

The Merovingians in Historiographical Tradition

The Merovingian centuries were a foundational period in the historical consciousness of western Europe. The memory of the first dynasty of Frankish kings, their origin myths, accomplishments, and failures were used by generations of chroniclers, propagandists, and historians to justify a wide range of social and political agendas. The process of curating and editing the source material gave rise to a recognizable “Merovingian narrative” with three distinct phases: meteoric ascent, stasis, and decline. Already in the seventh-century *Chronicle of Fredegar*, this tripartite model was invoked by a Merovingian queen to prophesy the fate of her descendants. This expert commentary sets out to understand how the story of the Merovingians was shaped through a process of continuous historiographical adaptation. It examines authors from across a millennium of historical writing and analyzes their influences and objectives, charting the often-unexpected ways in which their narratives were received and developed.

Yaniv Fox is Associate Professor of History at Bar-Ilan University. He is the organizer of the 2021–2022 Israel Institute for Advanced Studies research group “Purity and Pollution in Late Antique and Early Medieval Culture and Society” and the author of *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul: Columbanian Monasticism and the Frankish Elites* (2014).

The Merovingians in
Historiographical Tradition
From the Sixth to the Sixteenth Centuries

Yaniv Fox
Bar-Ilan University, Israel



Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-28501-8 — The Merovingians in Historiographical Tradition
Yaniv Fox
Frontmatter
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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009285018

DOI: 10.1017/9781009285025

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First published 2024

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Fox, Yaniv, 1975– author.

Title: The Merovingians in historiographical tradition : from the sixth to the
sixteenth centuries / Yaniv Fox, Bar-Ilan University, Israel.

Description: Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2023. |
Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023028786 | ISBN 9781009285018 (hardback) | ISBN
9781009285063 (paperback) | ISBN 9781009285025 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Merovingians – Historiography. | Merovingians – History. |
Civilization, Medieval – Historiography. | Civilization, Medieval. | France –
History – Medieval period, 987–1515 – Historiography. | France – History –
To 987 – Historiography.

Classification: LCC DC65 .F68 2023 | DDC 944/.02–dc23/eng/20230630

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2023028786>

ISBN 978-1-009-28501-8 Hardback

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Acknowledgements

The idea for this book came to me in 2017, as an attempt to remedy my unease with the way I was teaching the Merovingians, hopping from Clovis to Dagobert to their “do-nothing” successors. In the six years it took to complete, friends and colleagues have helped me think through my often-simplistic ideas, offering their guidance, encouragement, and experience at every turn. I have also received material and emotional support from a long and diverse group of institutions, friends, and family. Their generosity and insight have been crucial and, while offering my gratitude here is perhaps insufficient compensation for their efforts, I can only hope to be able to repay them in the future. As always, the flaws that remain in this work are mine alone.

This research was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (Grant 1417/18). The four years during which this grant was made available have been invaluable, and I am very grateful for their support. I would also like to acknowledge the University of Tübingen’s Center for Advanced Studies project “Migration and Mobility in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,” and to thank especially Steffen Patzold and Mischa Meier, for offering me a fellowship in February 2020. The time spent there was both insightful and delightful, especially since the world ground to a halt precisely as I returned home to the first of many lockdowns. I am also very grateful to the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies for the year I spent in Jerusalem in 2021–2022 as a member of the research group “Purity and Pollution in Late Antique and Medieval Society and Culture.” The community and friendships forged there remain strong, even though we have all since dispersed. I would especially like to thank Iris Avivi, Keren Rechnitzer, and Anat Yagil for their kindness, patience, and humor.

I am especially thankful to my home institution of Bar-Ilan, to the Faculty of Humanities, and to the staff and faculty at the department of general history; to Hilda Nissimi and Doron Avraham for their assistance as department heads; to Revital Yitzhaki and Oriyan Yehezkel for their administrative help; and to my research students for their inquisitiveness.

viii Acknowledgements

But mostly I am indebted to my friends there for their engaging company and generous spirit: Yosef Liebersohn, Dov Stuczinski, Daniela Dueck, Yaakov Mascetti, and Tal Tov. A special thanks is due to Myriam Greilsammer, not only for the kindness and guidance she has afforded me since I arrived at Bar-Ilan, but also for her assistance in translating Old French.

The generosity and camaraderie I found in the community of Late Antique and Early Medieval historians has been overwhelming. I would like to thank Stefan Esders, Rob Meens, and Carmela Vircillo Franklin for their efforts on my behalf and for their valuable guidance and advice. Laury Sarti has read and commented on early versions of this book and her friendship has been unwavering. To Éric Fournier and Daniella Talmon-Heller for their friendship, hospitality, and advice; to Robert Wiśniewski who welcomed me in Warsaw; and to Jerzy Szafranowski, whose gesture of friendship I will not forget, I am forever grateful.

My utmost gratitude to Yitzhak Hen, who has been a guiding light in matters big and small, academic and personal. It is to him that I came with my worries and ideas, setbacks and triumphs. Yitzhak was the first person I consulted about this book. He has since read many of its iterations and his input, as always, has been invaluable. Working alongside him at the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies was a rare privilege, which made a wonderful year that much better.

I am grateful for the editorial acumen of Sara Tropper, who often knew what I meant better than I did; to the team at Cambridge University Press for their diligence and professionalism—Elizabeth Friend-Smith, Elizabeth Hanlon, Victoria Phillips, and Laheba Alam; and to Mary Morton for her copy editing during the manuscript's final stages of production.

Finally, thank you to my family: for the many Sabbath dinners spent talking and lovingly arguing with my in-laws, the Naim family; to my parents, Michael and Leah, for their persistent support and encouragement; to my brother Yaron for his indefatigable optimism; to Lital, my wife and closest companion, with whom I shared my difficulties and my joys; and to my dear children, Yahav, Ouria, and Ivri. This book is dedicated to you.

Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
AMP	<i>Annales Mettenses Priores</i>
ARF	<i>Annales regni Francorum</i>
BECh	<i>Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes</i>
Bede, <i>HE</i>	Bede, <i>Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> , ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969)
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis
CSSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
DRG	<i>De rebus gestis Francorum ad christianissimum Galliarum regem Franciscum Valesium, eius nominis primum, libri decem, ex postrema auctoris recognitione. Additum est de regibus item Francorum Chronicon, ad haec usque tempora studiosissime deductum, cum rerum maxime insignium indice copiosissimo</i>
HL	Paul the Deacon, <i>Historia Langobardorum</i>
LHF	<i>Liber historiae Francorum</i>
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA	Auctores Antiquissimi
Conc.	Concilia
DD	Diplomata
Merov.	Die Urkunden der Merowinger
Arnulf.	Die Urkunden der Arnulfinger
LdK	Die Urkunden der deutschen Karolinger: Ludwig das Kind
Epp.	Epistola
LL Nat. Germ.	Leges nationum Germanicarum
Poetae	Poetae Latini Medii aevi
QQ zur Geistesgesch.	Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters
SRG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, in usum scholarum separatim editi

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SRG n.s.	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, nova series
SRL	Scriptores rerum Langobardorum
SRM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
SS	Scriptores (in folio)
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–1864)