Significant chronological boundaries can be both flexible and negotiable. Anywhere one draws one may prove disputable or even demonstrably wrong, but at some point all will agree that the change under discussion has occurred. This is the old paradox of the sorites. How many grains of sand constitute a heap? One stone is a stone. Two stones are a coincidence. Three stones are a wall. There is only one answer to this disconnect: accept complexity and vagueness, but also use boundaries as illuminating heuristic devices that can be good to think with. Which events at which dates changed things?

In the past, it has been presumed that the most significant battle that Clovis fought was the Battle of Tolbiac, ca. 496, in which he defeated the Alamanni. This battle, it was thought, set the stage for Clovis’s adoption of Nicene Christianity, which virtually foreordained Clovis’s victory at Vouillé over the Arian Visigoths in 507. As a consequence, even though the battle was suitably commemorated in local venues (Fig.1), Vouillé has received scant attention and little respect in modern scholarship.¹ The present volume, however, rehabilitates the Battle of Vouillé and establishes it not only as a military milestone in the history of the Franks and their king Clovis, but as a crucial prelude to the rise of medieval and modern Europe. It engages in a debate both about events (what actually happened?) and about memory and representation. The contributions in the volume handle concrete problems about the battle itself, its causes, its immediate as well as later reception, and its ultimate importance and significance.

Clovis fought Alaric II of the Visigoths at a place variously called Voglada, Boglada, Boglodoreta, or the Campus Vogladensis. Alaric perished in that battle, which was seen as the decisive element in the expulsion of the Visigoths from Gaul into Spain. Gaul (soon to be Francia) was thereby left largely to the Franks. So, at the very least, the battle marked a point at which the Franks gained a significant amount of territory in Gaul. Its date, fortunately, is undisputed. The location of the battle, however, is not, and currently is

¹ To cite but a few of a multitude of examples, a major publication on Clovis and the Franks, Die Franken Wegbereiter Europas: Vor 1500 Jahren, König Chlodwig und seine Erben, vol. 1 (Mainz, 1996), barely mentions Vouillé; and L. Bourgeois, ed., Wisigoths et Francs autour de la bataille de Vouillé (507) (2010), nominally about Vouillé, does not in fact contain a contribution about the battle.
Fig. 1: Flyer announcing the celebration of the 1500th Anniversary of the Battle of Vouillé, held at Vouillé, Source: Gerard Pironneau, President, Association Vouillé et son Histoire.
identified either as modern Vouillé, northwest of Poitiers, or as Voulon, south of Poitiers. As a plaque at Vouillé, now called Vouillé-la-Bataille, has it, the battle took place “dans ces lieux” and “alors commença la France” (“then France began”). Although one easily could dismiss that proclamation as mere chauvinistic propaganda of the local historical society of Vouillé, the studies in this volume suggest that this is in fact a justifiable assessment of the significance of the battle.

History belongs to winners. Clovis and the Franks are no exception. Late Antiquity witnessed the establishment of numerous barbarian successor kingdoms. Of these one alone, that of the Franks, would survive down to modern times in a form that could plausibly claim continuity of rule and territory with the early Middle Ages, even if not of form of government. This claim had already been made in the 16th century. Estienne Pasquier in his *Recherches de la France* 2.1 (1596) exalted the French (against the Vandals, Lombards, Ostrogoths, and Burgundians) as the only people who had found their greatness among the spoils of the Roman Empire, who continued to flourish and to hold onto their territory without enduring kings other than those who attached importance to Gaul as their true dwelling place. So national pride in continuity started long ago. Gibbon (1737–94) agreed: “The Franks, or French, are the only people of Europe who can deduce a perpetual succession from the conquerors of the Western empire.” The same tune sounded in the *Abrégé de l’Histoire de France* published for the Royal Military Academy in 1789.

France was thus a special case. And Clovis and the events of his reign have always featured in France historiography. Although the Merovingians were not just before France, but also before Germany, Clovis, we are told, has never

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2 See Mathisen’s essay on Vouillé in this volume.
3 Although some also might make a case for Anglo-Saxon England.
7 For the baptism in particular, see Clovis chez les historiens (Paris/Geneva, 1996).
dominated popular historical consciousness and culture in the German-speaking world in quite the same way.⁹

The Creation of France

The questions of national continuity and the formation of France (dare one call it “natiogenesis”?⁹) are additionally linked to religion. Most of the barbarian peoples of the western empire were historically pagan or Arian Christian, so relations with Nicene Christian Romans in the successor kingdoms required accommodation and negotiation and sometimes entailed conflict. In late-5th-century Francia the Franks were pagan, the Burgundians of mixed religion, both Arian and Nicene, whereas the Visigoths were Arian rulers of Nicene Gallo-Roman subjects. Elsewhere in the west were the Arian Vandals and Ostrogoths and the pagan (so it seems) Alamanni, to name a few.

The long-term success of the Franks and the survival of Francia have often been ascribed to Clovis’s decision to be baptized as a Nicene Christian. His choice, so it goes, removed a barrier between himself and his own Roman subjects and allowed him to drive wedges between rival Arian kings and their Roman subjects, permitted him to harness the power of the Nicene church, and enabled him more easily to be recognized by Emperor Anastasius in Constantinople.

This of course leaves aside religious claims about true faith as opposed to paganism or heresy, of the sort promulgated by the great Counter-Reformation historian Cesare Baronio (1538–1607), Cardinal, Prefect of the Vatican Library, and key figure in the promotion of the baptism.¹⁰ He introduces his eloquent Latin account of the “people that walked in darkness” as follows: “Look at God’s providence! For, at the time when such dense shadows obscured the world everywhere and beclouded the peoples, to such an extent that there was not a single Catholic prince in Europe, in Gaul, clearly by divine act, the shining star of a new light appeared; by it the whole Catholic Church would be illuminated for ever after.”¹¹ Gibbon joined religion and politics, cannily drawing an explicit

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⁹ See M. Becher, Chlodwig I: Der Aufstieg der Merowinger und das Ende der antiken Welt (Munich, 2011), 9. One’s agreement with him is qualified. He may be right about contemporary Germany, but not so about 19th- and early-20th-century Germany, which he does not really discuss in his book.


¹¹ Baronius, Annales Ecclesiastici 612: Sed vide providentia Dei. Quo enim tempore tam densae tenebrae operirent ubique terram, et caligo populos, adeo ut nullus penitus in universe
comparison between Clovis and Henri IV: “His savage character and the virtues of Henry IV suggest the most opposite ideas of human nature; yet some resemblance may be found in the situation of two princes who conquered France by their valour, their policy, and the merits of a seasonable conversion.”

It is perhaps significant that it was Baronius who advised Clement VIII in 1594 about whether Henri IV, as a lapsed heretic, should be taken back into the Catholic Church and suggested that he should be. It is interesting to note that the 1867 edition of the *Annales Ecclesiastici* seems to insert an extra echo of close-to-contemporary events in Baronius’s account of how God shone in the heart of the king of the Franks to make the Catholic faith glorious. Baronius had reason to be preoccupied with the beliefs of the kings of Franco-Gallia, be they ancient or contemporary.

The future of what would be France is thus closely linked to Clovis’s baptism. That would be all very well, if it were possible to date that providential event securely and thus contextualize it in Clovis’s career. Unfortunately there have always been severe problems with the sources for the chronology of Clovis’s reign. At the end of the second book of Gregory of Tours’s *DLH* (2.27–43), Clovis’s career is punctuated by a series of deceptively precise-looking quinquennial dates that are found in some manuscripts. He was born in 466/467; 481/482 marked his accession; 486/487 his defeat of Syagrius (5th regnal year); 491/492 his defeat of the Thuringians (10th regnal year); 496 his Alamannic victory and his baptism (15th regnal year); 500 his Burgundian campaign; 506/507 Franco-Visigothic War (25th regnal year); 511 his death. This may all look acceptable, but if one collates Gregory’s claims about when Clovis died, one comes up with no fewer than three different dates: 509, 511, and 518. Further problems emerge when one compares other sources for

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12 Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* 361.
confirmation of the dates of the different events in Clovis’s life. As one scholar put it, “Whenever Gregory’s dates for Clovis’s reign can be checked by external sources, Gregory is wrong.”

In 1996, the 1,500th anniversary of the traditional date for the baptism of Clovis occasioned controversy in France. Even in a country with an official policy of laïcité, the Frankish king’s conversion to Nicene Christianity was felt to be significant. Clovis was temporarily hot. Adam Gopnik covered the controversy in France surrounding the Pope’s visit to Reims in the New Yorker; Der Spiegel spoke of a “Theological Soap Opera.” A conference to celebrate the 1,500th anniversary of Clovis’s baptism was held on 19–25 September, and its papers published. When it became known that the Pope John Paul II had been invited to celebrate mass, controversy erupted. Who paid for his visit? Did it violate the principle of laïcité? Various right-wing elements such as Jean-Marie Le Pen seemed to be appropriating the figure of Clovis. Some saw anti-Christian sentiment. Some liberal British scholars boycotted the festivities. Was Clovis the French proto-Fascist who would purge his country of undesirable foreign elements? Or was he a Catholic king around whom nostalgic monarchists could rally? A flurry of publications on the late-5th-century Frankish king and on his reception showed that he was a veritable Arthur, rex quondam rexque futurus: a once and future king. And Clovis and Chlodwician milestones still matter. Matthias Becher’s recent book, for example, commemorates the 1,500th anniversary of the death of Clovis on 27 November 511.

The date of the baptism is important for interpreting Vouillé, for Alaric and the Visigoths were Arians. The majority of scholars still assume that Clovis’s baptism took place in 496. This permits them to follow Gregory of Tours’s depiction of the Vouillé campaign as a Nicene crusade against Arianism. Yet Clovis may not have been baptized in 496, but as much as a decade later in 508. Dates proposed range from 495 to 509. And if Clovis had not yet been

16 Long ago the author of the Maurist Histoire littéraire de la France (Paris, 1735), 3.392, claimed that his chronological errors only occur in the ancient history he narrates that was taken from other writers: “Et il est facile d’y remedier par d’autres monuments.”
17 James, Franks, 79.
baptized, the Gregorian crusade is called into question. Was it Gregory’s own fabrication? Or was it perhaps authentic propaganda of Clovis’s? Or something else? One needs to ask some very interesting, though perhaps unanswerable, questions about Clovis’s religious affiliation and sympathies in 507. For before baptism was supposed to come a process of conversion and the catechumenate. At least one source from the 560s implies a delay in Clovis’s conversion.23

In 2007, the 1,500th anniversary of the Battle of Vouillé in 507 passed almost without commemoration. Only two academic celebrations of the Battle of Vouillé were held. One, on 28–30 September 2007, has already resulted in a volume in French.24 The second was a conference held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on 21 April 2007. In spite of its title, Wisigoths et Francs autour de la bataille de Vouillé (507), the volume resulting from the French conference did not contain a contribution about the Battle of Vouillé.25 This volume based on the Illinois conference, however, will make good on its billing. It includes seven contributions deriving from papers presented at the conference, along with three additional contributions26 to complete the picture. It aims to view the battle in the round from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and to shed light both on factual questions, such as where it actually took place and what may have caused it, but above all to illuminate its significance. Why did it matter?

The Political and Military Dimensions of the Battle of Vouillé

The first section of the book discusses the nut-and-bolts aspects of the battle itself, that is, the military and political circumstances leading up to the battle, the prosecution of the battle, and its immediate political fallout.

Ralph Mathisen first sets the stage for the Battle of Vouillé with an account of previous hostilities between the Visigoths and Franks commencing in or around 496 C.E. During the course of these campaigns, first the Franks and

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22 See Becher, Chlodwig I, 17.
23 Epist. Austras. 8, p. 122 (MGH Epist. 3): et cum esset homo astutissimus, noluit adquiescere, antequam vera agnosceret. Cum ista, quae supra dixi, probate cognovit, humilis ad domni Martini limina cecidit et baptizare se sine mora promisit.
24 Bourgeois, Wisigoths et Francs autour de la bataille de Vouillé (507).
25 Indeed, only one brief contribution, that of I. N. Wood, “Les Wisigoths et la question arienne,” 19–22, even mentioned the battle more than just in passing.
26 Two by Mathisen and one by Wood.
then the Visigoths gained the upper hand. Eventually, the powerful Ostrogothic
king Theoderic, who viewed himself as having a sort of western barbarian
hegemony, attempted to step in and end the bad feeling between Alaric II and
Clovis. But Clovis had other ideas, and in 507 he invaded the Visigothic
kingdom in force.

*Bernard Bachrach* discusses the battle itself as a military historian from the
perspective of whether it qualifies as a “decisive battle.” He points out that,
although the Battles of Châlons (451) and of Poitiers (732) earned positions on
canonical lists of decisive battles, Vouillé has not. Definitions of decisive battles
vary, and criteria used by historians include whether the course of history would
have been seriously different had a different party been victorious, and whether
the battle was fought by choice, not chance. Military theorists, such as
Clausewitz, focus instead on the strategy and intent of the commanders: was the
battle fought to bring things to a head and to destroy the enemy? And although
more modern military historians such as Verbruggen have brought this latter
criterion to bear upon Vouillé, the battle has been on the whole downplayed;
likewise the question about whether it was decisive. More importantly its
strategic contours have not been delineated. Bachrach emphasizes the role of the
Byzantine Empire and suggests that Clovis may have had Anastasius’s support.
He finds it unlikely that Gundobad and the Burgundians were ever intended to
fight at Vouillé. Instead they were supposed to deal with any eventual
Ostrogothic relief force. Ancient commanders’ thought processes must be
deduced from our analysis of their attested actions. Bachrach reconstructs the
preliminary moves of the Franks and the Visigoths, including the levying of
expeditionary and civilian troops. Clovis was active; Alaric reactive, his aim
being to stop Clovis as far north as possible. Bachrach provides a rationalizing
reading of Greg. *DLH* 2.37. The battle opened with arrows and spears; then the
Visigothic cavalry attacked Clovis’s foot soldiers. Alaric did not as Gregory says,
flee, but attempted a strategic feigned retreat. Ultimately he was routed. From
Bachrach’s analysis Vouillé emerges as decisive according to several criteria, both
as an intended, sought, staged battle and as an event that changed history.

In a second contribution dealing with the prosecution of the battle itself, we
turn to the battle’s disputed location. *Ralph Mathisen* takes us on a historio-
graphical tour of the many proposed sites for Clovis and Alaric’s battle of 507,
narrowing down to the usual suspects, Vouillé and Voulon. He uses historical,
topographical, linguistic, and military arguments to show that, from nearly
every perspective, Voulon is a highly unlikely, if not impossible, site for the
battle and that the battle of the Campus Vogladensis indeed took place at
Vouillé.

*Danuta Shanzer*’s contribution investigates the battle by focusing on
rereading a series of sources to correct and revise previous interpretations of
them. In the process of doing so, she segues from a discussion of political/
military factors to a consideration of the role of religion. She aims to highlight their different generic emphases and rhetorical slants to show how Vouillé was “heard” in early medieval sources. She takes to heart Fried’s warnings about memory, but tries to discern what kernels of fact can be rescued from what might seem to be hopelessly literary narrations. She starts with the descriptions of the Battle of Vouillé in Greg. DLH 2.37 and Fortunatus’s De virtutibus Hilarii. She then turns to the Burgundians, revisiting the letters exchanged between Avitus of Vienne and Sigismund of the Burgundians that relate to campaigns. Revising some of her own previous readings, she argues that Avitus’s Epist. 92 may be connected with the campaign of 507, and likewise that the famous phrase from Epist. 46, *vestra fides nostra victoria*, may refer to the Clovis’s conversion and the Franks’ and the Burgundians’ joint victory in 507. She thus argues for religious propaganda as part of the Visigothic campaign, despite advocating a later date for the baptism. She ends with some of the more suspect sources for events surrounding the Vouillé campaign, including the *Vita Sollemnis Carnoteni* and Fredegar. The former casts what may be Vouillé as Clovis’s conversion battle. The latter supports the diplomatic sources on financial, not religious causes for the war.

The immediate international consequences of the battle in Gaul are discussed by Ralph Mathisen in a detailed analysis of the ceremony at Tours in 508 in which Clovis received from the Byzantine emperor Anastasius the patriciate, the honorary consulate, and a golden crown. It is suggested that the Roman recognition of his role as a Roman client king resulting from his victory at Vouillé gave Clovis the political and personal capital that allowed him to incorporate the other Frankish peoples under his rule. As a result, he was able to create a Frankish kingdom that eventually would develop into the modern nation of France.

The political fallout of the battle from an external perspective follows. Jonathan Arnold turns to the Ostrogoths and presents a richly informed look at, and back at, Vouillé from Italy. Vouillé was eventually seen as the beginning of something new, namely France. But, as Arnold shows, to contemporaries in Italy its aftermath, the reconquest of Provence, heralded the empire *redux*. This empire, however, was Ostrogothic Italy under Theoderic. Italian sources presented Gaul as a province that had gone missing, as it were, and been barbarized. And, while political barbarization was understandable (needs must when the devil drives!), cultural barbarization was not. Italian views expressed in texts such as Ennodius’s *Epistles* of the culture of various Gallic individuals were not flattering. But Gallic youth could always leave Gaul for Italy to reclaim their Romanitas. While some of these reactions were rhetorical poses, there still

remains a very real sense in which barbaricum was seen as moving south, its borders no longer being the Rhine, but the Alps. Franks, Burgundians, and Visigoths were all tarred with this discourse. But caution required diplomacy, war avoided by other means, in the run-up to Vouillé, and that was what Theoderic used. Initially it worked, but not in 506–7. And 508 finally brought Theoderic’s military reaction. Was it to be seen as an invasion of Gaul? Revenge for the defeat of fellow Goths? Reconquest? Or preemptive defense? All provide useful and not necessarily disjunctive alternative lenses. The Italian reaction to the reconquest of Provence was jubilation. In Gaul the reconquest was sold as liberation and restoration. Notable Romans such as Gemellus and Liberius were sent to oversee a process that included aid for Gaul. By 511, the year of Clovis’s death, only four years after Vouillé, the consulship of the Gallo-Roman Felix (after a period of fifty years without Gallic consuls) signaled Italy’s reclaiming of at least part of Alaric II’s kingdom and the options open again for Gallo-Romans.

Religion Considerations Surrounding the Battle of Vouillé

In past historiography, the role of religion has loomed large in interpretations, both ancient and modern, of the Battle of Vouillé. Gregory of Tours painted Clovis’s campaign as a virtual crusade against Arianism, and modern scholarship, too, has seen religion, and in particular Clovis’s baptism as a Nicene Christian, as a major factor in the outcome of the battle. Several contributions, therefore, look at the role of religion from different angles regarding how it related to the workup, the process, and the results of the battle.

Ian Wood focuses on the conflict between Arian and Nicene Christianity, and in particular on the significance of the Frankish adoption of Nicene Christianity. He works from a late date for Clovis’s baptism (508), while acknowledging that his conversion may have occurred in 506. It is clear that there was Arianism in Clovis’s immediate surroundings: both Arian bishops and at least two siblings. Why, however, is unclear. Scholars since Ensslin have suggested that the Arianism of Clovis’s sister Audefreda was strategic, related to her marriage to Theoderic. But this fails to explain Lentechildis’s “lapse” into Arianism. Was she too a princess who married an external Arian, perhaps in


[29] Attested by Avitus’s lost Sermo 31 de conversione Lenteildis Chlodovaei sororis. See MGH AA 6.2, p. 152 Peiper. Also Greg. DLH 2.31. The third sister, Albofledis, who was
the Burgundian kingdom? Or was Arianism simply an available option at Clovis’s court, suppressed by Gregory of Tours? And if Clovis either hosted Arians in his court and permitted the evangelization of his sisters, how can these facts be reconciled with Gregory of Tours’s presentation of the Vouillé campaign as a crusade against Arianism? While historiographic texts like Gregory of Tours could be pious fabrications, Clovis’s letter to the Aquitainian bishops that guaranteed protection for Catholics in the Vouillé campaign cannot. So he could indeed have been officially converted by 507. But this leaves the problem of the alliance with the Arian Burgundians and of the possible Burgundian participation in Vouillé attested only by Isidore. Ultimately it is impossible to tell whether Sigismund and the Burgundians were there. But they were certainly at Toulouse and Narbonne, and the Burgundians suffered reprisals from Theoderic.

Wood also analyzes the complicated religious politics of the Burgundian kingdom. Gundobad was pro-Catholic, even if he did not convert. All the known women of the royal family were Catholics. Sigismund had converted by 501/502, well before 507. This leaves the Arian followers of Gundobad, whom Wood sees as the core, if not a majority in the kingdom, possibly even former members of Ricimer’s bodyguard. Wood adverts to possible economic causes of the war and sees Clovis’s “crusade” as propaganda, possibly even contemporary propaganda for the Catholic Gallo-Romans of Aquitaine. Clovis could thus emerge as a cunning propagandist to match his portrayal as the deceiver who sheds crocodile tears in Greg. DLH 2.42 fin. The Visigothic kingdom had had its own Arian-Catholic tensions, even though Agde represented détente before Vouillé; likewise the Breviarium of Alaric. But Catholics fought for Alaric at Vouillé, including Sidonius’s son Apollinaris. Avitus’s correspondence with him says nothing of religion, but concentrates on Apollinaris’s release from a charge of treason and the family’s relief. There were thus no simple divisions between Catholic and heretic. Clovis seems to have presented himself as a Catholic. But this does not seem to have won over the Aquitainian aristocrats—if they were aware of it. But the late dating of Clovis’s conversion suggests that he recreated the Franks as a Catholic nation in the years 506–11 with the Visigothic campaign, his own baptism, and the Council of Orléans.

Gregory Halfond guides us through reading yet a different type of text reflecting an event, the Council of Orléans of 511, that followed on the heels of the Battle of Vouillé. Starting from Alaric II’s council at Agde in 506, Halfond outlines a competitive ecclesiastical-political program of Clovis’s: Alaric had

baptized with Clovis could have started as a pagan or an unbaptized Arian catechumen. Hartmann, “Gregor von Tours,” makes many excellent arguments about Clovis’s three sisters, but seems to exclude the possibility that Audefleda’s Arianism could have been homegrown and not brought back to Lentechildis after Audefleda’s marriage to Theoderic by a pro-Gothic party at court.
planned a synod at Toulouse in 507 that would never take place. When Clovis
convoked the Council of Orléans in 511 he has been seen as a new Constantine.
But it is far more likely that he was taking his lead from Alaric. Unlike his
Visigothic model, as a baptized Nicene he could actually set an agenda for his
Nicene bishops. And in the wake of Vouillé the reintegration of the formerly
Visigothic bishoprics and bishops was important ecclesiastic politics. Clovis
needed to amalgamate the bishops of the new and expanded Frankish kingdom
and make them work together.

The relationship between Vouillé and Orléans is an old question, but, since
Daly in 1994 staunchly denied a connection, Halfond’s treatment is overdue.
He begins with the “who?”—carefully dissecting the credentials and sees of the
invitees to Orléans. Some sees represented at Agde were not at Orléans, and it is
likely that the Ostrogothic military presence stood in the way. Plotting the sees
on a map reveals that the southernmost latitudinal line (east-west) corresponds
to the limits of Frankish military control of southern Gaul. The newly annexed
bishops of northwestern Gaul were there in force, while those from east of Paris
were not. While trouble with the Alamanni might explain absences from the
northeast, Halfond sees instead an exclusion of better acculturated Frankish
bishops. Churches may have encouraged bishops from sees new to his rule more
than old trusts, and the episcopal subscriptions support this interpretation.
Why? Orléans allowed Alaric to unify the new north and the conquered south.
Halfond provocatively suggests that Clovis omitted his old guard because they
knew him too well from his previous incarnations as a pagan or Arian (or both)!

Turning to the “where?” Halfond shows that location and convenience
mattered as least as much as size or prestige. Yet Orléans stood beyond the
traditional boundaries of Gallic councils. By holding his council of 511 there
Clovis could send a clear message that the Frankish church was not going to be
purely southern. But, as a unifying compromise, a southern bishop, Cyprian of
Bordeaux, presided. Halfond illuminatingly compares the venue of Orléans
511 to the choice of Washington DC as capital of the American republic. The
extent of Clovis’s influence on the council has been debated, but Halfond sees
no reason to limit it to the first ten canons. From the time of his accession
Clovis had been urged by Remigius of Reims to work with bishops. And he was
in correspondence with at least one Burgundian bishop, Avitus of Vienne, at the
time of his baptism. He saw himself as actively engaged with the church and its
politics in a positive paternal relationship. The canons of Orléans deal with

30 Becher, Chlodwig I, 250, 273, now raises the possibility that, since this part of the
kingdom would soon fall to his son Theuderic, Clovis may have ceded control to him
before his death.

31 See now Becher, Chlodwig I, 248–49, for possible contacts between Clovis and Cyprian
during the Siege of Bordeaux in winter 507/508.
issues raised by Clovis’s recent victories—but largely implicitly, leaving Vouillé
as important background. The Council of Orléans repays such a geographical,
military, and political reading. It initiated the new Frankish church, founded on
a Gallo-Roman substrate, but enabled only by a major military victory.

The contribution of Deborah Deliyannis returns to the Italian connection
and is linked both to the question of Arian and Nicene Christianity and to the
reception of the Battle of Vouillé in Italy, in this case Ravenna. The church
(originally Theoderic’s) now known as Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo is attested as
dedicated to S. Martin in the late 6th century, and its late-6th-century mosaic of
the saint leading the martyrs still survives. Her initial evidence is thus art
historical. Martin in the mosaic in Sant’Apollinare Nuovo has been explained by
scholars who work on Ravenna as an anti-Arian saint. But Martin’s fortuna as a
combatant of Arianism has been questioned. McKinley dates his anti-Arian
reputation to the 580s or 590s, too late to explain his presence in Ravenna
already under Bishop Agnellus in 557/570. Deliyannis draws a distinction
between Martin’s role in Sulpicius Severus as one who suffered at Arian hands to
his role in Gregory of Tours as their adversary. By the 560s in Nicetius of Trier’s
letter to Clodswinda we find Martin’s healing miracles favorably compared to
those of Arian saints in the vicinity of an allusion to Clovis’s military successes
against Gundobad and Alaric. While Gregory in the 590s is the first to link
Martin explicitly with Vouillé, he is unlikely to have invented the connection.
The kernel seems to have been in place by the 560s.

Turning to Italy Deliyannis suggests that the Martin hymned by Ennodius
under Theoderic cannot have been perceived as anti-Arian and notes that in the
early 570s Fortunatus did not know of the rededication, even though he had
initially visited in 566. This suggests that the rededication and mosaic date to
after 566. Martin spread to Italy as an ascetic. But, as a result of Vouillé and
Clovis, he began to be seen as an anti-Arian saint by the 560s. The rededication
to Martin of what had formerly been Theoderic’s church may reflect the saint’s
role at Vouillé. There were always questions about what to do with churches that
had been Arian or had been used by Arians and how to “cleanse” them. In this
case, part of the purge consisted of a dedication to a Gallic saint who, as a result
of propaganda connected with Vouillé, had earned a reputation as an
antitheretical patron. At the time the church was rededicated, opposition to
Arianism had again become topical under the threat of the Lombards. The
dedication of the Byzantine exarch’s church to Martin may have been an
homage to the preferred orthodoxy of the Franks.

(Liverpool, 2002), 295–302.
The Material Remains

The Visigoths were in Aquitaine for almost a century, but paradoxically seem to have left no archeological trace of their presence. Because archeologists conveniently used to assume that peoples could be linked to distinctive material cultures, they have always felt the pressure to try to make mute artifacts speak and to flesh out dry bones with the contours of the living human being. Bailey Young takes us through the vicissitudes of archeological attempts to recover the seemingly invisible Visigoths from their archeological record. Barrière-Flavy saw them in Francia wearing their Crimean national costume. But the very material evidence he used would eventually be shown to be derived from Frankish and Roman prototypes. Defining Visigothic material culture has consistently proved difficult. Weapons and pottery were rare. Pottery found in Visigothic graves could be shown to be late Roman. Only a rectangular plate-buckle remained. Edward James in 1977 showed that only materials from Septimanian and Spanish graves could be considered Visigothic ornaments. In the meantime Kazanski’s research on Černiakhov culture has shown that features once thought Visigothic were actually Danubian. The barbarians that came to Francia did not bring one distinctive funerary culture, but several—and those confusingly shared with Romans and others. In short, male Visigoths, at least in death, seemed to have wished to appear Roman.

Women, however, seem to be different. Bierbrauer suggested that distinctive female graves, featuring paired fibulae on both shoulders and found throughout Francia, were those of Visigothic women related to splinter groups of Visigoths that Bierbrauer saw as having left Spain for Francia while Clovis was consolidating his power against the Visigoths. But a team from MAN under Pépin and Kazanski has now revised Bierbrauer’s thesis to see in these graves the wives of late-5th-century east Germanic warriors, whose graves were ethnically marked and drew on Danubian material culture as a koine. According to them the imitation went from Francia to Spain, not vice versa, and they dated some of the Bierbrauer graves earlier than 480. By the time of Vouillé the military elite were adapting a Frankish style that included dressed burial, and, just as the Visigoths were being expelled, they may have imitated their Frankish foes in this too.

This volume thus provides a thorough look at the causes, prosecution, and consequences of the Battle of Vouillé. In the process, it establishes the place of the battle as one of the most pivotal battles of history, a battle that, unlike many “great battles,” had lasting and significant consequences for the future course of history.
Bibliography


### The Battle of Vouillé

#### Tale of the Tape of the Two Combatants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Alaric II</th>
<th>Clovis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Visigoth</td>
<td>Frank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Euric (466–484)</td>
<td>Childeric (ca. 456/463–81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth year</td>
<td>ca. 460</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accession</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>507 (in battle)</td>
<td>511 (natural causes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in 507</td>
<td>ca. 47</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
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<td>King of the Salian Franks</td>
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### Signet ring

![Signet ring](image1.png)

**Legend**

- **ALARICVS REX GOTHORVM**
- **CHILDIRICI REGIS** (signet ring of Clovis's father Childeric)

### Siblings

- none known
- Audefleda, Albofledis, Lantechildis

### Wife

- Theodegotha, Ostrogoth, daughter of Theoderic
- Chrotchildis, Burgundian, daughter of Chilperic

### Children

- Amalaric, Gesalic (illegitimate)
- Theoderic (illegitimate), Ingomeres, Chlodomer, Childebert, Chlothachar

### Territory

- Roman provinces of Aquitania I–II north to the Loire, Novempopulana, Narbonensis I, southwestern Viennensis; Spain
- Roman provinces of Belgica I–II, much of Lugdunensis II–IV south to the Loire, Thuringia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital city</th>
<th>Toulouse</th>
<th>Tournai</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Arian Christian</td>
<td>Nicene Christian or pagan</td>
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<td>Breviarium Alarici</td>
<td>Lex Salica</td>
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<td>Church council</td>
<td>Agde (506) (Nicene)</td>
<td>Orléans (511) (Nicene)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>Visigothic army, Gallo-Roman levies</td>
<td>Frankish army, Burgundian allies</td>
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