and see how often individuals having such titles are mentioned by name. This represents no mechanistic use of quantitative data applied to periods when documentation is painfully limited. Rather it rests upon a conviction that contemporaries tend to show which officials are important by mentioning them by name. When we survey this kind of information we discover that the important sources dealing with our first period contain the names of more than fifty individual dukes, *rectors*, and patricians, divided as follows: in *Gregory of Tours*, forty-one dukes, five patricians, and three *rectors*, but only twenty-five counts; in *Fredegar*, three additional dukes, two additional patricians, and one additional count; in *Fortunatus*, one additional patrician, one additional duke, and one additional count.\textsuperscript{21} If one is willing to judge the relative importance of officials in this way, then, dukes, *rectors*,


\textsuperscript{17} *The Edict of Paris*, in MGH Capit., ed. Boretius, pp. 18–19.


\textsuperscript{19} These royal charters are to be found in *Les diplômes originaux des Merovingiens*, ed. P. Lauer and Ch. Samaran (Paris, 1908), nos. 1–5 and 7, pp. 4–6 and 8, which I use because of all surviving charter collections this best reflects a Merovingian court and administrative center.

\textsuperscript{20} I am making use of the edition of *Fredegar’s Continuaciones* found in *The Chronicle of Fredegar*, ed. Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 80–103; the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, ed. B. Krusch, in MGH SSrerMerov 2, supplemented by a number of saints’ lives which are specifically concerned with later Merovingians and early Carolingians, such as the *Vita Arnulfii*, the *Vita Gertrudis*, the *Vita Baldechidis*, and the *Vita Dagoberti III*—all to be found in MGH SSrerMerov 2, as well as the *Passio Leudegarii Episcopi Angustadinensis, I, II and III*, ed. B. Krusch, in MGH SSrerMerov 5.

\textsuperscript{21} Not only do *Gregory of Tours* and *Fortunatus* name more patricians, *rectors*, and dukes than they do counts, but they cover their activities more thoroughly. For a full listing of such officials praised by *Fortunatus* in his *Carmina*, see the mention of: Jovinus, patrician and *rector* (not in *Gregory or Fredegar*) in *Carmina* 7, nos. 11–12; in MGH AA 4:165–68; Duke Chrodinus (not in *Gregory or Fredegar*) in *Carmina* 9, no. 16, 219–220; Duke Lupus (in *Gregory*) in *Carmina* 5, nos. 7–9, pp. 159–161; Duke Bodegisel (in *Gregory*) in *Carmina* 5, no. 5, pp. 156–157; Count Galctorus (not in *Gregory or Fredegar*) in *Carmina* 7, no. 25, and 9, no. 19, pp. 177–78 and 251–52; Count Berulf (called a Duke in *Gregory*) in *Carmina* 7, no. 5, p. 170; and Count Sigoald (in *Gregory*) in *Carmina* 10, nos. 16–18, pp. 249–51.
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and patricians would seem to be twice as important as counts during these years.

During the second period, between 592 and 643, we possess considerably more information of a general nature concerning these officials, which is to be found in Marculf’s *Formulae*, Dagobert’s listing of officeholders and their functions, and Fredegar’s *Chronicle*. They reveal that these officials were now regarded as forming distinct classes or categories and that the districts which they governed were now viewed as distinct from those ruled by counts.\(^{22}\) In addition to this, Fredegar’s *Chronicle*, the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, selected saints’ lives, and a number of *diplomas* issued by Merovingian monarchs provide us with the names of some eleven patricians and thirty-seven dukes, but only ten counts who were active during these years, as follows: in Fredegar, eight patricians, thirty-five dukes and six counts; in the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, two additional patricians and one additional duke\(^{23}\); in the *Vitae Columbani, Eligii*, and Desiderii (of Cahors), one additional patrician, one additional duke and four more counts\(^{24}\); in a number of Merovingian di-

\(^{22}\) Marculf’s *Formulae* 1.8 mentions “carta de ducato et patriciati et comitatu.” More decisive is evidence from Dagobert’s list of office-holders and their functions as follows: “comes qui super unam civitatem, vel super . . . milia. Dux super duodecim civitates. Patricius qui ad latus regis sedet et, ne molestias rex accipiat, ipsa dispensat quicquid ad imperatorem vel ad regem adlatur causarum providentiarum et populorum utilitatem. . . . Ex hac supplicatione constat quod sit . . . comes sub duce, dux sub patricio, patricius sub rege vel imperatore fit Caesar sub Augusto.” Cap. 1, in M. Conrat, “Ein Traktat,” p. 248.

For a *comita* this same treatise states as follows “Defensor civitatis (i.e., the bishop?) qui judicat causas civitatis sue, sed intra muros tantum, non judicat autem de his qui extra civitatem aguntur. Ipsa sub comite, sub ipso curator est qui explorat quicquid iniquitatis in civitate agitur.” Ibid., cap. 3, in Conrat, “Ein Traktat,” p. 249.

Fredegar’s *Chronicle* throws additional light on these districts and the duties or status of the officials who governed them. It mentions the *patriciatus* of the Patrician Willihad. Fredegar 4.90, p. 77, and the *ducatus* of Dentelin. Ibid., 4.20, 37–38, and 77, pp. 13, 30, 32, and 67. It also reports the promise made by Flochard, Mayor of the Palace of Burgundy (in writing), that he would protect the ranks and dignity (“gradum honoris et dignitatem”) of the dukes and bishops of Burgundy. Ibid., 4.89, pp. 75–76. For mention of *comitatus* in other contemporary sources see references to the “comitatus of Strassburg” in *Vita Eligii* 1.31, p. 687; the “comitatus of Bourges” in ibid., 2.5, p. 702; and the “comitatus of Albi” in *Vita Desiderii* 2.35, p. 592.

During this same period the Visigothic realm was also divided into a series of provinces composed of counties ruled by counts or *rectors* which were supervised by dukes in charge of them, which seems quite similar to the organization contemplated by Dagobert’s above treatise. For a summary of this situation based upon the researches of Sánchez-Albornoz see Historia de España, 2, *La Alta Edad Media*, pp. 63–66; and L. Valdeavallano, Historia de España, 4th ed. (Madrid, 1952), pp. 317–20. Concerning the subordination of most of the Lombard dukes (except those of Spoleto and Beneventum) accomplished by the newly elected Lombard king Rothari during this same period see Fredegar 4.70–71, pp. 59–60.

\(^{23}\) Gunoald and Wintrio (called dukes by Gregory of Tours and Fortunatus) are referred to as *patricis* in the *Liber Hist. Franc.* 36, p. 304, which also mentions “Bertoald, dux Saxonorum” in 622–23. Ibid., 40, pp. 312–14. We also find a reference to Syagrius, a brother of Saint Desiderius as a *rector* of Marseilles in *Vita Desiderii* 2.4 and 7, pp. 564–65 and 568; and to a Duke Waldenus in the *Vita Columbani* 18, p. 79.

\(^{24}\) For additional named counts, note a mention of Count Theobald of Nantes in *Vita
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plomas, one additional count. All of which shows a ratio of named patricians and dukes to named counts which is in the neighborhood of five to one, a much more decisive ratio than that which seems to have prevailed in the preceding four decades.

And finally, we have the much more scattered and unsatisfactory evidence which is provided by narrative and other sources which deal with the period between 643 and 751, consisting of the Continuators of Fredegar,26 the Liber Historiae Francorum,27 a body of royal diplomas covering the years 654 to 717,28 and a number of saints' lives, especially those written during this period which tell us of saints who were members of the Merovingian and Carolingian families.29 These provide us with the names of some twenty dukes, plus three others referred to who are not specifically named.30 If we add to this number some sixteen other named optimates, who are clearly distinguished from named counts and who are referred to in Merovingian charters which date from the years 691, 693, and 695,31 we find ourselves with a list of some thirty-nine such individuals. To this group we should add the names of some five patricians which similar sources mention for us.32 In

Columbani 23, p. 97; of Counts Gallebad and Vincentio in the Vita Eligii 31, p. 687; and of Syagrius, called a Count of Albi, in the Vita Desiderii 2.4, p. 565.

25 A Count Elbulf is mentioned in a royal diploma of Clovis II dating from 639. Les diplômes originaux des Merovingiens, no. 7, p. 8.


28 Les diplômes originaux, nos. 6 and 8–38, pp. 9–27.


31 The term optimates or magnates when used in sources generally appears to refer to dukes rather than counts as early as the time of Chlotar II and Dagobert I. See the mention of dukes and bishops called “optimates” in Fredegar 4.89–90, pp. 75–76, and in Dagobert's list of officeholders, cap. 2, in Conrat, op. cit., pp. 248–49. For optimates clearly distinguished from counts by name see Les diplômes originaux, no. 20 (691), p. 15; no. 23 (693), pp. 16–17; and no. 25 (695), p. 18.

32 Rocco and Andoberecho are named as patricians in Les diplômes originaux, no. 13 (677), p. 11; while Felix, patrician of Toulouse is to be found in the Mir. Sancti Mart. Lemov., in ibid., p. 291, as well as in Ch, Higounet, Bourdeaux, pendant le haut moyen-age (Bordeaux, 1963), p. 21. For Hector, patrician of Provence see Passio Leudegarii 1.9, p. 291; for Abbo, a Patrician of Provence, Cartulaire de l'église cathédrale de Grenoble, ed. J. Marion (Paris, 1869), pp. 34–49; as well as Baratier, Histoire de la Provence, p. 102. The patricians of Neustria who invaded Burgundy in 676 according to the Passio Leudegarii 1.21, p. 302, were probably Rocco and Andoberecho mentioned above.
contrast, these same narrative sources mention only one count by name, in
the Passio Leudegarii, although a considerable number of counts appear by
name in Merovingian royal charters which originate in the general area of
Paris and Neustria — some sixteen in all.\textsuperscript{33} Thus, the number of named
dukes and patricians amounts to a total of forty-four and of named counts to
a total of seventeen. This ratio of almost three to one is not too different
from the ratios in the two earlier periods; it represents, as a matter of fact,
an average of the two. Making use of this kind of data, then, we can only
conclude that counts were not the territorial officials par excellence in the
Regnum Francorum during Merovingian times. Rather we should regard
dukes, patricians, and rectors as the officials who played the leading role.

One might still claim that counts, while not more important than dukes,
rectors, and patricians, were still the basic landed officials used by Merovingian
monarchs during these years. Such a contention, however, is very easy
to refute. During this entire period dukes are to be found serving as officials
in every part of the Regnum Francorum except for Provence, where the
somewhat similar rectors and patricians were used.\textsuperscript{34} In contrast to this state
of affairs, one finds counts functioning in much more restricted areas until
the time of Charles Martel. During the late sixth century, for instance, none
of them are known to have served east of the Rhine, in Champagne, in most
of Austrasia, or in Provence. Though the use of such counts and of very
similar graiones increased during the seventh and early eighth centuries until
we find them throughout Austrasia and in Alsace, down until 726 they were
still not be found east of the Rhine or in Provence and were rare in other
regions as well.\textsuperscript{35} Thus, it is clear that counts can hardly be considered basic
Merovingian landed officials because they were simply not found in a sur-
prisingly large part of the Regnum Francorum. We must reserve that designa-
tion for dukes.\textsuperscript{36}

Having in this way attempted over a period of two centuries to establish
the relative importance and basic character of these officials, we must now
examine them and their duties in more specific detail. We should begin by
noting that, during the formative period which we have attempted to estab-
lish, these officials bear a close resemblance to the duces found at this same
time in Lombard and Byzantine Italy or Visigothic Spain.\textsuperscript{37} We also find

\textsuperscript{33} A certain Boba who is said to have dominium in the city of Valence according to the Passio
Leudegarii 1.20, p. 301, so I presume him to be a count. For other named counts see Les diplômes
originaux, no. 11 (657), no. 20 (691), no. 23 (693), and no. 27 (696), pp. 9 and 14–19.

\textsuperscript{34} See note 7 on the wide areas in which dukes are to be found in the early sixth century and
the situation which prevailed in Provence at the same time.

\textsuperscript{35} On the restricted areas in which counts functioned during the sixth century see note 7. For
their spread during the seventh and early eighth century see Ebling, Prospographicie, esp. pp.

\textsuperscript{36} See ibid., esp. pp. 12–14, that shows dukes found in every part of the Regnum Francorum
during this period.

\textsuperscript{37} For the situation prevailing in Lombard and Byzantine Italy at this time see G. Bognetti,
"Longobardi e Romani," in Studi in onore di E. Besta (Rome, 1939), and G. Pepe, Il medio evo
that, during the years between 550 and 592, they seem already to be becoming a class of officials holding a rank which contemporaries recognized as distinct from that of count. Thus, Gregory of Tours tells us how in 585 a certain Rathar was sent "in the quality of duke" to restore King Childebert's authority in Marseilles,\(^\text{38}\) how Count Nicetas was appointed Duke of Clermont, Rodez, Uzès, Auvergne, and other districts,\(^\text{39}\) and how Ennodius held the office of Duke of Tours and Poitiers.\(^\text{40}\) It is also from Gregory that we learn that in 587 this same Duke Nicetas was made rector of Provence and in 588 is referred to as Patrician of Provence.\(^\text{41}\) Similarly Duke Leudegisel, who, according to Gregory, in 585 commanded King Gunthram's forces fighting the Visigoths in Septimania, a few years later, according to Fredegar, was made Patrician of Burgundian Provence.\(^\text{42}\) It would be unwise indeed on the basis of such slender evidence to conclude that already there existed a regular cursus honorum in the realms of the early Merovingians, but it does seem evident that in practice there was a tendency present to evolve one. It was often possible at this time to move from the office or dignity of count to that of duke and then on to the even greater dignity of rector or patrician. And perhaps such officers were already beginning to be regarded as distinct and different ones within the Regnum Francorum, as was to be the case later on, with the title of rector or patrician recognized as superior to that of duke, just as that of duke was superior to that of count.

We now need to turn our attention to the duties which such officials performed during this period. All of our evidence indicates that the principal duties carried out by patricians, rectors, and dukes were of a military character and that these officials led the military forces of Merovingian monarchs, either as overall military commanders, or as subordinate ones commanding contingents which were often raised by counts.\(^\text{43}\) Thus, Gregory of Tours tells us how the Patrician Mummolus commanded armies of King Gunthram which were used against the Lombards in 574,\(^\text{44}\) and as a duke headed the rebel forces of Gundovald between 583 and 585.\(^\text{45}\) He and Fredegar also mention a number of other military commanders who were called dukes during this period, such as Duke Gunthram Boso,\(^\text{46}\) Duke

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\(^{39}\) Ibid., 8.18, p. 343.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 8.26, p. 348.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 8.43, p. 363 and 9.22, p. 295.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 8.40, p. 318; and *Fredegar* 4.5, p. 6.

\(^{43}\) For a recent analysis of the military organization of the Merovingian realm during this period see B. Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization, 481–751* (Minneapolis, 1972), pp. 24–73.


\(^{45}\) Ibid., 7 and 28, pp. 291 and 365.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 4.55, p. 159; 6.18, pp. 256–57; and *Fredegar* 4.2 and 10, pp. 9–10.
Desiderius,47 Duke Leudegisel,48 Duke Dragolen,49 Duke Nicetas,50 Duke Beppelin,51 and those twenty dukes whom King Childebert send to Italy in 590 to attack the Lombards.52

If commanding troops during the almost constant civil and foreign wars of the period was their most important duty, such officials had other tasks given them as well. Thus, in 585 Duke Sigulf saw it to that Count Theodulf was returned to office in Angers, after he had been driven out of this civitas by its citizens.53 We are also informed by Gregory that in 590 Ennodius, who in the same passage is called both a duke and an ex- duke, was ordered by his king to prosecute Bishop Egidius of Metz for treason.54 We also find dukes being used as ambassadors, like those who accompanied King Chilperic’s daughter on her way to be married to a Visigothic king in 584.55 In short, although the principal duties of dukes, rectors, and patricians were of a military character, on occasion they also supervised counts, served in a judicial capacity or acted as ambassadors according to the desires of their royal masters.

This leads to a further question which is more difficult to answer. Were these officials given definite territorial districts to govern? As far as rectors and patricians are concerned the answer seems to be an affirmative one. Rectors served as governors of a part of Provence which owed allegiance to one branch of the Merovingian house, while patricians ruled the other portion as territorial governors or served as officials in charge of part of the Kingdom of Burgundy, probably the southern area of this regnum.56

As for the dukes, some of them controlled definite and well-defined territorial jurisdictions, like Lupus and Wintrio who governed the ducatus of Champagne,57 or Gariwald who may have been a duke ruling the Bavarians in 555,58 or Leudedefred and Uncelen who in 587 served as dukes of the Alemans,59 or Leudedefred, the first known Agilulfinger, who was made duke of Transjurian lands in 591 in place of Duke Wandalmar.60

48 Ibid., 8.37 and 39, pp. 315 and 318.
49 Ibid., 5.18, pp. 198–99.
50 Ibid., 8.30, pp. 351–53.
51 Ibid., 10.9, p. 438.
52 Ibid., 10.7, pp. 430–32.
53 Ibid., 8.18, p. 344.
54 Ibid., 10.19, p. 455.
55 Ibid., 6.32, p. 278.
57 Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc. 4.32, p. 156; 6.4, pp. 234–35; and 9.11 and 14, pp. 334–35 and 383 as well as Fortunatus, Carmina 5, nos. 7–9, pp. 159–61 which also mentions Lupus and his ducatus. For Wintrio’s ducatus see Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc., 8.18, p. 323 and 10.3, p. 430 as well as Fredegar 4.14 and 18, pp. 10 and 12.
58 Gregory of Tours, Hist. Franc. 4.6, p. 122. Gregory, however, does not call Gariwald a duke. We learn that he held that office from later sources.
59 Fredegar 4.8, p. 7.
60 Ibid., 4.13, p. 10. See also Zöllner, “Die Herkunft der Agilolfinger,” in Geschichte der Bayern.
As for others, it seems probable that their ducati tended to be much less fixed in character and changed as rapidly as the boundaries of the Merovingian monarchs whom they served. Thus, we have mention of Berulf, who in 580 and 583 ruled Tours, Poitiers, Angers, and Nantes; of Dukes Bladast and Desiderius who in 583 led forth the entire armed force of the province (Aquitaine) which was allotted to them; of Duke Nicetas who both in 585 and later on was Duke of Clermont, Uzès, Rodez, Auvergne and certain other districts; of Ennodius who was made duke of Tours and Poitiers in this same year after Duke Berulf had been removed from office, and who in 587 was given Aire and Lescar as well. We also know that in 586 Duke Beppelin was given the civitates of Rennes and Angers which had belonged to King Chilperic, and that Duke Austrovald, who succeeded Duke Desiderius in 587 and defended the region formerly controlled by the latter against the Gascons, led the armed forces of Perigueux, Agen, Saintes, and Bordeaux against the Goths of Septimania in 589. We also hear how Duke Ebracher, who was sent by King Gunthram to attack the Bretons in 590, fell out with his co-commander Duke Beppelin and had him killed because he feared the latter would usurp his ducatus. In short, many of the dukes of Gregory’s time were governors of distinct regions or districts that formed their ducati. And when we consider the rudimentary governmental system and limited resources available to Merovingian monarchs during this period, it would probably not be amiss to conclude that these kings paid such officials by having them raise their own salaries from the districts which were allotted to them. Despite all this, Gregory’s narrative still makes it clear that not all of them were, as yet, in charge of definite ducati of their own, remaining instead as household officials of the kings.

Similarly, the sources dating from this period reveal that to hold the office of patrician, rector, or duke was by no means a secure position. Almost every such official mentioned by Gregory, Fortunatus, or Fredegar lost either his life, his office, or both after a few years in power. So true does this seem to be that Gregory regards it as exceptional that Duke Lupus should have regained the ducatus of Champagne after being driven out of it, or that

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63 Ibid., 8.18, 30, and 43, pp. 343, 351, and 363.
64 Ibid., 8.26, p. 348.
65 Ibid., 9.7, p. 375.
67 Ibid., 9.7, and 31, pp. 376 and 401.
68 Ibid., 10.9, p. 438. Duke Leudast also plotted to gain an unspecified ducatus.
69 Nicetas, when a count, for instance, gave presents to his king to be appointed a duke according to Gregory. Ibid., 8.18, p. 343, which emphasizes that power to appoint such officials was a royal prerogative.
70 For reference to such household dukes see ibid., 5.1, p. 168; 6.32, p. 278; 7.7, p. 291; and 10.19, p. 455.
71 Ibid., 9.9 and 14, pp. 381 and 383.
Duke Bodegisel, who died in 585, should have been able to pass on his estate to his sons without its being diminished. To be a high official in the *Regnum Francorum* during these years was as unsafe as being a Merovingian or Visigothic monarch.

The second era we are considering, the half century between 592 and 643, can be divided into three smaller periods: twenty-five years of internecine wars in which Queen Brunhild was a leading participant until her death in 613; a quarter century of unity and administrative and governmental reorganization under Chlotar II and Dagobert I which lasted until 638; and a five-year period of growing disorder under the minor and incompetent heirs of Dagobert who succeeded him.

We should begin by emphasizing the fact that during the reigns of Chlotar II and Dagobert I the *Regnum Francorum* changed considerably. In this period the three nuclear *regna* which had appeared by the seventh century—Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy—developed relatively distinct and well-organized *palatia*, each of which was organized by a separate Mayor of the Palace. At the same time Merovingian administration became better organized, judging by the *diplomas* of its monarchs which begin to appear from about 625 or which were issued by their chanceries. This explains why we now find such important enactments as Chlotar II's *Edict of Paris* and the *Acta of the Council of Paris*, both of which date from 614 and which in 616 were extended to the Burgundian *regnum* in a special way, as well as Dagobert's list of officeholders and their functions, which echoes information found in Marculf's *Formulary*.

These decades also saw considerably more use made of church councils in this same Merovingian heartland, especially councils which reflected the

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72 Ibid., 8.22, p. 347.
73 It would be an error to presume that any of these *regna* possessed distinct boundaries at this time. For instance, Neustria appears to have controlled a part of Marseilles still. Baratier, *Histoire de la Provence*, pp. 92–94. And as late as 692 and 716 its *palatium* was exempting the Abbey of Saint Denis from tolls levied there. See the *diplomas* of Clovis III and Chilpéric III in *Les Diplômes originaux*, nos. 22 and 35, pp. 15 and 25. Not only did Austrasia also control a part of Marseilles, but the Duchy of Auvergne in Aquitaine was also Austrasian, which explains why Duke Bobo of Auvergne served in Sigibert's army when he attacked the Thuringians in 639. *Fredegar* 4.87, pp. 73–74. On the strong connections between Austrasia and Aquitaine see also E. Ewig, "L'Aquitaine et les Pays Rhénans au haut moyen-âge," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* I (Poitiers, 1958). Also, especially after 622, Austrasia exercised a general supervision over all of Germany beyond the Rhine and of Alpine regions beyond the Juras as well. *Fredegar* 4.47, p. 62. Until this time, however, it seems clear that the *Regnum* of Burgundy controlled Alpine areas which stretched east of the Juras and included a considerable part of Bavaria. Ibid., 4.36, pp. 29–30 and 4.43–44, pp. 36–37.
74 See the six *diplomas* of Chlotar II, Dagobert I, and Clovis II which date from the year 625 to 639 in *Les diplômes originaux*, nos. 1–5 and 7, pp. 4–6 and 8.
75 MGH Capit 1:19–23.
77 Concerning this conclave, which was held in Burgundy see *Fredegar* 4.44, p. 37.
78 See the provisions found in Dagobert's list of officials cited in note 22 and found in Conrat, "Ein Traktat," pp. 248–49.
interests of churchmen in the metropolitan sees of Sens, Bourges, and Lyons, although occasionally we find a council like that of Paris in 614, which, like similar Visigothic councils of Toledo in the same period, reflected a wider church scene and drew together churchmen from the sees of Rouen, Rheims, Trier, Besançon, and Bordeaux as well. At the same time we now find clerics playing a much more important role in Merovingian administration, both in royal chanceries and *palatia* and on the local secular administrative level, anticipating in some ways later Carolingian practices. Thus, in the nuclear *regna* clerics and especially bishops became increasingly important as an official class, equal in significance to the dukes and patricians who were chosen from the same upper-class land-owning families.

Finally, these years reveal to us considerable legal developments of importance. It was towards the end of this period that Merovingian monarchs

79 These councils, which begin with one held in Paris in 552 and which are especially numerous during this period lasted until the mid-seventh century. See MGH Concilia for their *acta* and provisions. That held in Paris in 614 and found in ibid., pp. 185–92, was particularly well attended and was quite similar to the great councils of Toledo held during this same period: the 3rd (589), the 4th (633), the 5th (636), the 6th (638), and the 7th (646). For a survey of Merovingian councils, their composition and importance see Riché, *Education et Culture*, pp. 311–16 and especially map, p. 314. A record of the Visigothic councils is to be found in Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collecta* (Florence, 1759–98), with fuller additions by Tobelet. On their significance, especially the Third Council of Toledo which established orthodoxy in the Visigothic realm, see Historia de España, 2, rev. Udina-Martorell, pp. 80–88.

80 This new importance of clerics in the *Regnum Francorum*, although somewhat outside the scope of this paper, is reflected in the career of Eligius who according to the *Vita Eligii* served as Dagobert's treasurer, gave counsel to the "principes, optimates, duces, et episcopes" according to *Vita Eligii* 1.14, p. 680, and in 636–37 was sent as an ambassador to a *princeps Brittonorum*, ibid., 1.13, p. 680. We can regard him as almost an Alcuin to Dagobert's Charlemagne. The role of treasurer was one assigned also to Saint Desiderius before he returned to Cahors according to the *Vita Desiderii* 2.13, p. 571. A similar political role was played in Austrasia by Bishop Arnulf of Metz during this same period according to the *Vita Arnulfii* and *Fredegar* 4.52–53, and 58, pp. 43–44, and 49. He was succeeded as a prince in the Austrasian *palatium* by Bishop Chunitbert of Cologne. *Fredegar* 4.58 and 75, pp. 49 and 85–86. See also *Vita Boniti* 2–3, in MGH SSrerMerov 6, pp. 120–21.

At the same time, bishops begin to be listed along with dukes and other secular notables as among the magnates who were regularly consulted by Merovingian monarchs. See Chlotar's *Edict of Paris*, no. 19, p. 23 which mentions "episcopi vero vel potentes qui in alias possident regiones," or how Chlotar II summoned bishops and other notables of Burgundy to a council held at the royal villa of Bonneuil in 616, *Fredegar* 4.44, p. 86, and the bishops and *proceres* of Neustria to another conclave held at Clichy in 627, *Fredegar* 4.55, p. 46. For a survey of this new or at least *expanded* political role played by bishops in the *Regnum* see Riché, *Education et culture*, pp. 315–18. For the similar situation now prevailing in Visigothic Spain, where bishops played a vital role in royal councils and participated in the election of Visigothic kings see Valdevallano, *Historia de España*, 1:301–04.

81 One might cite many examples of the political and military power that bishops now could exercise. For instance, in 626 Bishops Palladius and Sidoc of Eauze were accused of fomenting a Gascon revolt, *Fredegar* 4.54, p. 46, while according to the *Vita Desiderii*, a Bishop Desiderius was to all intents and purposes in political and military control of Quercy. And in 642, during a period of civil strife in Burgundy Bishop Aigulf of Valence seems to have led troops to the north, *Fredegar* 4.90, p. 77.
became increasingly concerned with their more eastern domains, which were
developing a new economic, political, and religious importance. This is why
they issued three important legal codes for these regions: a *Lex Ribvaria*,
tailored to the needs of the Austrasian Franks; a *Pactus Alemannia* for the
Alemans of Suabia and Alsace; and an early version of the *Lex Bauvari-
orum*. In the field of law, as in that of administration and church affairs,
these years saw considerable change and attempts at organization, just as
they did in the nearby Spain of the Visigoths or in Lombard Italy.

Turning from such an overview of the *Regnum Francorum* to the more
specific matter of dukes and patricians, one must again emphasize that our
evidence seems to show that the primary duty of such officials was to serve as
the military commanders of the armed forces of the *Regnum*.

Thus, we find Duke Wintrio of Champagne leading an army into Chlotar's domains in
593, and Crodobert, duke of the Alemans, defeating the Wends in 630, at
the same time that Dukes Abundantius and Venerandus were leading
armed contingents into Visigothic Spain. In this same year we learn of
Australians led by dukes who mustered armed forces to attack the Thurin-
gians, and in 635 find a reference to an even larger army commanded by
ten dukes and a patrician which was sent to attack the Gascons. And finally,
we are told of a number of dukes who commanded the contingents which
King Sigibert led against Duke Radulf of Thuringia in 639.

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82 According to Wallace-Hadrill the *Lex Ribvaria*, ed. F. Beyerle and R. Bruchner in MGH
p. 92.

83 For the *Pactus Alemannorum* see MGH Leges 5, pt. 1. It dates from this period also and so
too does at least the initial form of the *Lex Alemannorum* (now in a new edition) according to
too was first written down in this period also according to K. Beyerle in his introduction to the
*Lex Baiuvariorum* (Munich, 1926), pp. i-xxxix. All these law codes reflect Dagobert's interest in
organizing his eastern Germanic domains more effectively during these years according to E.
Ewig, "Die civitas Ubiorum, die Francia Rinensis und das Land Ribuirien," *Rheinische Viertel-
jahrsblätter* 19 (1954).

84 The *Edict of Rothari*, compiled in 643 is to be found in the *Leges Langobardorum*, ed. F.
Blühme in MGH Leges 4 (Hanover, 1869). It is discussed in K. Drew, *Note on Lombard
Drew also comments upon the lack of evidence of much church influence in Rothari's *Edict* in
ibid., pp. 46–49.

For details concerning the more sophisticated and advanced nature of Visigothic law which by
the mid-seventh century had resulted in the promulgation of the *Liber Judiciorum* see *Historia de

85 A general view of Frankish military organization during this period is to be found in
Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization*, pp. 74–91, and his "Military Organization in

86 *Fredegar* 4.14, pp. 10–11.
87 Ibid., 4.68, p. 57.
88 Ibid., 4.73, p. 62.
89 Ibid., 4.74, p. 62.
90 Ibid., 4.78, pp. 65–66.
91 Ibid., 4.87, pp. 73–74.
But dukes and patricks also continued to perform other duties. By this time they had become the most important group of *optimates* who presided over counts on a local level.\(^{92}\) Several of them acted as controllers of the *palatium* of Austrasia at various times.\(^{93}\) Others, like Dukes Amalgar and Venerantius in 636, served as ambassadors to Visigothic Spain.\(^{94}\) In short, these officials still served in an administrative or judicial capacity or acted as envoys when their royal masters ordered them to do so.

At the same time we now have more evidence that patricks, *rectors*, and dukes were likely to be given definite districts to govern. Thus, we learn that the Patrician Aegyla ruled Provence in 602,\(^{95}\) that the Patrician Protadius governed Transjurian territories in 604,\(^{96}\) and that the Patrician Willhad controlled the *patriciatus* of Burgundian Provence in 643.\(^{97}\)

As for dukes, we now find it possible to divide them into three categories in accordance with the regions or districts which they governed. Some, referred to as dukes in our sources, seem to be leaders of nearby tribal peoples whose allegiance to Frankish monarchs was at best nominal. Examples of this type are Genealis, who was placed over the Gascons by Theuderic and Theudebert in 602,\(^{98}\) and Aegyna, perhaps a Bessin Saxon, who is referred to as duke of the Gascons when these latter submitted to Dagobert in 636.\(^{99}\) In the same category one should place Clodoard, duke of the

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\(^{92}\) Again see Dagobert's list of officeholders and their duties in Conrat, "Ein Traktat," Cap. 1, p. 248, which describes the overall authority of dukes and patricks as follows "Constat quod sit . . . comes sub duce, dux sub patricio, patricius sub rege." For their judicial role see ibid., Cap. 2, pp. 248–49, and note that it is clearly distinguished from that of the counts which is described in ibid., Cap. 3, p. 249, which states that the "defensor civitatis (a bishop?) . . . ipse sub comite, sub ipso curator est qui explorat quicquid inquitatis in civitate agitur."

A similar judicial role is assigned to *optimates*, who are clearly mainly dukes, *rectors*, and patricks, as well as bishops in Chlotar's *Edict of Paris*, caps. 12 and 19, pp. 22–23.

It is probably significant that in nearby Lombard Italy dukes also had a judicial role in government according to the *Edict of Rothari*, nos. 20–25, and it has even been proposed that they were themselves the *judices* who presided over courts in Lombard civitates. See W. Williams, *The Communes of Lombardy from the VIIth to the Xth Century*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore, 1891), pp. 41–42. Although Ms. Drew, in her *Notes on Lombard Institutions*, pp. 3–4, does not accept this point of view, she does assign Lombard dukes a definite judicial role. Ibid., pp. 80–81. On the judicial duties of Visigothic dukes at this time see *Historia de España*, 2:66.

\(^{93}\) *Fredegar*, 4.75, p. 63; 4.77, p. 64; and 4.87, p. 73.

\(^{94}\) Ibid., 4.74, p. 62.

\(^{95}\) For the general existence of such *patriciatus* at this time see Dagobert's list of officeholders, Cap. I, in Conrat, "Ein Traktat," p. 248, and Marculf's *Formulae* 1.8. For Aegyla called a Patrician of Provence, *Fredegar* 4.21, p. 14.

\(^{96}\) *Fredegar*, 4.24, p. 16.

\(^{97}\) Ibid., 4.89–90, pp. 76–77. For reference to an earlier appointment of Leudegisel as Patrician of Burgundian Provence see ibid., 4.5, p. 6.

\(^{98}\) Ibid., 4.21, p. 14.

\(^{99}\) Ibid., 4.78, p. 67. Aegyna was probably the same Saxon (Bessin) duke mentioned in 626, ibid., 4.54, p. 66, and thus not a native Gascon.
Saxons, when he was defeated by Chlotar II in 622–23,100 and Duke Dervan of the Sorbs who was a Frankish vassal until he went over to Samo in 630.101

Still other dukes were more subject to Merovingian royal authority, but governed areas within the Regnum Francorum which were inhabited by peoples who were neither Frankish nor specifically Gallo-Roman. Examples of such dukes are provided for us by Leudefred, Uncelen,102 Crodobert,103 and Leuthar,104 who served as dukes of the Alemans in 607, 630, and 643, respectively; Radulf, who was Duke of Thuringia in 639 and 643105; and Herpo and Eudalia, who governed Transjurana lands about 613 as successors to the Patrician Protadius.106

Finally, we have dukes who governed definite districts within the more nuclear regna of Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy. Such a duke was Wintrio, who served as Duke of Champagne between 593 and 598;107 or Bobo, who was Duke of Auvergne in 639.108 And we should add that there was a ducatus of Dentelin in northeastern Gaul which was a bone of contention between monarchs and regna between 600 and 632.109

Even when we consider dukes and patricians for whom we lack evidence that they ruled definite territorial ducati or patriciati during this period, we must note that they seem to have functions and hold offices which are now essentially regional in nature and that they identify themselves with one of the three specific sub-regna within the Frankish realm. Each of these now appears to have its own dukes and, in the case of Burgundy, patricians as well, just as it has its own palatia and mayors of the palace. The Burgundian Fredegar supplies us with most detailed information concerning his own regnum and its officials by giving us the names of a number of Burgundian dukes and patricians like Alethius, mentioned in 613 and 617110; Rocco, Sigoald, and Eudalia in 613;111 Arnebut, referred to in 626 and 629112;

100 Lib. Hist. Franc. 41, p. 311.
101 Fredegar, 4.68, p. 57. In this same passage and later on Samo is called a king. Ibid., 4.48, pp. 40–41. And in 635 a leader of the Bretons is also called a king, although he had submitted to Dagobert. Ibid., 4.78, p. 66. He is probably the same princeps Brittonorum visited by Saint Eligius in 636–37. Vita Eligii 1.13, p. 680. On the complex situation existing in Brittany at this time see J. Morris, The Age of Arthur (New York, 1973), pp. 258–60. It is also worth noting that Duke Radulf of Thuringia is said to have behaved as if he were a king after his defeat of Sigibert in 639. Fredegar 4.87, p. 74. Yet a clearly independent leader of the Wends during these years is referred to as Duke Walluc. Ibid., 4.72, p. 61.
102 Ibid., 4.8, p. 7; and 4.28, p. 19.
103 Ibid., 4.68, p. 57.
104 Ibid., 4.88, p. 75.
105 Ibid., 4.77, p. 64; and 4.87, pp. 73–74.
106 Ibid., 4.43, p. 36.
107 Ibid., 4.14, pp. 10–1; and 4.18, p. 12.
108 Ibid., 4.87, p. 73.
109 Ibid., 4.20, p. 16; 4.37, p. 30; 4.38, p. 32; and 4.74, p. 64.
111 Ibid., 4.43, p. 34.
112 Ibid., 4.54, p. 44; and 4.58, p. 58.
Amalgar in 629 and 643\textsuperscript{113}; or Burgundian dukes in general who are referred to in 631, 635, and 643.\textsuperscript{114} Similarly, we have a number of references to specific Austrasian dukes like Adalgisel\textsuperscript{115}; or the Pepinids, Pepin I, and Grimoald I in 638 and 639\textsuperscript{116}; or to Austrasian dukes in general in 631\textsuperscript{117} and 643.\textsuperscript{118} Neustrian dukes specifically or on a group basis are not mentioned by Fredegar, but he does have general references to Neustrian magnates, who include dukes, in a number of places.\textsuperscript{119}

As a matter of fact, it should not surprise us that it is in the period after 613 that we can begin to identify dukes and patricians on a more regular basis than had earlier been the case, since in 614 for the Regnum Francorum as a whole and in 616 for Burgundy in particular Chlotar II issued important decrees which profoundly affected both lay magnates and important churchmen. Among these decrees one of the most important stipulated that from this time on royal officials and bishops were to be chosen from the ranks of families who lived in the regions in which they were expected to serve.\textsuperscript{120} This enactment does much to explain why dukes and patricians now tend to be identified with definite regions in contrast to the peripatetic nature of their careers in the days of Gregory of Tours.

Despite the growing regionalization or localization of dukes and patricians, and counts as well, after 613, throughout this entire period our sources show that such officials were still unable to find much security in the enjoyment of

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 4.90, pp. 76–78.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 4.74, p. 62; and 4.78, p. 65. Fredegar only mentions dukes in 643 when he is referring to secular magnates of Burgundy, stating as follows: "Floachard (Mayor of the Palace) cunctis ducibus de regna Burgundiae per epistole . . . uniuque gradum honoris et dignitatem suam amiciam perpetuo conservavit," ibid., 4.89, pp. 75–76. Later on this same Floachard summoned to a conclave "pontifices et duces de regnum Burgundiae," ibid., 4.90, p. 76.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 4.76, p. 63; 4.77, p. 64; 4.87, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 4.85, p. 71; and 4.87, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 4.85, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 4.74, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 4.55, p. 46; 4.56, p. 47; 4.74, p. 62; 4.80, p. 68; and 4.90, p. 77.

\textsuperscript{120} The specific provision is to be found in the Edit of Paris and reads as follows: "Nullus judex [i.e., official] de aliis provinciis aut regionibus in alia loca ordinetur," Edict of Paris, no. 12 in MGH Capit 1:22. This provision should be considered along with others from this Edict especially no. 19, p. 23, the actions taken by the Council of Paris of 614 found in MGH Conc 1:185–99, and that special conclave which was held in 616 for Burgundian bishops and magnates according to Fredegar 4.44, p. 37.

I find it difficult to accept the view of Lot, op. cit., pp. 183–84, that all these represented concessions wrung from a reluctant monarch who feared the power of the magnates of the Regnum Francorum. Rather these and similar actions of Dagobert a little later mark an effort made by powerful rulers to rationalize and organize their realms more effectively after a long period of civil strife which had ended in 613. They resemble similar efforts in Visigothic Spain as reflected in the great councils of Toledo and the codification of Visigothic law as well as the legal and administrative changes which were also taking place in Lombard Italy under King Rothari. They also parallel somewhat similar legal, administrative and religious changes which were inaugurated by the Emperor Heraclius at this same time. And it is interesting to note that Dagobert was in close touch with Heraclius and that Fredegar comments extensively upon his relations with Byzantium. Fredegar 4.62–66, pp. 51–55.
their rank, their offices, or their persons. Not only was Queen Brunhild ruthless in removing from office officials of whom she disapproved, but so too were Chlotar II and Dagobert I. Death in battle or assassination by rivals was still a common occurrence, even if no royal disfavor was involved. Despite all efforts of officials to regularize their positions, to be chosen a duke or patrician was no sinecure even though it did bestow considerable power upon an individual or family. Nevertheless, as we approach the mid-seventh century we do begin to discern a tendency for such offices to become hereditary, especially in Austrasia with Pepin I and Grimoald I, in eastern German areas like Bavaria where the Agilulfingers begin to exercise what is almost an hereditary authority, and elsewhere as well. By 643 the age of hereditary dukes and other high officials was at hand, as the Merovingian line of kings began to lose vigor and the lesser beasts took over in their place.

The third period which concerns us and which lasted for a century between 643 and 751 has too often been characterized by scholars who have been influenced by Einhard’s famous passage in his Life of Charlemagne as one during which power ceased to be wielded by Merovingian monarchs and instead now came to be exercised by Mayors of the Palace. Perhaps such a view of things is acceptable if one concentrates upon the Neustrian and Austrasian heartlands alone, but in the Regnum Francorum as a whole it seems far from the truth. Rather, what seems to have occurred was a very different process. Increasingly now the Frankish realm began to be taken over by the same dukes and patricians whom we have been examining; they established themselves in their localities as hereditary ruling families and became all but independent of the central authority of either Merovingian kings or their Mayors of the Palace. And, on the local level, these same families were able to eliminate competing local rival clans whose members had earlier borne the titles of duke and patrician. Thus, by the time Charles Martel and Pepin II and Carloman had begun to expand their authority they found that rival principes had already eliminated on a local level a host of optimates who had held the title of duke, rector, and patrician in earlier times. Although the main outlines of this change are clear enough, the sources which deal with these years are so limited and unsatisfactory that we have less precise knowledge of the events which took place than we do for earlier developments.

As a series of young and short-lived Merovignians mounted the throne

121 For example, Duke Wintrio in 598, Fredegar 4.18, p. 12; Bertoald, Mayor of the Palace of Burgundy in 604, ibid., 4.24, p. 16; and Duke Uncelen and the Patrician Wulf in 607, ibid., 4.28–29, p. 19.

122 The Patrician Alethius in 616, ibid., 4.44, p. 36–37; the Agilulfinger lord Chrodoald in 624, ibid., 4.52, p. 43; and Godinus, son of a Mayor of the Palace in 626, ibid., 4.54, p. 45.

123 On Duke Grimoald I succeeding his father Pepin I as Mayor of the Palace of Austrasia see ibid., 4.86 and 88, pp. 72 and 75.

124 On the Agilulfinger noble family and its power see ibid., 4.52 and 87, pp. 43 and 73.

125 For the attempt of the family of Warnacher to set up an hereditary Mayoralty of the Palace of Burgundy see ibid., 4.54, pp. 44–46.
one after another, the more outlying portions of the *Regnum Francorum*

beyond the nuclear *regna* fell into the hands of magnates who were independ-

ent of the *palatia*, a state of affairs which differed from what one finds in

the nearby Visigothic and Lombard realms.\(^{126}\) One of these, a contemporary

or successor to the mysterious "Felix, Patriarch of Toulouse," was a certain

Duke Lupo who in 673 ruled Gascony and probably was responsible for the

convocation of an important local regional church council between 673 and

675, and a little later on seems to have controlled a part of southern

Aquitaine as well. He was assassinated as he attempted to add Limoges to his

*ducatus*,\(^{127}\) but it is possible that he was the founder of a native Gascon ducal

\(^{126}\) A striking example of this provided by a comparison of *Fredegan's Chronicle* with the

writings of his continuators down to 737. See *Fredegan Cont.* 1–16, pp. 80–92, or the *Liber


While Fredegan is informed of events taking place, not only throughout the entire *Regnum* but

in Italy, Spain, and Byzantium as well, the authors of these later *chronicles* seem only to know of

what is going on between the Rhine and the Loire, with occasional references to Burgundy. One

can, therefore, only conclude that the Neustrian and Austrasian *palatia* which they describe had

lost all control over most of the *Regnum Francorum* after 643.

We must emphasize, however, that during this same period Visigothic Spain and Lombard

Italy did not follow such a pattern of development and indeed no longer resemble the *Regnum

Francorum*, as they did down to 643. From the mid-seventh century on, for instance, the realm of

the Visigoths was anything but parochial. Instead, important church councils continued to be

held at Toledo which dealt with matters affecting the entire kingdom, when such councils had

closed to meet in the Frankish realm. These councils were the IXth (655), Xth (656), XIth

(675), XIIth (681), XIIIth (683), XIVth (684), XVth (685), XVIth (693), and the XVI1th (702).

Though the forces of regionalism grew apace down to the reign of Witiza (700–710), on the eve

of the Islamic conquest, Visigothic monarchs were always recognized throughout the realm. See


Furthermore, Julian of Toledo, who died in 690, considers the entire realm when he writes his

life of King Wamba in the older tradition of John of Biclar and Isidore of Seville. There is even a

c considerable quickening of intellectual life in the previously backward northwest where after

740 Christian Asturian kingdoms were to arise. See Riché, *Education et culture*, pp. 401–9.

As for Lombard Italy, there was a brief period of crisis when the Emperor Constans II

attempted between 663 and 668 to expand Byzantine power. See L. Hartmann, *Geschichte

Italiens im Mittelalter*, 2 (Gotha, 1906), 245. Then the Lombard monarchy began to extend its

authority and perfect its legal code, especially at the time of King Liudprand (713–35). See

Drew, *Lombard Institutions*, pp. 3–23 and 46–57. Indeed, both the *Liber Pontificalis* and Paul the

Deacon’s *Historia Langobardorum* (the latter now a reliable source for this period) reflect a wide

knowledge of events taking place throughout the entire Mediterranean world. And a positive

renaissance in religious and cultural life occurred which affected both Lombard Italy and a

Rome which was ruled by Greek and Syrian popes. On these developments see Riché, *Education et
culture*, pp. 449–72. And this continued down to the time of the Carolingian conquest in 774

and later on as well.

\(^{127}\) Perhaps a separate Aquitaine having strong ties with Gascony began to appear as

Charibert II’s short-lived kingdom, with its capital at Toulouse which lasted until 650. *Fredegan*

4.57 and 68, pp. 47–48 and 55–56. But, since Dagobert extinguished this kingdom and then

went on to subdue the Gascons we would be wise to date its beginning some four decades later

at the time of the Patrician Felix and Duke Loup or Lupo. Lupo is mentioned as participating

between 673 and 675 in a regional church council which he probably called together to buttress

his local authority. See MGH Conc, pp. 215–16. That he was practically an independent rul
The Dukes in the Regnum Francorum

dynasty, for a century later in 769 we hear of another Duke Lupo of Gascony who submitted to Charlemagne.128

More important than this family was another which had appeared in this part of Francia by the first years of the eighth century, a family of hereditary Aquitaine dukes or principes who came to rule a vast domain south of the Loire. The area they controlled included parts of the Loire valley which had formerly been part of Neustria, as well as an Auvergne which as late as 639 had been under the control of the palatium of Austrasia. The first duke of this line, who seems to have eliminated all other ducal optimates within his domains, was a certain Eudes who was a serious rival of Charles Martel.129 In 735 he was succeeded by his son Hunald,130 and a little later by Waiffre, who was finally deposed by the Carolingians in 769.131

Still a third region which appears to have produced a series of independent local rulers was Provence. One of these was a certain Patrician Hector who intervened in Burgundy as a friend of Saint Léger of Autun.132 He was followed by other patricians about whom we know little except their names, like Metranus, who seems to have controlled Marseilles about 700, or the Patrician Abbo, who, judging from his will which reveals that he possessed vast estates in Dauphiny in 739, may actually have been the patron of Burgundian Provence.133 Finally, we have Maurontus, whose local title may well have been that of duke rather than patrician and who was an enemy of Abbo. His power was destroyed by Charles Martel between 736 and 739 when this Carolingian princeps finally absorbed Provence and the entire

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128 This later Loup is called a duke or princeps of the Gascons in Astronomus, Vita Hludovici 3, ed. Pertz in MGH SS 2:608.
129 Sources written in the Frankish heartland first mention Eudes as a duke of Aquitaine in 717–18. Fredegar Cont. 10, 13, and 15, pp. 89–91; and Liber Hist. Franc. 53, pp. 327–28. However, local chronicles composed in the Midi refer to him as a princeps as early as 715. See Annales Anianenses, cols. 3–4, in Histoire Generale de Languedoc, 2, ed. Privat (Toulouse, 1879) and Chronicon Ucense, col. 25, in ibid.

There can be little doubt that Eudes and his successors had complete control of Auvergne, which as late as 639 had been Austrasian, for in 761 it was still theirs. Fredegar Cont. 41, pp. 109–10. As for former Neustrian territory in the Loire valley, he held that too as early as 718 according to ibid., 11 and 13, pp. 89–90, even though as late as 652–53 King Sigibert III had been able to give special privileges in Loire ports to the Monastery of Stavelot according to Receuil des chartes de Stavelot-Malmedy, 1, ed. Halken and Roland (1909), no. 4, p. 10.

130 Hunald is referred to as a duke in 742. Fredegar Cont. 25, p. 98.

131 By 753 Waiffre is called a princeps in ibid., 35, p. 103. He and his predecessors had only counts within their domains and used Gascons as troops as early as 718. On this see ibid., 10, p. 89, and Bachrach, Military Organization in Aquitaine, pp. 7–8.

132 Passio Leudegarii 1.9, p. 91.

133 On the particians see Baratier, Hist. de la Provence, pp. 92–102. For Abbo’s will see Cart. de Grenoble, pp. 34–48.
valley of the Rhone. Whether or not these patricians were related to one another, which is unlikely, there can be little doubt that they ruled Provence without making use of any ducal or comital subordinates and independent of any central authority exercised from the palatium to the North.

And what is true of Provence seems equally true of the regnum of Burgundy, where as early as the 670s the palatium had disappeared for all intents and purposes and where by 700 we find no trace of any centralized control. Instead, the Burgundian regnum appears to have become a region which, despite the efforts of Saint Léger and his family, was subject to constant outside intervention by an Ebroin of Neustria, Austrasian magnates, dukes of Alsace, or others from more southerly parts of the Rhone Valley and thus was essentially anarchical. It remained in this state until it was absorbed by Charles Martel in 736.

Turning from the more Romanized portions of the Frankish realm to more Germanic areas, one notes quite similar developments. By the end of Dagobert's reign, the Saxons and their dukes had ceased to pay tribute to the Merovingian rulers and soon began to encroach upon Thuringia, which after the mid-seventh century ceased to be of any real importance. By the

134 Maurontus is called a duke in Fredegar Cont. 21, p. 96. On the other hand his probable descendant, Bishop Maurontus, when testifying to the rights of the Abbey of Saint-Victor of Marseilles in 780, implies that he was a patrician. See Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Victor de Marseille, ed. B. Gueraud (Marseilles, 1857), pp. 43–46. If so, he, rather than Abbo, was the last patrician to hold this title in the Regnum Francorum.

135 It is true that there are general references to a Burgundian palatium during the 670s in the Passio Leudegarii 1.8, p. 289, which was controlled by Saint Léger and his brother, but none thereafter. Probably it was Ebroin who suppressed it when he got rid of Saint Léger. Ibid., 1.21, p. 312; Fredegar Cont. 2, p. 82; and Liber Hist. Franc. 45–46, pp. 318–20.

136 It seems improbable that Pepin II had any effective control over Burgundy after he defeated the Neustrians in 687, or that his eldest son, Drogo, was duke of the Burgundians as Ewig claims in his Teilreiche im 7. Jahrhundert, pp. 138–44. It is possible, however, that like Waimar, his non-Carolingian predecessor as Duke of Champagne, he attempted to intervene in Burgundian affairs. He is called only Duke of Champagne in the Liber Hist. Franc. 48, p. 323, and Fredegar Cont. 6, p. 86. Even if he briefly had some control over Burgundy, however, this must have ended when he died of fever before his father, Pepin II did in 714, ibid., 6, p. 86, and was succeeded in Champagne by his brother Duke Grimold according to the Liber Hist. Franc. 48, p. 323.

137 Burgundy neither had a palatium nor was it under Carolingian control when Charles Martel invaded it in 735. Note the words of Fredegar Cont. 14, p. 91 which states: "Carlus prnceps regionem Burgundiae sagiter penetravit, fines regni illius leudibus suis probatissimis viris industriis et resistendas gentes rebelles et infideles statuit, pace patrata Lugduno Gallia sui fidelibus tradidit. Firmata foedera judicaria reversus est victor fiducialiter agens."

138 On the tribute of the Saxons, which Dagobert ended in return for their help against the Wends see Fredegar 74, p. 73. On difficulties with these expanding Saxons see Fredegar Cont. 11, p. 90 (724); 19, p. 93 (738); and 27, p. 99 (743), when Carloman penetrated only Saxon borderlands.

139 As for the Thuringian ducal house, which had been so powerful at the time of Duke Radulf according to Fredegar 4.87, p. 74, by 720 it seems to have all but disappeared. But it seems clear that the expanding Saxons, not the Carolingians, were responsible for the end of this ducal family. For references to the last Thuringian duke, a certain Heden, see Kienast, Hertzogstitel, p. 351, note 8.
late seventh century, however, the Saxons were of less importance to those who controlled the Merovingian heartlands than another pagan German people, the Frisians. These latter, who were now led by an able duke or princeps called Radbod, began to expand into the Rhinelands and to contend with some success with the Austrasian Mayors of the Palace, Pepin II, and Charles Martel.\textsuperscript{140} They were powerful enough so that the former thought it wise to marry his oldest son, Grimoald, to Radbod’s daughter.\textsuperscript{141} And the Frisian dukes remained a menace to the Austrasians until Charles Martel defeated Radbod in 718 and ended their independence later on when he crushed their new Duke Bubo in 736.\textsuperscript{142}

If Frisian and Saxon dukes seem to have been able to operate free of any centralized royal or palatial control down to the time of Charles Martel, so too did those Agilulfinger dukes or principes of the Alemans and Bavarians, who controlled the rest of Germany west and southwest of Austrasia. By the late seventh century the Bavarians seem to have been ruled and indeed organized by an Agilulfinger duke named Theudo,\textsuperscript{143} who was succeeded by Duke Hucbert, who in turn was followed in the early eighth century by Duke Odilo. Odilo, although he was a son-in-law of Charles Martel, stubbornly clung to his independence until his death in 748,\textsuperscript{144} and his son, Duke Tassilo III, continued this tradition.\textsuperscript{145} Equally hostile to the pretensions of

\textsuperscript{140} Our knowledge of these Frisian dukes or principes is derived more from English sources like Eddius, \textit{Vita Wilfredi}, ed. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927), than from those originating in the Merovingian realm. On Frisian attempts to expand into the Rhinelands in which Duke Radbod, called a princeps, was defeated by Pepin II see \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 49, pp. 323–24, and \textit{Fredegar Cont.} 6, p. 86 (in which he is referred to as a duke).

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Fredegar Cont.} 7, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{142} Radbod’s intervention into Austrasian affairs after the death of Pepin II is sketched in ibid., 8–9, pp. 87–88. For details of his defeat by Charles Martel in 718 see Alcuin, \textit{Vita Willibrordi}, ed. Levison in MGH SSrerMerov 8, p. 137. For the defeat of Duke Bubo, who probably only controlled the northern part of Radbod’s domains, see \textit{Fredegar Cont.} 17, p. 92. Those Frisians who in 747 were ruled by kings like nearby Wends and helped force the Saxons to accept the nominal overlordship of the Carolingians were probably living along the coasts of Saxony and Jutland and not in Frisia proper. Ibid., 31, p. 101.

\textsuperscript{143} Though Fredegar makes it clear that Dagobert was powerful in Bavaria and in 624 had the Agilulfinger lord Chrodoald killed, \textit{Fredegar} 4:52 and 60, pp. 43 and 60, the Agilulfingers were immensely powerful and in 639 were cooperating with the rebel Duke Radulf of Thuringia. Ibid., 4.87, p. 73. They had had close ties with the Lombard royal house since the time of Queen Theudalinda. Ibid., 4.34, p. 22. For their history and the development of a Bavaria under their rule see Zöllner, \textit{Die Herkunft der Agilolfinger}, and K. Reindel, “Das Zeitalter der Agilolfinger,” in \textit{Handbuch der Bayerischen Geschichte}, 1, ed. M. Sprindler (Munich, 1967). During the first half of the eighth century when Duke Theudo was a brother-in-law of the Lombard King Liudprand relations between Italian and Bavarian monasteries and the church hierarchy of both areas were especially close and remained so. See Richè, \textit{Education et culture}, p. 490.

\textsuperscript{144} At the same time it is worth noting that it was not until 725 that Charles Martel was able to attack the Bavarians successfully. \textit{Fredegar Cont.} 12, p. 90. On Carolingian battles with Duke Odilo, who married Charles’s daughter, see ibid., 25–26 and 32, pp. 98–102.

\textsuperscript{145} Tassilo supported Pepin III in 756 when the latter invaded Italy according to ibid., 38, p. 107. Later on, however, he asserted his independence from Carolingian control. See Wolfram, “Das Fürstentum Tassilos III, Herzog der Bayern,” \textit{MGSLK} 108 (1968) and C. Bowlus, “Austria
The Austrasian and Carolingian Frankish rulers were the hereditary dukes of the Alemans, who during the early eighth century may have had ties to the Merovingian house as well as being Agilulfingers. Their dukes, such as Lentfred and Godafred, remained independent until Caroloman broke the power of the latter’s son, Theobald, between 743 and 747, did away with the ducal house, and divided Suabia into counties. In short, until the late 720s or even later on, the writ of the central authorities of the Regnum Francorum who controlled Neustria and Austrasia had ceased to run in Germany or Alsace any more than it did in more Romanized areas south of Neustria. And this is true whether this authority was exercised by either Merovingian monarchs or their Mayors of the Palace until the time of Charles Martel.

This establishment of families of hereditary dukes, who increasingly are referred to as principes in our sources, is paralleled by developments which occurred in Austrasia but, curiously enough, not in Neustria. In Neustria, expect for a brief period in the mid-seventh century, we find a succession of Mayors of the Palace who were unable to establish hereditary rule but who


146 The hereditary dukes of the Alemans seem to be among those referred to as principes in Liber Hist. Franc. 49, pp. 323–24.

147 On these ties see L. Levillain, “Les Nibelungen historiques et leurs alliances de famille,” Annales du Midi 49–50 (1937–38). These Suabian dukes had close relations as well with their fellow Alleman ducal neighbors, the house of Alsace, whose last duke seems to have been a certain Liutfred. For extensive references to both of these hereditary ducal families until their power was extinguished by the Carolingians between 736 and 751 see Kienast, Hertzogtitel, pp. 350–51, and notes 6 and 7. For additional information concerning the Alsatian dukes beginning with Duke Chadalirco, who desired the position of patrician, according to Passio Leudegarri 1.25, p. 306, see Ch. Pfister, “Le duché d’Alsace et la legende de Sainte Odile,” Annales de l’Est 4–5 (1890–91). For sources see Buchner, Regesta Alsatiae aevi Merovingici, 496–918 (Strassburg, 1949).

148 See Fredegar Cont. 25–29, pp. 98–100 and Walahfrid, Vita santi Galli 14, in MGH SS rerMerov 4, pp. 322–23, on the Carolingian conquest of this line of Suabian dukes, a story told in greater detail in Zöllner, Geschichte der Franken.

149 For a discussion of the use of the title of princeps and its implications during this period see Wolfram, Intitulatio, 1:136–55. However, it is perhaps worth noting that the first time this title is used and is applied to a non-Merovingian is in a Neustrain narrative source written shortly after the death of Dagobert when there is a reference to the principes of the Palatium in Vita Eligii 2.31, p. 733. Soon thereafter, Erchinoald, Mayor of the Palace of Neustria is called a princeps several times in the Vita Baldechilidis 2–5, pp. 483–84. Later on other principes of the Palace of Neustria are mentioned, like Ebroin, in ibid., 5 and 10, pp. 487 and 495, titles which are also used in the Passio Leudegardi 2.12, p. 323, and 3.2, p. 358.

Such titles of princeps are much less frequently used when referring to early Carolingian dukes. Not until after he had defeated Bechar in 687 does the author of the Liber Historiae Francorum call Pepin II a princeps, Liber Hist. Franc. 48–50, pp. 323–25, a title also used for him in the Vita Dagoberti III 2–6, pp. 513–17. He is always referred to as only a duke, however, in Fredegar Cont. 4–8, pp. 84–87. Again it is the Liber Historiae Francorum 51, p. 325, which mentions the principatus of Ragamfred. And as for Charles Martel it is only after he had defeated Ragamfred and Eudes of Aquitaine in 718 that he is called a princeps in Fredegar Cont. 11 and 13, pp. 89–90. From this time on he and his sons, Pepin III and Carloman are regularly referred to as principes in narrative sources and charters alike.
seem to represent competing families of magnates.\textsuperscript{150} In Austrasia a more complex story unfolded. At first it seemed that an hereditary family of dukes, the Pepinids, would not only succeed in monopolizing the office of Mayor of the Palace, but even in having one of their number succeed to the Austrasian throne as a pseudo-Merovingian.\textsuperscript{151} By the 660s, however, this effort had ended in failure and a certain Duke Wulfoald of a rival family had become Mayor of the Palace in their place.\textsuperscript{152} Not until 680 was Pepin II (of Heristal), who had married an Arnulfing daughter, able to recover authority in Austrasia when he and his uncle, Duke Martin of Champagne, replaced Wulfoald in power.\textsuperscript{153}

This Carolingian Mayor of the Palace, however, was anything but secure in his victory. His uncle and co-ruler of Austrasia, Duke Martin, was killed in battle by the Neustrians,\textsuperscript{154} and even after he (Pepin II) had defeated his Neustrian rivals in 687 and united Neustria and Austrasia he does not seem to have been too powerful. For instance, he thought it prudent to keep the mayoralties of Neustria and Austrasia separate by appointing his younger son, Grimoald, Mayor of the Palace of Neustria about 700,\textsuperscript{155} while his older son Drogo held the more important Duchy of Champagne.\textsuperscript{156} And he also

\textsuperscript{150} Erchinoald was Mayor of the Palace of Neustria until his death in 657. \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 43, p. 317, and \textit{Fredегar Cont.} 2, p. 80. He was succeeded by Ebroin who continued as Mayor until he was driven out of Neustria and sent to a Burgundian monastery about 675, and Erchinoald’s son Leudesius was made Mayor in his place. \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 43–45, pp. 317–18, and \textit{Fredегar Cont.} 2, pp. 80–81. Ebroin then recovered power and disposed of both Leudesius and Saint Léger according to the \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 46, p. 320, and \textit{Fredегar Cont.} 2, p. 82. Then Ebroin in turn was killed and succeeded in office by a certain Waratto and his son, Ghislamar. \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 47, p. 321 and \textit{Fredегar Cont.} 4–5, p. 83–84. Both of these had died by 687 and been succeeded by Waratto’s wife’s son-in-law Bechar who was defeated and his power as Mayor ended by Pepin II at Tetry. \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 48, p. 423, \textit{Fredегar Cont.} 5, p. 85, and \textit{Les diplômes originaux}, no. 17 (687), p. 13. In Neustria, then, except for the fact that Erchinoald’s son briefly held the Mayoralty in the mid 670s, no hereditary principes managed to establish themselves during this period.


\textsuperscript{152} The non-Carolingian Duke Wulfoald then became Mayor of the Palace in Austrasia and was unsuccessful in his attempt to seize Neustria in 675. \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 45, p. 317, and \textit{Fredегar Cont.} 2, p. 81. See also Ebling, op. cit., pp. 241–46, with genealogical chart.

\textsuperscript{153} \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 46, pp. 318–20, and \textit{Fredегar Cont.} 3–5, pp. 83–85.

\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 46, p. 320, and \textit{Fredегar Cont.} 3, p. 83.

\textsuperscript{155} Pepin was, at first, Mayor of Neustria as well as Austrasia. \textit{Les diplômes originaux}, no. 27 (696), pp. 18–19. By 703 Grimoald was holding this office. Ibid., no. 29, p. 22. But his power must have been minimal since in 710 the Merovingian king Childerbert III felt powerful enough to deny his claims to a part of the patrimony of the Abbey of Saint Denis. Ibid., nos. 31–32, pp. 22–23. By 716 the next Merovingian monarch in Neustria was able to rule without any Carolingian or other Mayor of the Palace whatsoever. Ibid., nos. 33–38, pp. 24–26. For further information on Grimoald’s position as Mayor in Neustria see \textit{Fredегar Cont.} 6, p. 86, and \textit{Liber Hist. Franc.} 49, p. 323.

\textsuperscript{156} Drogo, Pepin’s eldest son was given the Duchy of Champagne according to \textit{Fredегar Cont.}
found it wise to marry this same son Grimoald to the daughter of his Frisian rival princeps, Radbod.\textsuperscript{157} Indeed, his family's control over both Neustria and Austrasia proved to be so insecure that when he died, in 714 princely rivals like Eudes, duke of Aquitaine and Radbod, duke of Frisia, intervened successfully in Austrasian affairs and secured the election of a non-Carolingian, Ragamfred, as Mayor of the Palace of Austrasia.\textsuperscript{158} Not until the late 720s was his (Pepin's) third son Charles Martel able to defeat such princely ducal rivals and lay the basis for later Carolingian greatness.\textsuperscript{159} Until this time we would be wise to regard the Carolingians as simply one of a number of families of hereditary regional dukes, like those who had appeared elsewhere in the Regnum Francorum and who were in fact in some ways less important than some of the others we have been considering.\textsuperscript{160}

A few points are worth emphasizing about these dukes and patricians or principes who had managed to establish themselves throughout the Regnum Francorum as its local rulers, often indeed as hereditary principes. First of all, by the year 700 there seem to have been fewer of them than had been the case in 643. By this time, although we know that a number of ducati were still in existence and continued to exist into later Carolingian times,\textsuperscript{161} it seems that only a few families of hereditary principes had been able to establish themselves firmly in local areas. They were dukes who controlled Aquitaine, Alsace, Champagne and Austrasia, Frisia, Saxony, Suabia, Bavaria, and perhaps Thuringia, Gascony, and Provence. And by this time it is equally clear that many of the ducati which these dukes or principes controlled were well on the way to becoming actual territorial principalities which were often composed of a number of subordinate counties.

The dukes or principes of this period were still mainly military commanders who led troops into battle,\textsuperscript{162} but most, perhaps all of them, were in direct administrative control of their ducati or ruled them through subordinate counts. In certain areas like Suabia and Bavaria where special non-Frankish legal systems and laws had developed, they were also able to exercise supreme judicial authority as well.\textsuperscript{163} In a number of cases, perhaps

\textsuperscript{6} p. 86. His brother Grimoald succeeded him as Duke there when he died. Liber Hist. Franc. 49, p. 323. Neither of them were in control of Burgundy, however. See note 136 on this.

\textsuperscript{157} Fredegan's Continuator makes it clear that this happened after the death of King Childebert in 711. Fredegan Cont. 7, p. 86, and Liber Hist. Franc. 50, pp. 324–25.

\textsuperscript{158} Liber Hist. Franc. 51, p. 325, and Fredegan Cont. 9–10, pp. 88–89.


\textsuperscript{160} For instance, the ducal or princely houses of Aquitaine or Bavaria.

\textsuperscript{161} For a listing of these ducatus between 751 and 840 see Kienast, Herzogstitel, pp. 46–48 and for an earlier period see Ebling, Prosopographie, pp. 17–21.

\textsuperscript{162} The overall military situation which prevailed during this period is surveyed in Bachrach, Merovingian Military Institutions, pp. 92–112. For Charles Martel's military role and leadership which can be applied to other principes, see his, "Charles Martel, Mounted Shock Combat, the Stirrup and Feudalism," in Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History 7 (1970), and Military Organization in Aquitaine, pp. 5–13.

\textsuperscript{163} On the Agilulfinger role in the final codification of the Lex Baiuvariorum about 740 see K. Beyerle, Lex Baiuvariorum, pp. xx–lxv. Probably the Lex Alemannorum in the form it has reached
in most of them, they had come to control both the local church hierarchy and local monastic establishments. In other words, we can now regard them as the “de facto” rulers of the Regnum Francorum, a fact which contemporary sources make clear when they refer to them as principes. Only as they were successively defeated and removed from office and their ducati absorbed by Charles Martel, Caroloman, Pepin III, and Charlemagne did they cease to play a vital role. The proof of their importance can be seen in the

us also dates from this period. See Zöllner, Geschichte der Franken, on the power of both the ducal houses of Bavaria and Austria.

164 For the power which such principes exercised over the church in Romanized parts of the Regnum Francorum see, for the Dukes of Aquitaine: Fredegar Cont. 41, p. 109, and Cartulaire de Brioude, ed. H. Doniol (Clermont-Ferrand, 1856), no. 26, pp. 46–47 (both of which deal with seizure of Church land). For Patricians of Provence: Cartulaire de Saint-Victor de Marseilles, no. 31, pp. 46–47. For the Carolingians prior to Charles Martel: Les diplômes originaux, nos. 31 and 32, pp. 22–23.

Across the Rhine the situation was somewhat different except in Bavaria where Agilulfing dukes were able to control both the Church hierarchy and its monastic establishments. See F. Prinz, Frühes Monchtm im Frankreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft im Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispel der monastischen Entwicklung (4. bis 8. Jahrhundert) (Munich, 1965) and especially his “Zur Herrschaftsstruktur Bayerns und Alemanniens im 8. Jahrhundert,” Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte 102 (1966). In Swabia, on the other hand, although the ducal house had close connections with the church, judging from their tombs according to J. Werner, Das alemmanische Fürstengrab von Wittislingen (Munich, 1950), and the work of Saint Pirmin after 724, their lands had no ecclesiastical organization or monastic institutions of importance prior to 751. Indeed, most of the population was still pagan. See R. Sprandel, Der merovignische Adel und die Gebiete östlich des Rheins, Forschungen zur oberrheinischen Landesgeschichte 5 (Freiburg, 1957).

As for the Saxons and Frisian dukes, since they were pagan they had no need to concern themselves with the Church at all during these years. On the other hand, it was precisely at this time that Charles Martel and his heirs Pepin III and Caroloman began to support the missionary activities and organizing efforts of Saint Boniface in Thuringia, Hesse and Franconia, as an aspect of their developing authority. On the relative success which had been achieved prior to 751 see Riché, Education et culture, pp. 484–89.

The contrast between the way these Carolingian princes treated the church across the Rhine and the church in their Frankish heartland after 737 is no accident. In Germany, support for Boniface and church reform efforts increased their authority in an area where it had earlier been nonexistent. In the Carolingian heartland, however, their primary need was to break the military and political power of bishops, who like the dukes, represented the interests of competing families of magnates. Hence their confiscation of Church lands as shown in the actions taken at the three great councils which they held in 743 and 744. See MGH Capit, ed. Boretius, nos. 10–12, pp. 24–30, and Pepin II’s divisio imposed upon the church when he became king in 751 according to the Annales Alemannici, Guelferbytani, Nazariani, anno 751, ed. Pertz in MGH SS 1:26–27. By this time, they had largely succeeded in such efforts. The ranks of the dukes had been so thinned out by a policy of deliberate attrition that in 739 when Duke Childebrand led an army south to attack Maurontus at Avignon he could speak of the remaining dukes (reliquus ducibus) who were included in his forces. Fredegar Cont. 20, p. 94.

Now the military power of the bishops had also been destroyed as their vassals either accepted direct Carolingian overlordship or lost their lands to new Carolingian vassii. So by the mid-eighth century those episcopi and optimates of the older noble families from whom, since 614 or even earlier, patricians, dukes, and bishops had been chosen, lost power to a new Carolingian order of counts, bishops, and abbots. The Carolingian revolution had been completed, except in Aquitaine or Bavaria.
The Dukes in the Regnum Francorum

way these same Carolingian princes had suppressed the office and title of duke and patrician, even in their own family by the time Pepin III had become king in 751, a process which was finally completed when autonomous Aquitaine and Bavaria disappeared. And once this had been accomplished, although ducati continue to be found in the Frankish realm, its Carolingian rulers were on the whole unwilling to resurrect, except sparingly, the title or office of duke.

Our examination of dukes, rectors, and patricians during Merovingian times, then, makes it clear that for some two centuries they were the most important and basic of all Frankish officials and by the early eighth century had become the real rulers of the Regnum Francorum. They were not only from the beginning more important than the counts, who were less important basic officials and generally their subordinates, but it was they rather than the Mayors of the Palace who were the most dangerous rivals with whom the later Merovingians had to contend after the death of Dagobert in 638. And it was only after defeating such rival dukes and patricians one after another, removing them from office and suppressing their titles that Charles Martel and his immediate successors, who were themselves originally from a ducal family, were able to become masters of the Regnum Francorum and then convert it into a Carolingian Empire.

At this point a postscript seems in order. Did this development of princely ducal power during the late seventh century lay the basis for more permanent territorial principalities which survived the Carolingians and reappeared later on, as Wolfram and some others have argued? Our answer must be a somewhat qualified affirmative one, depending upon the area concerned. Saxony, Suabia, and Bavaria which were formed into principalities by the late seventh century lasted on under a Carolingian overlay to reappear by the tenth century. So too did Alsace. On the other hand, a Thuringian duchy never really reappeared, and Frisia, despite its brief

165 Just prior to 751 Pepin III's brother Grifo revolted and lost his ducatus. Fredegar Cont. 32 and 35, pp. 101 and 103. This ducatus was composed of twelve counties and located in Neustria (and thus was similar to the type which Dagobert had prescribed a century earlier). "Grifoniem more ducem duodecim comitibus donavit," in Annales regni Francorum 9, anno 748. On Duke Chrodegarius who held this ducatus in 710 see Ebling, Prosopographie, pp. 117–18. And it is precisely in 751 that Childerbrand, Pepin III's uncle, who had always been referred to as a duke, is now called a count, as is his son Nibelung. Fredegar Cont. 34, pp. 102–03.


167 For the way Charlemagne continued the anti-ducal policies of his predecessors see Ganshof, Frankish Institutions under Charlemagne, esp. pp. 26–27 and 102–06.

168 Kienast, Herzogstitel, pp. 313–451, contains a wealth of information on these principalities.


170 Though Thuringia never again became a true principality, there is a reference to "Boppo et Egins, comites et duces Thuringiorum," in 883 and to Thuringia itself as a ducatus as late as 884. Kienast, Herzogstitel, p. 47.
renaissance as a ninth-century Viking kingdom, did not do so either.\footnote{171 For reference to a ducatus of Frisia in the early ninth century see ibid., p. 48. For that Viking kingdom of Frisia which was destroyed by Arnulf see A. Lewis, *The Northern Seas* (Princeton, 1958), pp. 256–65.} And it is difficult to establish any continuity between the duchy of Franconia and that Austrasian regnum which the Carolingians dominated by 700 and whose center seems to have been located in Champagne and the lower Meuse Valley and not across the Rhine.\footnote{172 Franconia was centered in the Rhinelands. The heartland of the Austrasia of the Merovingians, the Pepinids and the early Carolingians was located in Champagne and the Meuse Valley. Thus, any connection between the two seems tenuous indeed.}

In Francia, there can be little doubt that Aquitaine, developed as a principality in later Merovingian times, survived the Carolingians,\footnote{173 For Aquitaine in Carolingian times see L. Auzias, *L’Aquitaine Carolingienne* (778–987) (Toulouse, 1937), and Ph. Wolff, “L’Aquitaine et ses marges,” in *Karl des Große*, 1 (Dusseldorf, 1965).} and so did Gascony,\footnote{174 Native Gascon dukes continued to control part of Gascony during the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. Lewis, *Southern French and Catalan Society*, pp. 20–49. And as late as 932 a certain Sanchez, called a Gascon princeps, did homage to King Raoul. Ibid., p. 187. But no true Duchy of Gascony appeared until late in the tenth century. See Ch. Higounet, “Le groupe aristocratique en Aquitaine et en Gasconie (Fin Xe–début XIIe siècle),” in *Les structures sociales de l’Aquitaine, du Languedoc et de l’Espagne au premier âge féodal* (Paris, 1969), pp. 223–24.} while it is possible to view the Gothic Septimania of the late seventh century as the basis of a later Languedoc.\footnote{175 For Visigothic Septimania and its Carolingian aftermath see Ph. Wolff, *Histoire du Languedoc* (Toulouse, 1967), pp. 110–83. For the beginnings of a true principality of Languedoc in the late eleventh century see J. Hill and L. Hill, *Raymond IV de Saint-Gilles, comte de Toulouse* (Toulouse, 1959), pp. 1–43.} But it is difficult to see a duchy of Brittany appearing at the earliest before the late ninth century,\footnote{176 A Breton principality developed in some ways under ninth-century dukes like Nominœc and Salomon, but it was not until the last years of the eleventh century that a united Duchy was formed by Duke Alan IV. Kienast, *Herzogtitel*, pp. 146–52.} or to regard the Neustria of Count Robert the Strong as anything other than a late Carolingian creation unconnected with the Neustria which was a Merovingian regnum.\footnote{177 See R. Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France* (New York, 1966), pp. 1–21, and M. de Bouard, “De la Neustrie Carolingienne à la Normandie féodale. Continuité ou discontinuité,” in *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 29 (1955), 1–10.} Nor would it be wise to see in Merovingian Burgundy the basis of that duchy of Burgundy which had emerged by the first years of the tenth century,\footnote{178 M. Chaume, *Les origines du Duché de Bourgogne*, 2 vols. (Dijon, 1927–37).} or later Provence as anything other than a new creation of Count William the Liberator about the year 1000.\footnote{179 For Provence, which was reconstituted in part as a principality during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries see Baratier, *Histoire de la Provence*, pp. 111–37.} And who can really claim that later Dauphiné represents a continuation of Burgundian Provence,\footnote{180 On the disorganized state of Dauphiné after the eighth century see A. Chevrier, “L’évolution de l’acte à cause de mort en Dauphiné due VIIe à la fin du XIe siècle,” in *Société de l’histoire de droit et des institutions des anciens pays du droit écrit*, 1 (1948). For its appearance as a feudal principality later on see F. Bernard, *Les origines féodales en Savoie et Dauphiné* (Grenoble, 1950).} or that the county of Champagne was anything other than...
a new creation of the house of Blois during the twelfth century. In short, all one can safely say is that the medieval principality began to appear in certain areas of the Regnum Francorum and was formed by certain dukes or principes of the late seventh century, but that only a beginning had been made in its evolution prior to the year 751.

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