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**Studies in Austrasian Politics
and Diplomacy from Theudebert I
to Childebert II.**

Brian Hancock

**A Thesis in the Department of
History**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
at Concordia University**

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

May 1990

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ISBN 0-315-64638-1

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ABSTRACT

Studies in Austrasian Politics and
Diplomacy from Theudebert I to
Childebert II

B. Hancock

Diplomatic contact with the Empire was carried out during almost constant internal turmoil. Even so events in Italy would ensure the continuing relationship between Emperor and King and Austrasian interference in the affairs of the Ostrogoths and Lombards. The contrast between the political structures of Empire and Kingdom was apparent but their association was not political but personal. As seen in selected Austrasian letters the interaction between the systems was not any regulated international process but a personal relationship within the framework of a "family of kings".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation for the support and advice given to me by my thesis supervisor Professor Franziska Shlosser.

As well I would like to thank the Inter-Library Loans Departments of the Norris and Vanier Libraries at Concordia University.

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CHAPTER I

C'est une entreprise fort malaisée que d'essayer d'établir, à l'aide des documents originaux, la nature et la suite des relations du royaume franc avec l'empire de Byzance.¹

Difficult indeed, but possible, to understand with the documents available and some conjecture to form the best possible conception of the sometimes peculiar nature of Merovingian politics and its background to the hierarchical diplomatic relationship between kingdom and empire. The original sources for the most part have been translated into English. For example, the Historiae of Gregory of Tours is available in an excellent translation by Lewis Thorpe in Penguin Books entitled The History of the Franks. One important source, Epistolae Austrasicae, however has not been translated, although some letters are paraphrased by the well-known English scholar Thomas Hodgkin in his Italy and her Invaders. A working translation is included at the end of the paper as Appendix I based on Wilhelm Gundlach's edition in the Monumenta Germaniae Historica. The wording of the letters may sometimes seem odd but then the Latin is often decadent and of course the sensibilities of the writers are particular to the times. As well a Glossary of Names is attached as Appendix II to bring together the many characters who play a part during the curious and confusing circumstances of this period.

When Clovis died in 511 he left his kingdom to his four sons. Theuderic took as his patrimony Austrasia in the east which was later enlarged by his son Theudebert.

Finally the last of the brothers, Lothar, consolidated the kingdom but he died in 561 leaving four sons. One soon died and the remaining three divided the kingdom. Guntram received Burgundy, Sigebert Austrasia, and Chilperic took the western lands which were to become known as Neustria in the next century. The three brothers fought amongst themselves to expand their territories and when Sigebert was assassinated Austrasia was reduced in area to the north-east of Gaul. However Chilperic in his turn was killed and Sigebert's son Childebert II inherited a larger Austrasia and signed a treaty with his uncle Guntram. On Guntram's death in 593 the Austrasian king controlled most of Gaul.

The relationship between Frankish kings and Byzantine emperors during the sixth century depended rather on a hierarchical familial bond than any association between political systems. In fact, the differences of the two systems is considered a characteristic feature of the time.² The empire had the continuity of an established administrative procedure but the kingdom had no such unified system only the king's sometimes tenuous authority transferred down through rebellious dukes and obstinate bishops.³ Royal power was based on the hereditary right to rule not of an individual but of a family and the possession of property.⁴ The conquests of Clovis had left his descendants rich in land on which to base their regnancy.⁵ The office of the emperor, however, never did become truly hereditary, generally resting on a military base. The emperor's diplomatic position was founded on the Roman conception of pater familias.⁶ This principle and the monotheism of Christianity made the emperor father and head of the family of kings since all government was considered a terrestrial version of the celestial model.⁷ The emperors had become imperator Dei gratia rather than divus imperator.⁸

With respect to the concept of the emperor as father, evidence is found in the letters of the adoption of certain Austrasian kings as son.⁹ There are examples of a king addressing an emperor as father, an emperor addressing a king as son and as well examples of the special relationship between the families. In letters 19 and 20 Theudebert calls Justinian father and in letter 25 Childebert refers to Maurice as father. In letter 42 Maurice lectures Childebert as a father would a son referring to proper filial affection. In letters 40 and 41 the Exarch of Ravenna calls Childebert the son of Maurice. Further in letter 43 to Theodosius, the son of Maurice, Childebert writes about their shared father. The extended family relationship is demonstrated in letter 40 in which the Augusta is referred to as the sister of Childebert and in letter 26 where Brunhild addresses Maurice as father. Widening the connection, in letter 48 Gogo calls all the Franks sons of the emperor.

So then, the emperor was considered the head of the family of kings and even in some cases the father of all the people of a kingdom. The empire itself recognized sometimes the importance of another power for instance Persia¹⁰, by addressing its ruler as brother.¹¹ However the kings accepted their relationship with the emperor, it enhanced their status and seemed to fit in with the divine plan of things.¹² This was a reflection of a celestial order¹³ which gave a sense of stability in an uncertain world.

Adding to this uncertainty was the religious aspect of international relations at this time. Arianism denied the divinity of Christ believing that the Son was lesser than the Father. This, of course, was declared heresy by the Catholic Church and in 325 at the

Council of Nicaea the teachings of Arius were condemned as blasphemous. But even as Arianism was being crushed within the Empire a Goth, Ulfila, converted many of his people to the heresy which then spread to neighbouring tribes. The Franks, however, embraced the true Church for Clovis, perhaps influenced by his wife, became orthodox Catholic. This brought the Frankish king and Byzantine emperor together in a common religion.

In order to understand more fully the special relationship between Metz and Constantinople it is necessary to consider internal events in Gaul and circumstances in Spain and Italy. Theudebert and Childebert always felt the pressure of incessant family feuding while trying to maintain their position at home and at the same time deal with imperial demands to participate in foreign adventures. In Spain Childebert became concerned in events through his sister. But the background to the diplomatic contacts are revealed first in Italy in the letters that were written after the death of Theodoric.

CHAPTER II

Amalasantha, Queen of the Goths, had determined to raise her son Atalaric in the Roman fashion but some nobles objected and pressed for his upbringing in the Gothic custom. Their resistance caused her enough alarm that she planned to escape to Byzantium and with the approval of the Emperor Justinian she prepared for the journey. However some of her henchmen managed to eliminate much of the conservative opposition and she hesitated but continued correspondence with the Emperor with the view to eventually subject Italy to imperial control.

In the meantime, in Tuscany a certain Theodatus, nephew of Theodoric, was attempting to expand his territory at the expense of his neighbours. This brought him into conflict with the Queen and he formed the plan of turning over Tuscany to Justinian for a large sum of money so that he might retire. The Emperor received a letter from Theodatus suggesting that he was weary of the strife and turmoil around him and that a quiet estate would suit his scholarly sensibilities. Justinian must have wondered if it would be as easy as that to obtain Tuscany for the price of a farm and the rest of Gothic Italy if Amalasantha decided to leave.

Nevertheless, in spite of the animosity between Theodatus and Amalasantha, the death of Atalaric forced a reconciliation. She offered him the throne if he would consent to share power with her and he agreed. Afterwards she was slain with the consent of

Theodatus by the relatives of those noble Goths who had been killed on her orders. As a result an envoy of Justinian, Peter, threatened the new King with an invasion from the south while from the north came a warning from the kings of the Franks.¹ Theodatus was now menaced from two sides but did nothing.

Belisarius, Justinian's general, by this time had defeated Gelimar the Vandal in Africa so that Justinian now had an experienced force in close position to act in Italy. The Emperor also wrote to the Franks for assistance explaining that Italy had been taken from the Romans by the impious Arian Goths and that a common orthodox faith bound true believers to act together. He also sent money with the promise of more to follow on their intervention. Always ready to exchange a promise for gold the Franks pledged their support to their brother in religion.²

After this, the imperial invasion began: the general Mundus moved into Dalmatia in preparation for an attack from the north-east while Belisarius fought his way through Sicily. These events naturally caused Theodatus much concern until news reached him of the death of Mundus. Now he exhibited a peculiar boldness in his treatment of the imperial envoy at his court because he had made an agreement with the Franks that in exchange for land and gold they would aid the Goths in their impending struggle with Belisarius.³ He seems to have been unaware that the Franks were in communication with the Emperor and that the slain Mundus could be replaced. This was done. Constantianus entered Dalmatia forcing the Gothic army to retreat to Ravenna and at the same time, Belisarius landed in southern Italy.

As Belisarius moved further towards the centre of Italy, the Goths became concerned on account of the inactivity of the rather sensitive and weary Theodatus. With the fall of Naples they acted. A meeting was held: a new King, Wittigis, was chosen and Theodatus was chased down and executed. Italy would not now be a gift from traitorous Gothic royalty and Justinian would need considerable resources for a military and diplomatic effort to recover the territory.

Meanwhile in Gaul, King Theuderic had died and his son Theudebert then attained the throne in spite of the efforts of his uncles, Childebert and Lothar. The new King was an able and elegant young man and although daring and wild as well, he was considered by Gregory of Tours to be a friend of the Church because of his natural generosity.⁴ He soon reconciled with his uncles and joined with them in the final subjugation of Burgundy which was then divided into three parts.

Wittigis prepared for war but it was not only Belisarius he was worried about, the Franks were still a threat.⁵ He garrisoned Rome then set out for Ravenna there to plan his strategy. Wittigis proposed a secret pact with his northern neighbours: they would receive Gothic lands adjoining Gaul (Provence and part of Dauphiné) and the money previously promised by Theodatus in return for military assistance. The Franks agreed to send auxiliary troops and to keep the agreement quiet since they had already consented to an alliance with the Emperor.⁶ This strategy allowed the Gothic general Marcias to return from the northern frontier in order to bolster the army at Ravenna.

Even though Wittigis had left troops in Rome, the inhabitants decided to accept Belisarius into the city and so imperial forces controlled Italy from the Tiber south and could move as well north into Tuscany. Due to this reverse now Wittigis wrote a letter to the Emperor inviting peace.⁷ Hearing of discontent in Rome, however, and with Marcias moving south, Wittigis then decided to press on with the war and besieged Rome. Later Milan went over to the imperial side and was soon encircled by Goths supported by ten thousand Burgundians. These men had been sent by Theudebert who claimed that they acted independently.⁸ An imperial legate, Andreas, arrived at Theudebert's court with a request for assistance. It seems that letter 19 is the King's excuse to the Emperor for not sending three thousand men to Italy saying that because of the delay in the ambassador's arrival, the request came too late for action. Now, these troops either were meant for the relief of a patrician called Bregantinus,⁹ named Vergentinos by Procopius,¹⁰ or perhaps for the benefit of Belisarius himself.¹¹ Indeed the petition may instead refer to a senator from Bregantio, a town in the Alpes Cottiae, a province retained by Theudebert after the invasion of 539.¹²

Theudebert also received the ambassadors Theodore and Solomon who carried correspondence from the Emperor asking that he list the lands and peoples over which he had dominion. Theudebert records in letter 20, the subjugation of the Thuringians and North Sueves in Germany, the Visigoths in Gaul, and the Saxons and Eucii in Pannonia and north Italy. The letter is courteous but not obeisant.¹³ Theudebert is proud of the extent of his control, deferential but showing his independent nature. His reply would have been returned with the imperial legates or sent on later with one of his own envoys,

perhaps Secundinus.¹⁴ Both letters indicate that during the early period of the reconquest, Justinian followed a policy of adoption¹⁵. In the address of both letters Theudebert refers to the Emperor as "father". This reflects the influence of the Emperor in that a Frankish King, even though irritated by imperial presumption, would still recognize his authority.¹⁶

Back in Ravenna, the siege of Rome having been lifted, Wittigis had heard that Belisarius planned an expedition to the north during the next year. Lacking confidence in his ability to meet the imperial commander in battle he resolved to request aid from fellow barbarians. Suspecting the consequences of Frankish backing,¹⁷ he sent envoys to the Lombards but they refused support and Wittigis in desperation even conceived a plan to involve the Persians.¹⁸

Now as Wittigis remained in Ravenna and Belisarius was involved in the siege of Auximus Theudebert considered the time was right for profit through bold action. Accordingly, he gathered an army together and crossed the Alps into Liguria.¹⁹ They acted as a friendly force until they reached the Po at which time they threw off any pretence of support for the Goths and viciously attacked the garrison holding the bridge at Ticenum (Pavia). Procopius relates that the Franks began to kill women and children but this may be doubtful with a Christian king, Theudebert himself, leading the army and perhaps any outrage may be attributed to pagan adventurers attached to the large and undisciplined company.

Once the bridge had been taken, the eager multitude crossed the river and advanced towards the main Gothic camp. Not yet aware of the true intentions of the approaching army they were unprepared, caught off guard and forced to retreat towards Ravenna. Seeing this from afar, the imperial troops in the area believed that Belisarius had arrived but they were quickly undeceived and learned then that the Frank made no distinction between Goth and Roman.

The victors, however, soon realized that the ravaged land could not support such a throng and many perished due to dysentery. In the meantime, Belisarius alarmed at the perfidy of the Franks wrote a letter to Theudebert accusing the King of breaking his agreement with the Empire and warning him of the consequences. On account of these factors Theudebert ordered a retreat. From then on Belisarius during his operations in the north of Italy was always anxious concerning the designs of the Franks.²¹ Thus Theudebert not only succeeded in alarming both his supposed allies but as well returned home with a great deal of plunder.

Theudebert provoked the Emperor further by minting coins with his own likeness stamped thereon.²² Normally gold coins minted in Gaul would have the image of the emperor upon them. Theudebert was angered because Justinian took to himself exaggerated titles such as conqueror of many nations including the Franks.²³ This effrontery even caused the King to plan an expedition to the east²⁴ but instead he defied custom and expressed his independence with his unconventional currency.

Belisarius finally captured Auximus and now moved against Ravenna and Wittigis. Theudebert, still ready to interpose, sent envoys to Wittigis to arrange another alliance with a design to destroy Belisarius and then to divide Italy.²⁵ When Belisarius heard this, he sent his own legates to propose a treaty with the Goths. The Franks warned the Goths of invasion from the north which could annihilate the Roman army. The imperial legates pointed out that the Emperor could raise forces of unparalleled size and then reminded Wittigis of the faithlessness of the Franks. They warned the Goths of the fate of the Thuringians and Burgundians and reminded them of the slaughter on the Po last year to appreciate the value of a Frankish pledge. Convinced, Wittigis dismissed Theudebert's ambassadors and accepted the imperial proposal.

Nonetheless there was no end to the war, only a respite, for many Goths were dissatisfied with the arrangement due to the exactions of imperial agents and soon a new champion, Totila, rose to continue the struggle. In order to strengthen his standing he asked for the daughter of a Frankish king in marriage.²⁶ It was probably Theudebert who refused.²⁷ Perhaps at this time Totila gave over lands in north Italy to Theudebert²⁸ to forward his suit or the Franks simply assumed control²⁹ and later Theudebald was fabricating the reasons for their possession of the territory to an imperial legate, Leontius, to further his argument.

When Theudebert died, he was succeeded by his son Theudebald, a malicious, ignoble and sickly youth.³⁰ He soon received two imperial legates, John and Missurius, who carried a letter from the Emperor denouncing Theudebert's Italian adventure but at the

same time seeking to ensure that the alliance continue. Theudebald replied in letter 18 that any reproach of such a leader and conqueror as his father had been was unjustified, particularly a short time after his demise. Nevertheless, he proclaimed that the alliance should endure and be upheld through common faith. Theudebald does not address the emperor as "father", either because he was not formally adopted or because he would not address a slanderer of Theudebert in a dignified and deferential manner.

Later Justinian sent another embassy;³¹ this time led by Leontius, to demand that the Franks withdraw from north Italy and to uphold the alliance in order that they proceed jointly with the struggle against the Goths. Theudebald replied that the lands in question were a gift from Totila and that the Goths and Franks were presently friends so he would not march against them. However, he sent his envoy Leuardus to the Emperor to discuss the first complaint and to promise restitution should it be proved that the Franks controlled territory in Italy without justification.

After the death of Totila, the Goths appointed Teïas as their king.³² At Ticenum (Pavia) they found much of the treasure of Totila and decided to make a formal compact with the Franks now that they had the means again to influence them. This attempt failed but after the death of Teïas with the danger from the imperial commander Narses becoming acute they were compelled again to seek Frankish intervention. They came to Theudebald forecasting eventual imperial violence across the Alps if the Gothic nation failed in driving

the invaders from Italy. The King refused but allowed two Alamanni brothers, Leutharis and Butilinus, to raise an army of adventurers interested not at all in supporting the Goths but only in plunder.³³

In Samnium the army divided: Leutharis drove down the east coast while Butilinus marched along the west. The former was the first to attempt a return with his plunder but crossing the Po into Venetia, a province unhealthy for Frankish invaders, an outbreak of plague ended this expedition.³⁴ Meanwhile Butilinus, in Campania, noticed the first effects of the disease among his men so he resolved to determine the issue with Narses before the infestation became epidemic. Near Capua the second brother and his men met their end in a somewhat more glorious manner in battle.³⁵ The Empire now controlled most of Italy.

CHAPTER III

Sometime during the early 560's the Avars entered Europe and swept west through Pannonia. The Lombards were involved then in a fierce and protracted struggle with the Gepids for control of this region and with the arrival of the outsiders the balance of the contest was altered. The Gepids had been federates of the Empire but due to their destabilizing influence the Lombards were established in Pannonia as an obstruction to their further expansion.¹ The King of the Lombards, Alboin, thought to exploit the arrival of the Avars to form an alliance with them which would give him the necessary power to finally destroy his old enemy.² He proposed that such an agreement would not only bring land and wealth to the Avars but would increase their strength so as to resist the attempts of the Emperor to eliminate them. The Gepids naturally fearing this compact appealed to the Emperor but he replied only with vague promises and did not act hoping that each side would destroy the other.³ Cunimund, the leader of the Gepids, realizing finally that he would fight alone determined to engage with his familiar adversary first and if victorious to deal with Baian of the Avars.⁴ Cunimund was defeated entirely and the few Gepid survivors were subjected to harsh Lombard or savage Avar dominion.

The Lombards and the Franks had previously concluded marriage alliances during the period when the former held Pannonia. Theudebert and his son had married Lombard princesses and Alboin had been married to the daughter of Lothar.⁵ This relationship between the royal families and the recent treaty between Alboin and Baian did not prevent

the Avars from invading Gaul.⁶ In 562, shortly after the death of Lothar, the Avars invaded forcing Sigebert, his heir, to counter although at that time he was involved in a civil war with his half-brother Chilperic.⁷ He met the invaders near the river Elbe where he overcame them and quickly accepted their plea for peace since Chilperic was busy in the meantime occupying some of his cities. After his first success Sigebert unhesitatingly engaged his brother in battle, forced him to flee and recaptured the cities of his patrimony. Four years later, however, the Avars returned.⁸ Again Sigebert marched out to meet them but in this encounter his men fled and he was captured. Fortunately he was able to reach an agreement with his captors and by means of presents and supplies convinced them to agree to a peace treaty which was to keep Gaul safe from further Avar incursions during his reign.⁹

Sigebert now had a pact with Baian who in turn was allied with Alboin who had been married to Chlothsind, sister of Sigebert. This tenuous triangle, formed on two sides by treaty and one side by marriage collapsed suddenly in 568 when the Lombards invaded Italy.¹⁰ The Avars were left in possession of Pannonia on the condition that the Lombards might return within a specified time and reclaim their territory.¹¹ It was the invasion of Italy by the Lombards and the determination of the Empire to remove them with the aid of the Franks that would ensure future diplomatic contact between Gaul and Byzantium.¹²

The same year that Alboin began his southern incursion Lombard marauders descended westwards on Gaul but were overwhelmed and many were sold into slavery.¹³ This was the first of many intrusions into Gaul by renegade dukes and their followers

which were on the whole unsuccessful and only served to disaffect the Franks.¹⁴ Two years later the Lombards undertook their only profitable foray into Gaul by defeating the Patrician Amatus.¹⁵ He fled but was caught and killed along with many of his Burgundian troops leaving the victors free to return to their new home in Italy burdened with plunder. On account of this disaster King Guntram replaced his fallen general with the ambitious and capable Ennius Mummolus.

The following year in 571 Lombard raiders again swept into Gaul but this time were met by the new commander of the Burgundian army near the town of Embrun in the Basses Alpes.¹⁶ Mummolus, aided by the bishops of Embrun and Gap, the infamous brothers Salonius and Sagittarius, managed to surround the invaders and by felling trees across the pathways so trapped the enemy. The few survivors returned home with the disturbing news of the ability of a superior Burgundian commander.

When the Lombards invaded Italy a group of Saxons had joined them in hopes of settling in a more prosperous territory but soon became unhappy with Lombard domination and decided to return to their homeland.¹⁷ However, after their departure from Germany Lothar and Sigebert had already settled their former lands with another group: the Swabians.¹⁸ The Saxons then marched into Gaul but were defeated by Mummolus and forced back into Italy. Still determined, they returned to Gaul once more planning to make an alliance with Sigebert so that they might be resettled. The next year, in 573, they reappeared in two groups marching by way of Nice and Embrun and then joining together near Avignon during harvest time.¹⁹ Mummolus heard that they were stealing provisions

and so he marched out to meet them and demanded restitution. They repaid the peasants with bronze bars falsified as gold then on receiving instructions from Sigebert turned and marched into Swabia, their former homeland.²⁰ The new inhabitants offered to share the land but Saxon intransigence forced a battle in which the wanderers were slaughtered and the remaining intractable few forced to accept Swabian terms.²¹

A year after these events another band of Lombards led by Duke Zaban entered Switzerland and ravaged the lands around the monastery at Agaunum.²² They then proceeded to Bex where they were defeated by a Frankish army and nearly all were killed and few escaped. Not long after this Zaban returned with two of his brother dukes, Amo and Radan.²³ Now that the King of the Lombards was dead, the dukes, secure in their authority in Italy, decided to increase their wealth at the expense of the inhabitants of Gaul even though previous expeditions had been futile, in fact disastrous, since Mummolus had been made patrician. Each commander took a different route and on reaching Gaul plundered the countryside as they marched. Mummolus defeated Radan first, forcing him to retreat to Valence where Zaban was conducting a siege. The Burgundians however, were not far behind and catching the two dukes at Embrum inflicted another defeat compelling the survivors to flee to Susa which was controlled at the time by Sisinnius, an imperial Master of the Troops. Mummolus pressed on. The Lombards found no support in an imperial city and so fled back across the mountains. Amo, in the vicinity of Arles, heard of these reverses and not wishing to face the formidable Mummolus unaided retreated in haste leaving most of his plunder.

The consequences of the Lombard incursions into Gaul were the extension of Frankish authority into the Alps and the deterioration of relations between the kingdoms.²⁴ Control of The Alpine passes did not prevent completely further Lombard adventures in Gaul for raiders used the coastal route in 581 to plunder the area around Nice and a year later around Forum Iulii.²⁵ The decline of relations would later be a factor in Childebert's invasions of Italy.

During the time of the invasion of the three dukes, an imperial army marched into northern Italy under the command of the son-in-law of the Emperor Justin, Baduarius.²⁶ This expedition may have been planned for some time since Theophylact mentions that it was sent to give aid to Cunimund.²⁷ However, Baduarius, too late and too weak to be effective, was beaten and killed by the Lombards. Sisinnius of Susa may have been involved in this disastrous campaign for after this time there is no record of him in the city which was afterwards controlled by the Burgundians. In fact there is no evidence of relations between Guntram and the empire except for the mysterious embassy of Count Syagrius ten years later.

Coincidental with these events Sigebert sent two men, Warinan and Firminus, as a legation to Constantinople to seek peace. They left Gaul in 571 and returned the next year.²⁹ If they were to simply conclude a peace treaty with the Empire then the mission should be regarded as a success.³⁰ However, if this embassy was to arrange a compact against the Avars, as Professor Walter Goffart of the University of Toronto proposes, it was unnecessary.³¹ Sigebert had during the previous decade reached an understanding with

Baian so he would not need a treaty with the empire to this end. He would surely be concerned with the Lombards and although Guntram was holding them in check he could not risk fighting with a foreign opponent while the situation at home was unstable. Already once before Sigebert had been forced to confront an enemy from outside, the Avars, while Chilperic took advantage of his absence to take some of his cities.

Walter Goffart suggests that letter 48 is relevant to this embassy but simply because other legations are not recorded during this period is not evidence enough to conclude a connection.³² We know that Sigebert sent another ambassador but unfortunately our source does not reveal his missions.³³ Letter 48 concerns the hoped-for defection of a Lombard duke and consequent common Frankish and Byzantine support. Sigebert's internal difficulties, his incipient contact with the Emperor and the complexities of a joint operation indicate a date later than 571-572³⁴ perhaps during his son's reign possibly the winter of 580-581.³⁵

CHAPTER IV

[marigenae] pereunt per multa vulnera fratres
civique cadunt acie.¹

A year later before the death of Sigebert the royal brothers on the instigation of Chilperic began to quarrel and then struggle for control of their patrimony. The sons of Chilperic ravaged the lands of Sigebert even though one of them had sworn an oath of fealty to his uncle.² Guntram allied himself with Chilperic at first since he could not come to terms with Sigebert who in turn called upon the Transrhenish tribes to dispatch their warriors. Once reinforced the Austrasian army marched against Chilperic. Guntram became afraid of the strength of the advancing throng consequently he deserted Chilperic for Sigebert and facilitated his progress across the Seine.³ Chilperic forsaken then retreated and sued for peace allowing that the cities taken by his sons would be returned to Sigebert. The men from across the Rhine had expected, and no doubt had been promised plunder but without fighting the chance was missed so they began to display their discontent by ravaging the lands around Paris. To his credit Sigebert by his personal authority and quick action was able to control his rampageous allies and compel them to return across the river. His savage auxiliaries certainly increased his military effectiveness but at the cost of what discipline a Merovingian army could muster.

The following year Chilperic and Guntram once again formed a compact against Sigebert.⁴ The events conformed closely to those of the previous campaign: Chilperic ravaged the lands of Sigebert, the Transrhenish tribes were summoned and Guntram again abandoned Chilperic. Two of Sigebert's dukes, Godigisel and Guntram Boso, forced a battle with Theudebert, one of Chilperic's sons, and killed him. After this, as before, Chilperic retreated. The outcome of the civil wars between Sigebert, Guntram and their half-brother Chilperic during this two year period was guided by the character of each brother. Chilperic was the agitator, ready for quick profit but with the first reverse prompt to retreat and then await another chance for advantage.⁵ Guntram, a good and kindly but timid king, was no warrior and left the field to his generals.⁶ Sigebert though was a fighter, cunning and astute, the only brother with true martial capabilities.⁷

On Chilperic's retreat Sigebert moved westwards and sent troops ahead to besiege Tournai, the refuge of his troublesome brother. The advancing King first stopped at Vitry to be acclaimed by some former supporters of Chilperic. Agents of Fredegund, Chilperic's poisonous queen, were waiting for him. They approached as if to ask for a favour and stabbed him with their iron knives.⁸ At this time Sigebert's wife, Queen Brunhild, and their young son Childebert were at Paris waiting for Sigebert when Chilperic arrived and took the Queen into custody. Young Childebert was saved by Duke Gundovald who spirited him off to Metz where he was hailed as future king.

Chilperic appropriated Brunhild's treasure and had her sent into captivity at Rouen. In the strange history of the Merovingians one of the more bizarre events now took place.

A son of Chilperic, Merovech, after disobeying orders to march to Poitiers arrived at Rouen and married his aunt Brunhild.⁹ Chilperic was furious, not only was his son in defiance of the law but now Brunhild was part of his immediate family and the wife of his heir.¹⁰ Merovech was imprisoned but escaped and took sanctuary in Tours where he came into contact with Guntram Boso, a sometimes Austrasian commander but now apparently an agent for Fredegund.¹¹ Brunhild had escaped as well and now Merovech managing to avoid the traps set for him by both Chilperic and Fredegund journeyed to Metz to be with his new wife. Brunhild no doubt considered the marriage a convenience, a temporary haven from the dangerous schemes of her enemies so that Merovech was not needed after she was safe in Metz and he found no welcome when he arrived. Her energies could now be devoted to Childebert's succession. Eventually the unfortunate Merovech was ambushed and cornered by some people of Champagne and rather than surrender he accepted death at the hands of a servant. The ambushade may well have been set by Guntram Boso on Fredegund's behalf so that only one of Chilperic's sons by a former wife, Audovera, was still alive.¹²

A year before the death of Merovech, that is in 577, Guntram and Childebert met at Pompierre where the young King was adopted by his uncle. With this alliance completed they sent legates to Chilperic demanding that he restore territory unlawfully seized but he ignored their threats without consequence. Childebert II was only seven years old on his adoption and at the Austrasian court he was watched over by Gogo, his nuritor or governor, who controlled the affairs of state on his behalf.¹³ Brunhild had little authority at this time since her son was still a minor and the nobles were not yet strong

enough to usurp Gogo's power. Now there was relative calm in Gaul until the eventful year of 581 when the alliance was broken and reversed.

On Gogo's death and the appointment of a weaker man in his place the nobles seized the regency.¹⁴ Brunhild had not the power to stop them. Her only supporter, Duke Lupus of Champagne, was attacked by Dukes Ursio and Berthefried and forced to take refuge with Guntram until Childebert should come of age in four years time.¹⁵ Following this Childebert renounced his compact with Guntram and formed an alliance with Chilperic. At least two of the nobles at the Austrasian court were foreign agents. As mentioned, Guntram Boso had worked for Fredegund and Bishop Egidius of Rheims had received money from Chilperic and was known to be a favourite of Fredegund.¹⁶ They may have instigated the new alliance to increase Chilperic's ascendancy basing their arguments on the division of Marseilles, half of which should have fallen to Childebert on his father's death but instead was turned over to Guntram who held on to it.¹⁷ It does not follow, however, that the agents would have a common purpose, the aims of Fredegund and Chilperic were not similar by any means.

By this time Chilperic's three sons had all met their deaths: first Theudebert, then Merovech and finally, Clovis was killed by an unknown assassin while a captive.¹⁸ Each one had been born to Audovera; each one would die through the agency of Fredegund. The apparent end of Chilperic's line and the enterprise of the Austrasian aristocracy had provoked a reversal in Merovingian politics.¹⁹ Chilperic drew closer to his nephew as Childebert's nobles pushed the young King from one uncle to the other.

The same year Mummolus, the great Burgundian general, renounced Guntram and fled with his family and retainers to the Austrasian city of Avignon.²⁰ In this defection and in the new alliance Paul Goubert sees the influence of Tiberius through Chilperic's embassy of 581.²¹ There is no evidence, however, in the sources for Byzantine interference in Merovingian affairs by means of this embassy. There is some evidence though for conjecture that the defection of Mummolus may be connected to the earlier embassy to Pamphronius in 577. The last time Mummolus fought for Guntram was against Chilperic's commander Desiderius in 576.²² After this there was a period of relative calm, as mentioned above, until 581 when Mummolus deserted. Why would he leave his successful career in Burgundy for uncertainty in Austrasia? Pamphronius had been given money by Tiberius to bribe some Frankish dukes to attack the Lombards.²³ Now Guntram had no interest in Italian affairs so it is possible that Mummolus, a leader with previous success against the Lombards, was induced by Byzantine gold to defect to the Austrasians who were more likely to attempt expeditions across the Alps.

Indeed one of the letters may relate to Austrasian diplomatic intervention in Italy during this period. Letter 48 is written by Gogo in the name of the King to Grasulf, the Lombard duke of Friuli. As mentioned above, Walter Goffart contends that this letter is connected with the embassy of Warinar and Firminus sent by Sigebert in 571 to Constantinople.²⁴ As Professor Eugen Ewig of Bonn University points out, however, it is unlikely that a Lombard duke would consider treason while Alboin was still alive and Austrasian politics such as they were at the time would prevent Sigebert from considering an Italian adventure.²⁵ Ernst Stein places the letter between 575, the date when Gogo

became Childebert's governor, and 581, the date of Gogo's death.²⁶ The latter date is generally accepted because of the authorship of the letter and the former is justified but for another reason than Gogo's governorship. Gogo could have written the letter before 575 on behalf of Sigebert but he wouldn't have written it to Grasulf. In 575 Gisulf, Grasulf's brother,²⁷ was still Duke of Friuli.²⁸ Shortly after Alboin had led his people into Italy he left his nephew Gisulf in charge of the fortress at Forum Iulii.²⁹ Since Gisulf was still alive in 575 and Gogo died in 581 the letter was written sometime between these dates.

During this period there were two embassies from Rome to Constantinople. The first, as seen, in 577 was that of Pamphronius who returned with gold to bribe the Lombards but failing that to purchase Frankish intervention.³⁰ Chramnichis, a Frankish duke, may have received some of this money also as a bribe to invade Tridentum.³¹ The second Roman embassy in 579 received assurances from Tiberius that he would approach the Lombards by promising them great rewards.³² The Lombards were without a king at this time and their dukes could be cultivated individually. One of the more important was the duke of Friuli who controlled the land route into Italy from the east. Letter 48 is written by Gogo, as an intermediary for the Empire, in the name of King Childebert to convince Grasulf to defect.³³

Gogo writes³⁴ that Grasulf's relation Billulf has reported the duke's proposition to consider an offer. An imperial embassy then on the way to Italy on arriving should be asked to continue on to Metz so that arrangements may be made. Grasulf for his assistance may accept either land or money as payment. If the scheme were to be carried

out as planned peace would be established. If, however, Grasulf should falter let him be reassured that the natural order of things should ensure success. When the imperial legates arrive they ought to receive an escort because they must travel overland since keen winter would make a journey by water difficult. The Emperor had made it quite clear to Austrasian envoys that any delay would be unacceptable. Gogo continues, explaining to Grasulf that if previously we reacted somewhat slowly³⁵ do not hesitate for now we are ready to rise and join with you to meet the enemy. Hopefully this plan will be received courteously and we will number among the Emperor's sons.

Grasulf finally did not forsake his comrades but remained an enemy of the Empire as reported in letter 41. The Byzantines could not buy Grasulf, he remained implacable even though tempted by Gogo.³⁶ The Roman envoys probably returned in late 579 or early 580 followed by the imperial embassy referred to in the letter. If so, letter 48 would have likely been written during the winter of 580/581.

As remarked, Chilperic's legates returned from Constantinople during 581 with presents from the Emperor.³⁷ They probably also brought back news of an exile who claimed to be a son of Lothar.³⁸ Now that Chilperic had no heir and Childebert was still a minor the Austrasian nobles considered that if they could remove Guntram their plan to diminish royal authority could move forward. Their base in Austrasia was secure for Wandeln, the new governor, seems not to have enforced his prerogative as did his

predecessor. The new treaty with Chilperic would devolve his kingdom in time to Childebert and hence to his protectors or more precisely his handlers. Only the King of Burgundy stood in their way and now a pretender, a man who would owe his position to the nobles, was waiting in Constantinople to be called home.

Chapter V

Gundovald, claiming to be a son of Lothar, but having been renounced by his father made his way eventually to Narses in Italy and then to Constantinople.¹ One of the methods of Byzantine diplomatic policy at this time was to shelter relations of foreign kings in the event they may be rendered useful in future dealings with their homeland. While in the east he probably would have met Albsuinda, the daughter of Alboin by Chlothsind, the daughter of Lothar. The young princess had been sent to the capital by Longinus, the Prefect of Ravenna, in 572.² Assuming that Gundovald's claim was valid then Albsuinda would be his niece.³ However this connection was not exploited even though the support of a grand daughter of Lothar would have strengthened Gundovald's contention. Perhaps the Emperor wanted to use the Lombard connection of his captive directly to influence affairs in Italy. If he did so, however, there is no record of it.

Guntram Boso arrived in Constantinople in 582 and invited Gundovald to return to Gaul at the behest of the Austrasian aristocracy.⁴ After making his visitor swear oaths in twelve different sacred places Gundovald accepted and left for home that summer supplied with funds from the treasury of Tiberius.⁵ Walter Goffart assumes that Gundovald was accompanied by his sons since they later turn up in Spain.⁶ It seems likely, however, that Tiberius in contracting and financing this undertaking would like some control over the pretender should his mission succeed for the Byzantines were well aware of the perfidy of the Franks.⁷ Accordingly, the Emperor may have sent them to his generals in Spain as

hostages where their near presence would afford inducement for their father to follow imperial direction.

Gundovald landed at Marseilles and was received by Bishop Theodore who supplied him with transport to Avignon so that he could join up with Mummolus. While the hopeful upstart was on his way, having left his treasure with the Bishop because of its bulk, Guntram Boso arrested Theodore and seized Gundovald's fortune with the connivance of a local duke. The reason for this sudden duplicity was that Boso had received some important news: a son, called Theuderic, had been born to Fredegund.⁸ Now that Chilperic had an heir his succession treaty with Childebert was invalid and the nobles were forced to abandon their plans for the meantime. Theodore was charged with the crime of introducing a pretender, an imperial agent, into the kingdom. The Bishop claimed he was acting on the instructions of the nobles and after interrogation by King Guntram was left in prison. Gundovald hearing of these developments retired to an island off the coast to await events.

Shortly afterwards Guntram's men captured Boso who then claimed that Mummolus as well was guilty of receiving the intruder. The King angry over his former general's defection was willing to believe the Duke and accepted one of his sons as a hostage while Boso then moved to besiege Avignon with a Burgundian force. Childebert realizing that one of his commanders was acting for Guntram sent an emissary to settle the situation. Boso was forced to retire and Mummolus allowed to remain in the city.⁹

Now that Mummolus was secure again in Avignon Gundovald left his island and joined the general in his city. Later Desiderius arrived with the news that Chilperic had been assassinated.¹⁰ The three rebels then travelled to the district of Limoges where Gundovald was acclaimed king.¹¹ Since the initial plan had faltered on the birth of a son to Chilperic now with the death of the King himself the scheme could proceed again. It would seem that with such advantage to be gained through the assassination it is feasible that the nobles may have been involved directly.¹²

Childebert sent an embassy to Guntram but unwisely included as his ambassadors Bishop Egidius and Duke Guntram Boso with the result that the meeting failed to achieve an understanding between uncle and nephew.¹³ In the meantime Gundovald demanded loyalty from the cities of Guntram and Chilperic but allegiance to Childebert of the cities that had belonged to his father.¹⁴ This in part gives rise to the speculation that Gundovald was supported by Brunhild because Guntram had seized some towns in the south that had previously belonged to Sigebert.¹⁵ As well Guntram had sent a letter in Brunhild's name to Gundovald hoping to deceive the pretender, the King at any rate believed that she supported Gundovald.¹⁶ Soon Gundovald was pursued by a Burgundian army and Guntram and Childebert met to settle their differences.¹⁷ The towns in question were returned to Childebert, he was made the heir of Guntram and warned about some men at his court, particularly Egidius.¹⁸

Having lost most of his treasure to Boso, Gundovald needed to raise enough money to support an army. At the time when Chilperic was killed Desiderius was travelling with

the King's daughter Rigunth to Spain where she was to be married. As soon as the news of Chilperic's death reached Desiderius, he immediately stole her treasure and, as seen, shortly thereafter appeared in Avignon among the conspirators.¹⁹ The stolen funds were used to finance the campaign and the gold was even minted into coins.²⁰

Eventually Guntram's army caught and besieged Gundovald in Comminges where he was still supported by Mummolus but now abandoned by Boso and Desiderius. As the siege progressed without success, Guntram's general, Leudegisel, sent agents to suborn Mummolus with false promises. He believed their lies and delivered Gundovald to be murdered.²¹ Mummolus then went back with Leudegisel to his camp where he in turn was killed on the orders of Guntram who remembered well his disaffection.²²

The adventure of Gundovald ended with a major change in Merovingian politics: the renewal of the alliance between Guntram and Childebert, the death of Chilperic and diminution of aristocratic power in Austrasia. As well, the imperial effort to instigate Merovingian intrusion into Italy through a pretender was prevented but events in Spain would give the Emperor more effective means to influence the Franks to conform with imperial plans for Italy.

Across the Alps, Alboin, the Lombard king who had led his people into Italy, was murdered at the provocation of his Gepid wife, Rosamund. Cleph was named king but he in turn met with an assassin two years later in 574.²³ After this the Lombard dukes decided not to appoint another king and each one would base his authority on a major

city.²⁴ During this period the Romans were hard pressed by the depredations of the dukes so that in 580 Pope Pelagius II wrote to Bishop Aunacharius of Auxerre asking that he use any influence he had with the kings of the Franks to involve them in Italian affairs.²⁵ Nothing came of this appeal and although coincidentally a Frankish duke, Chramnichis, raided Tridentum this incursion did nothing to affect Lombard power.²⁶

With the situation becoming ever more critical in Italy Pelagius wrote in 584 to his apocrisarius, Gregory, at Constantinople instructing him to appeal to the Emperor for help.²⁷ During this year Childebert received 50,000 solidi as an inducement to enter Italy.²⁸ Diehl, Hodgkin and Bury accept the evidence that Maurice had sent an embassy with the money.²⁹ Eugen Ewig reports that the subsidy payment was received from Tiberius and Walter Goffart writes that there is no evidence for an embassy from Maurice during this time.³⁰ Assuming then that the money didn't come from Maurice there are two other possibilities. Goffart argues that Guntram Boso had brought the money from Tiberius on his return from Constantinople and later turned it over to Brunhild. This seems quite out of character for a Frankish duke particularly Boso.³¹ After he stole much of Gundovald's treasure he went to Clermont-Ferrand to visit his home and then went on to see the King.³² Since there is no evidence that he turned over any money to the court it is possible that he hid the treasure in his house.³³ If this is so and it seems likely, and Maurice did not send the money then there is only one other possibility.

As seen, six years earlier Pamphronius had been given 3,000 pounds of gold by Tiberius to bribe the Lombard and coerce the Franks.³⁴ If minted this amount of gold

could produce over 200,000 solidi.³⁵ Tiberius was generous in his subsidies but Maurice on the other hand was averse to making payments to the barbarians.³⁶ On account of this unwillingness the citizens of Rome may have sent 50,000 solidi in his name to Childebert for now their position had become even more desperate with the elevation of a new Lombard king.³⁷ Ducal orderlessness was replaced with a strong and affirmed authority able to coordinate and concentrate Lombard arms against Rome.

Childebert was fourteen years old at this time and yet the young king himself led the first of four Austrasian invasions of Italy.³⁸ No doubt the decision was not his but that of his mother Brunhild for news had reached the court that her daughter and grandson were in imperial custody.³⁹ Realizing that any hope for the return of Ingund and Athanagild rested with the Emperor she convinced some loyal dukes to assist in the campaign.⁴⁰ The Austrasian army on arriving in Italy found that the Lombards had shut themselves up in fortified cities and refused challenges to battle. Having neither the means nor inclination for siegecraft the Franks accepted tribute and marched home with Lombard treasure. The Lombards were relieved, the Franks pleased and the Emperor greatly annoyed.

The next year Maurice demanded the return of the 50,000 solidi, money which had come from the imperial treasury whether he had sent it or not. Now Childebert came of age and rather than forfeit the money and because news had reached Metz that his sister had died in Carthage and his nephew had been sent to Constantinople, the King ordered a combined army of Franks and Alamanni into Italy.⁴¹ The invasion stalled when the various

commanders quarrelled and could not coordinate an effective operation. After this confused failure the new Exarch of Ravenna, Smaragdus, accepted a peace treaty with the new Lombard king, Autharis, for a period of three years.⁴² Now diplomatic activity between Metz and Constantinople intensified because of Austrasian apprehension for little Athanagild and the continuing imperial resolve to rid Italy of the Lombards.

Chapter VI

As part of his plan for the reconquest of the west, Justinian had sent his general Liberius to Spain during a period of civil war there to support one of the claimants, Athanagild. However, once victory was proclaimed the imperial army remained and captured a number of cities before being contained in Murcia and Andalusia which the Empire controlled into the next century.¹ Athanagild had two daughters: the younger, Brunhild, had married Sigebert in 566 and the elder, Galswinth, married Chilperic the next year. The King of Spain was content to thus have a familial connection with his unpredictable and expansive eastern neighbours but he died shortly afterwards and was succeeded by his brother Leuwigild.² The successor married his sister-in-law, Goiswinth, who was the mother of the two royal sisters now in Gaul.

The deceiver Chilperic had married the unfortunate Galswinth only for her dowry and her position for he was jealous of Sigebert and his queen. Even so he soon tired of his Visigothic consort and renewed his liaison with the notorious Fredegund. Galswinth pleaded to be sent home pledging to leave her treasure but was cruelly killed in her chamber on the instructions of her implacable husband.³ Brunhild on hearing the news was consumed with anger and demanded revenge so beginning a three generation feud.⁴ Guntram intervened and calmed her wrath with the award of Galswinth's morgengabe as recompense for the crime. The morgengabe was a gift given by a Merovingian to his wife the morning after the wedding night.⁵ This offering comprised the cities of Bordeaux,

Limoges, Cahors, Lescar and Cieutat and the revenues generated by them.⁶ Brunhild lamented the loss of her sister but soon another connection would be established with her homeland when Leuvigild asked that Ingund marry his son, Hermangild.

Ingund was the daughter of Sigebert and Brunhild and sister to Childebert.⁷ She travelled to Spain in order to join Hermangild and arrived to the rough treatment of Goiswinth, a fanatic Arian, who was determined to convert the young Catholic. Resolutely Ingund resisted so that Leuvigild in order to preserve family peace sent the young couple away from his court at Toledo to Seville.⁸ Here the impenitent queen converted her husband from the heretical belief of his family. Now Hermangild rebelled and allied himself with the imperialists who at this time had reinforced their position in Spain with an invading army.⁹ Leuvigild, however, had bribed the imperial commander and suddenly abandoned by his false and former allies, Hermangild was captured and sent into exile. Ingund and their little son Athanagild then fell into the hands of the imperial army. They were either captured or left in imperial custody by Leuvigild or Hermangild himself.¹⁰ Since shortly thereafter Leuvigild tried to force the imperial commander to return the captives it seems unlikely he would have given them over in the first place.¹¹ Hermangild may have been caught so completely off guard by imperial treachery that he had felt his family would be safe with the imperial army but it seems likely that they would have either remained with his own followers and had been captured while fleeing to Gaul or the imperial commander in return for his apparent support had demanded the two as hostages.¹²

Back in Gaul, Ingund's brother Childebert had planned an attack against the Visigoths to avenge the wrong to his sister and indeed Leuwigild did expect such an attempt.¹³ However it was Guntram, Ingund's uncle, who would be most threatening to Spain. Eventually in 585 Hermangild was murdered by Sisbert, an agent of Leuwigild. Although John of Biclar does not expressly state that Sisbert was an agent of the King, Gregory of Tours writes that the crime was committed on the orders of Leuwigild.¹⁴

The political struggle between Hermangild and his father had the aspects of a religious war.¹⁵ Hermangild's mother, Theodosia, had been a Catholic, sister of the famous Leander, Bishop of Seville.¹⁶ When Leuwigild married the Arian enthusiast Goiswinth, the Visigothic court became rigidly Arian. Hermangild's apostasy was so serious that the son feared even to meet with his father: "He is hostile to me because I have become Catholic."¹⁷ Naturally the young king would attract much support, he could become the hope of the Catholic mass of the population.¹⁸ Leuwigild feared this attraction which would weaken his authority so he commanded the execution of his first son. The next year the King fell ill and died leaving his throne to his second son, Recared.¹⁹ The new king doubted the religion of his father and called for a debate between the bishops of the two sects.²⁰ Convinced of the equality of the Trinity he ended the contest by accepting the belief of his murdered brother. The assassin Sisbert was then executed.²¹

On hearing that her daughter and grandson had been sent to Africa by the imperial commander in Spain, Brunhild appealed to the Austrasian nobles for assistance but was rebuked.²² It was left to Guntram, as mentioned above, to take the fight against the

Visigoths. His first attempt ended in disaster. Guntram had planned to send his army into Septimania with the further objective of pushing from there directly into Spain.²³ Unfortunately his troops became disorganized and fell to plundering the countryside which of course angered the populace so that they supported Visigothic ambushes on the Burgundians.²⁴ Guntram was furious and harangued his men on the evils of turning from the old ways²⁵ while Recared seizing the moment counter-attacked, forcing the angry Guntram to reinforce his western frontier. In spite of his success in driving back Guntram's invaders, Recared continually sent legates seeking peace. Fredegund was in secret communication with the Visigoths and her assassins with their envenomed knives made attempts on both Childebert and Guntram trying to upset the political balance in Gaul for her son's advantage.²⁶ She failed and in the year 587 the resolute Recared had made peace with Childebert but still Guntram refused even to receive his envoys.²⁷ The Burgundian king was steadfast in his opposition to Spain seemingly on account of the treatment accorded his niece but as well his resistance was founded on the Visigothic occupation of Septimania. Guntram regarded Septimania as part of Gaul and again he sent an army to attack the Visigoths but with the same inglorious results. This time he blamed Childebert's alliance with Spain for the failure.²⁸ Ingund had died at Carthage in 585 and her little son Athanagild was sent on to the Emperor Maurice.²⁹ The relations between Metz and Constantinople for the next five years would turn on the captivity of the small royal lad from Seville.³⁰

CHAPTER VII

In late 584 or early 585 Childebert received a letter from Maurice written the first of September 584 in reply to correspondence delivered earlier by Iocundus and Cothro.¹ It was general practice that after foreign legates had been received and any correspondence accepted a reply would be drafted and taken back by the same embassy.² Letter 42 may have returned with Childebert's envoys or arrived with the imperial legates who had demanded the return of the 50,000 solidi. Maurice lectures the young Childebert to simply accept friendship with Constantinople and not to debate and argue with the bluster of youth when his representatives could serve more useful a purpose. As well as letters ambassadors often also recounted verbal messages.³ In the address or greeting (*salutatio*) of the letter Maurice uses all the titles of an emperor who expects the deference of a king who in turn is greeted simply as *vir gloriosus*. This address is rather ordinary, the Emperor does not show him much regard by using a title of such wide application, formerly used for high functionaries of the Roman state.⁴ Of course Maurice's annoyance with Childebert may be reflected in the common address. In the conclusion of the letter, he terms himself as father to the king; the form of diplomatic adoption as seen before with Justinian and Theudebert.⁵

Letter 42 mentions two ambassadors: Iocurdus, a bishop and Cothro, a chamberlain. These men represent the two types of envoy employed by the King, the ecclesiastic and the aristocratic.⁶ They were not professional ambassadors but were

available for foreign missions as the need arose.⁷ Their major responsibility was to carry letters and return with any reply.⁸ Ambassadors were well received along the lines of etiquette practised at Constantinople.⁹ Of course they were equipped within the limited means of a Merovingian court and people along the way were required to facilitate their journey.¹⁰ The letters would have been written at court by scribes or clerks especially recruited for the job from the Roman population of Burgundy or perhaps even Italy.¹¹ Some of these clerks were no doubt ecclesiastics.¹² Gogo, Childebert's governor, is known to have written four letters¹³ having received training in rhetoric which was the basis for good correspondence.¹⁴

In early 586 an embassy set out for Constantinople carrying three letters concerning the captivity of young Athanagild.¹⁵ Twentieth century French scholar Paul Goubert includes letter 47 in this group but as Eugen Ewig contends there is no real evidence to support this supposition.¹⁶ Nineteenth century French scholar Georges Reverdy includes letter 46 with this embassy but this is not supported by either Goubert or Ewig.¹⁷ Thus the letters carried by Babo and Gripo were 43, 44 and 45. The identity of Babo is unknown¹⁸ but Gripo is mentioned in letter 25 as a sword-bearer and in Gregory of Tours and Paul the Deacon.¹⁹ Since Gripo is an officer of the court, probably a duke, the unknown Babo may have been an ecclesiastic since Childebert liked to include bishops in his embassies.²⁰

Letter 43 is addressed to the eldest son of the emperor, Theodosius.²¹ After an opening (exordium) to a fellow Christian that brothers in Christ should share equally in divine compassion Childebert states that the common interest of both states is peace. He

follows with the purpose of the letter in the statement (narratio) that his nephew is now in Constantinople separated from his relations and argues (confirmatio) that Theodosius intercede to unite Athanagild with his uncle. Throughout this section the writer appeals to the tender feelings of the reader, a rhetorical device (commiseratio) used commonly in the conclusion of an argument. Each letter uses certain rhetorical devices mingled with Christian supplication.

Brunhild addresses Constantina²² wife of Maurice and daughter of Tiberius, in letter 44. It opens with the announcement of Childebert's accession usually however proclaimed by the king himself.²³ She mentions the unity of the Christian people and then directly appeals to the feelings of the Augusta as a mother. Brunhild urges her to think of her own dear son Theodosius and pleads that Athanagild may be a comfort in her loss of Ingund. Finally, she proposes that Constantina will achieve fame and the two states will become closer on the return of the captive. Certainly some of the personality of the author is reflected in this letter.²⁴

Letter 45 is addressed to the Patriarch John Nesteutes of Constantinople or John the Faster.²⁵ The exordium of this letter is simply an encomium. The Patriarch's fame is so great it has even travelled through Germany into Gaul.²⁶ This is followed by an entreaty to God and then by the substance of the letter, again the captivity of Athanagild. The appeal here is not as effusive as the previous two, particularly 44, but the request for his return is made with reference to John's position in the Church. As the vicar of Christ it is his duty to assist and furthermore ensure concord between the two states.

During this same year of 586 in order to support the Austrasian claim on behalf of Athanagild, Guntram sent Count Syagrius to Constantinople to press that claim.²⁷ The embassy of Syagrius achieved nothing but his personal promotion to patrician at Constantinople a fact that dismayed and annoyed Guntram.²⁸ Envoys from Spain arrived to interview Guntram concerning peace between the Goths and Franks but were refused and sent on to Childebert. Guntram was resolute in his refusal to deal with the Goths ostensibly because of their treatment of Ingund. However, Childebert and Brunhild were ready to listen. In the meantime Recared had converted to Catholicism and now the Goths offered ten thousand solidi as a pledge for peace to Childebert.²⁹ For these reasons Childebert accepted a treaty with the Goths but concerning the question of the proposed marriage of Chlodosind to Recared he deferred to his uncle. Although she had been promised to Autharis, the Lombard king, the new political and religious situation changed her marriage plans. Guntram finally agreed to the Spanish union but he would not involve himself in Italy fearing disease for the Franks often found the Italian climate unhealthy.³⁰

CHAPTER VIII

The truce between Autharis and Smaragdus ended in 588 and immediately Childebert became involved again in Italy. In letter 25 Childebert refers to an imperial embassy and in letter 26 Brunhild mentions a letter from Maurice. There is no reference to this embassy in other sources, however, Gregory of Tours reports that Childebert asked for Guntram's help in an Italian campaign at this time.¹ It is probable that this imperial embassy returned to Constantinople carrying letters 25 and 26 from Childebert and Brunhild respectively. Letter 25 is an introduction and the credentials of the embassy Childebert proposes to send to Maurice. He addresses the Emperor as father, opens with a profession of unity, reports the arrival of the Emperor's legates and notes his intention to send an embassy in return. He introduces Ennodius, called Sennodius, the optimate, by Thomas Hodgkin² who used Troya's Codice Diplomatico Langobardo as his source which is equivalent to Bouquet's Variorum Epistolae concerning letter 25 in Gundlach (letter 49 in Bouquet). The passage concerning Ennodius reads:

Adeo illustri viro Sennodio optimate...

Paul Goubert contends that the S in Sennodius represents Sanctus and thus Ennodius is a bishop.³ Wilhelm Gundlach's edition in the MGH reads:

...adeo inlustro viro, sancto Ennodio, optimates...

and in his article Die Sammlung der Epistolae Austrasicae refers to Ennodius as a bishop.⁴ Ganshof calls Ennodius a duke⁵ citing Gregory of Tours as his source but there is no reason to assume the Ennodius the legate is the same man referred to by Gregory. Since the other ambassadors are court officials it is likely that at least one ecclesiastic would be included in the mission because of the religious connection, the common Christianity of Austrasia and the Empire. The other members of this embassy were: Radan, a chamberlain; Eusebius, a notary; and the sword-bearer Gripo, an experienced diplomat.

Letter 26 from Brunhild to Maurice communicates the arrival of his envoys and the letter they carried. She goes on to report that their proposals were accepted and through her letter declares that the alliance is affirmed. On account of this, letter 26 probably went back with the imperial legates as well. Together the letters proclaim an affiliation in peace with the Empire. In the address of letter 26 Brunhild greets Maurice as father and this is no doubt due to the importance of kinship to the Franks and she considers the Emperor as father not only to the King but the entire family. Most writers assign these letters to the Austrasian embassy of 588 carried in a bundle of fifteen, letters 25 to 39.⁶ Hodgkin contends that they carried sixteen adding letter 43.⁷ Eugen Ewig assigns letters 26 to 39 to these legates, letter 25 having been previously sent with imperial envoys.⁸ However letters 25 and 26 are so closely related as to be a pair and would probably have been sent together with Maurice's ambassadors and letters 27 to 39 sent later with Childebert's embassy.

This embassy left in early 588⁹ carrying fourteen letters addressed to Maurice and his relations, imperial and church officials, Sicilian patricians and young Athanagild. The letters are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Maurice | : 47 |
| 2. The family of the Emperor | : 29, 30, 33, 37 |
| 3. Imperial officials | : 34, 35, 36, 37 |
| 4. Ecclesiastics | : 31, 32, 33 |
| 5. Patricians | : 38, 39 |
| 6. Athanagild | : 27, 28 |

Letters 33 and 37 fall into two categories because Domitian is a bishop as well as a cousin of Maurice and Pauli is a senator and the Emperor's father.

Letter 29 is addressed to Anastasia, the widow of Tiberius and mother of Constantina.¹⁰ Letter 30 is without an address in Gundlach's edition but Bouquet presents the two letters as one in letter 53. Gundlach and Reverdy propose that they are the same letter with different wording.¹¹ Ewig and Goubert differ and assign one letter to Anastasia and the other to Constantina.¹² Goubert further argues that they are constructed according to a formula and so appear alike.¹³ Both letters seek the establishment of peace between Kingdom and Empire. Indeed the letters are so alike it is difficult to determine the address. Letter 29, however, is somewhat more specific naming Childebert and requesting that his ambassadors be kindly received. The letter is apparently addressed to an empress. Letter 30 is written in general terms, in such a way that it could simply be a polite note to

the mother-in-law of the Emperor for as Paul Goubert notes Brunhild may have been in contact with Anastasia when Tiberius ruled.¹⁴ Thus letter 29 may be addressed to Constantina and letter 30 to her mother.

Letter 33 is addressed to Domitian,¹⁵ a cousin and friend of the Emperor who was appointed Bishop of Melitene in Cappadocia.¹⁶ Childebert must have been informed by previous envoys, probably Gripo and Babo, that Domitian, as Maurice's confidant, could be expected to exert some influence with regard to the policy of his friend. The letter opens with mention of the Bishop's fame then asks for his assistance in aiding the ambassadors so that each side may profit through an alliance.

Childebert writes to Paul,¹⁷ the father of the emperor and princeps senatus,¹⁸ in letter 37. Again the purpose of the communication is harmony and peace between the two powers. The King flatters Paul as the father of an emperor and appreciates his influence on his son proposing that he promote the cause of peace at the imperial court. Childebert and Brunhild obviously held a good opinion of the imperial family and their position to influence the Emperor.¹⁹

Letter 34 is addressed to Theodore, magister officiorum, from Childebert. There is little doubt regarding his title²⁰ with only Georges Reverdy dissenting from the generally held opinion that Theodore was indeed Master of the Offices, an imperial functionary.²¹ Reverdy contends that he was Master of the Militia.²² He was probably the son of a patrician who dealt with imperial diplomatic affairs at this time.²³ Even though the name

and office are not unique this particular man may be mentioned by Pope Gregory I in a letter written in 598 to John the Bishop of Syracuse naming a Theodore, magister, in connection with his holding up the loan of ten pounds of gold.²⁴ Childebert refers to the authority of the office, an office also of trust and influence, which would allow Theodore easily to appear before and petition the Emperor for peace on behalf of the Franks.

Letter 35 is addressed to John,²⁵ the Quaestor, from Childebert. In 591 Pope Gregory wrote a letter addressed as well to a John, an exconsul, a patrician and quaestor, obviously a man of some experience and influence at the imperial court and likely the same man as addressed by Childebert.²⁶ The King thanks John with the usual flattery for his anticipated assistance in preparing an audience with the Emperor for his ambassadors. He writes that though John's help peace may be cultivated and grow and endure for the benefit of the descendants of each side. As seen with respect to the imperial family certain officials such as John and Theodore were believed to exert much influence on imperial policy by the Austrasian court.²⁷

Letter 36 is addressed to Magnus or Megas the Curator from Childebert. Reverdy accepts that the word megantis is an adjective and thus the letter is addressed to the great curator,²⁸ while Bury contends that the word is a name.²⁹ Goubert proposes that the address during a later transcription may have been altered and that Magnus does indeed represent a proper name.³⁰ Thomas Hodgkin is unsure.³¹ A Count Magnus is mentioned by Menander³² as a commander of an eastern army during the early 570's. This man after his military service may have taken up less onerous duties at the imperial court as curator.

Childebert writes that he recognizes the authority of Magnus and respects his standing at court so that with a word from him to the Emperor he could assist the welfare of both peoples in the promotion of peace.

Letters 38 and 39 were delivered to the Patricians Venantius and his wife Italica in Syracuse on the island of Sicily. These two must have had considerable influence even at such a distance with the Emperor to be asked by Childebert to support his ambassadors on their mission to Constantinople. Later Pope Gregory would write to them³³ indicating that their position and prestige was known at Rome. Venantius had been a monk who then renounced his vows and returned to secular life. He married Italica and after an attempt by Gregory to convince Venantius to return to the Church the Pope remained concerned with the affairs of this family.³⁴ Childebert's ambassadors would have probably received some advice from Syracuse for it would have been in the interest of Venantius to remain friendly with the Franks since the Arian Lombards were just across the straits of Messina. Georges Reverdy contends that letter 38 is addressed to the Exarch of Italy³⁵ but this is disproved by Goubert³⁶ and it is generally accepted that Childebert addressed this letter to Italica.³⁷

Two letters in this bundle are addressed to Athanagild directly from his grandmother and uncle. Letter 27 although addressed to the little captive is meant of course for the eyes of the Emperor as a plaintive appeal from his grandmother.³⁸ If she had written it in dactylic hexameter one might term it elegiac. She laments her lost opportunity for happiness and sadly hopes that in his eyes she might remember her

daughter. In letter 29 instead of the solicitude of a grandmother Childebert writes with the concern of an uncle. He assures Athanagild that happiness lies in his safety and reports that Austrasian legates are attempting to intervene on his behalf with the Emperor. Childebert feels that once an alliance is confirmed then an agreement can be reached concerning the fate of the boy.

Letter 47 is addressed to the Emperor Maurice from King Childebert. There are many difficulties with this letter beginning with which embassy actually carried it. Goubert and Reverdy include it with the mission of Babo and Gripo.³⁹ Hodgkin believes it was taken to Constantinople by Ennodius and his companions.⁴⁰ Eugen Ewig refutes Goubert's contention arguing that he does not have sufficient evidence for such a conclusion.⁴¹ If it is accepted that the letter concerns Athanagild it is the only one addressed directly to the Emperor about the captive. One particular passage poses difficulties:

Et quoniam cognovimus, illum famulum vestrum,
parentum nostrum, filium Scaptimundi apud vos in
urbe regia commorari...⁴²

Firstly vos in the manuscript⁴³ reads nos. The son of Scaptimundus is with us. If he is with his family then urbe regia refers to Metz and not Constantinople as seen in letter 43. However there is no record of any such person at the Austrasian court and the rest of the letter pleads for his release by the Emperor so this son must be at Constantinople. Secondly, this makes sense if the inceptive verb cognoscere is translated

as become acquainted with or seek to know. Childebert wants to know this mysterious person who is being kept away from him. So he writes, since we sought to know that servant of yours, our relative, the son of Scaptimundus and to have him stay with us in the royal city, the city of Metz. Thirdly, there is a problem with the phrase or name Scaptimundus. If the S represents sanctus as seen before with reference to Ennodius then we have the pious or venerable Captimundus. The pious one taken from the world. Hermanagild lost his life fighting for the Catholic cause against his Arian relations consequently Childebert may well refer to his brother-in-law in this manner. It follows that the son in the letter is Athanagild and this is further supported by the fact that he is known to have been in Constantinople and there is no evidence of another male relation being held by the Byzantines.

When the letters sent to Constantina and Theodosius by a previous embassy had no effect and Athanagild still remained a guest of the Emperor it is likely that Childebert would have written to the Emperor himself in order to try again for the captive's release. In fact in letter 28 to Athanagild, Childebert refers to the legates sent to Constantinople on his behalf. Letter 47 would likely have arrived with letter 28. Therefore, letter 47 probably was delivered to the Emperor by Ennodius, Radan, Eusebius and Gripo in 588.

The fate of Athanagild still rested with the Emperor and realizing his continued concern with Italy in the summer of 588 Childebert ordered his dukes to gather together an army.⁴⁴ Frankish troops marched south again expecting perhaps to receive tribute and their enemy lurking in fortified positions. This time, however the Lombards felt that they would

no longer pay tribute to rid themselves of their enemy so they left their refuge and marched out to battle. The slaughter of the invading army was immense, few were captured and fewer escaped back to Gaul to report the disaster. But the Franks were fighters though and accustomed to the vagaries of war and the next year Childebert raised another army:

multos castra iuvant et lituo tubae permixtus

sonitus bellaque matribus detesta.⁴⁵

The Lombards, however, sent gifts this time and petitioned for peace and as well, Guntram advised Childebert to postpone the invasion.

CHAPTER IX

After Gripo returned from Constantinople in 589 Childebert asked that he go back this time accompanied by Bodegiselus and Evantius. On the way they stopped at Genoa on the first stage of their journey to Carthage where they intended to ask the Prefect of Africa for permission to continue on to Constantinople.¹ They carried letter 46 addressed to Laurentius, the Patriarch of Milan, who was staying in Genoa as an exile on account of certain theological controversies.² Laurentius was asked to facilitate their journey eastwards and to intervene with the Exarch of Ravenna in order to arrange a combined operation against the Lombards.³ The position of Exarch is attested since the reign of Maurice. It combined military and administrative duties in one office so that a supreme leader could function more efficiently in the face of the Lombard threat.⁴ This year Maurice replaced the unstable Smaragdus with Romanus to deal better militarily in planned operations with the Franks. The invasion had been postponed for a year but the proposed scheme for cooperation was not forgotten.

Letter 46 to Laurentius, who is referred to in a letter from Pope Gregory to Bishop Constantius of Milan as a retired brother,⁵ opens with a comparison to the martyr of the same name. Childebert likens him to Laurentius, a deacon of Rome, who was executed in 258 during the persecution of Valerian by being roasted alive on a gridiron. The fame of this Saint was celebrated both east and west and the comparison is high praise indeed. The letter goes on to mention his charitable works and the promise made by Childebert to

free Italy from the Lombards. Childebert also asks that Laurentius contact the Exarch and have him raise an army so that a combined force may fight the Lombards. But after the letter had been sent Childebert changed his plans for this year because of Lombard gifts and the opposition of his uncle. However in 590 when Gripo returned and reported, the King would order twenty of his dukes into Italy.⁶

Gripo, Evantius and Bodegiselus had left Genoa for Carthage and there awaited the Prefect's permission to continue on to the imperial capital.⁷ During their stay a servant of Evantius stole some trinket from a shop and returned to his lodgings having been observed by the shopkeeper who followed demanding restitution. The servant refused and sometime later the exasperated merchant laid hold of the thief whereupon the Frank killed the man with his sword. The killer made his way back to the house where the envoys were staying but did not tell anyone about the crime. After an angry crowd had gathered at the house Evantius and Bodegiselus went out to investigate the uproar and were cut down. Gripo seized his weapons and stormed out demanding an explanation for the outrage. The Prefect calmed him and quickly arranged an audience with the Emperor. In Constantinople Maurice expressed his regret and promised that the perpetrators would be handed over but when they arrived in Gaul, Gripo could not identify them and Childebert let them go.⁸

As mentioned above, on Gripo's return from the east Childebert sent twenty dukes under three commanders into Italy.⁹ Audovald marched towards Milan and set up camp in the plain, Olo approached Bellinzona where he was killed with many of his men and the survivors joined with Audovald.¹⁰ Envoys arrived at the camp reporting that an imperial

army would arrive in three days time and would light a signal fire on a nearby mountain. The Franks waited six days but the promised troops did not arrive.¹¹

The third commander, Cedinus (Henus), fighting in the north-east took five strongholds and thirteen towns. After this the Franks wandered in Italy for three months collecting little booty and few prisoners but the summer's melting sun and dysentery combined to weaken the troops and reduce them eventually to selling their weapons and even their clothing in order to buy food.¹² Autharis remained in Pavia and his dukes hid in fortified cities leaving the invaders to wander about to suffer the enervating climate. The invasion failed due to the Lombard policy of waiting out the attack, the climate and the failure to join with imperial forces.¹³

While the Franks were retreating Romanus, the new Exarch, gained some successes. Nordulf, a mercenary Lombard general, arrived from the east with his men to assist in the hoped-for coordinated attack with the Franks.¹⁴ Romanus wrote letters 40 and 41 to Childebert thanking him for sending his emissary Andreas who had pledged Frankish support. The Exarch relates in letter 40 that the imperial army captured three cities before the Franks had even arrived in Italy. When Henus did arrive he harried Verona with 20,000 troops. However, no doubt because he could not effectively besiege fortified cities Henus accepted terms of peace from Autharis. Romanus complains that if Henus had committed his troops as previously agreed they might have even captured the Lombard king by using cutters on the river. Henus made peace for ten months then suddenly marched away. If only the Franks had stayed longer, laments Romanus, the faithless

Lombards would have been driven from Italy and the impious Autharis would be a captive at Metz. The Exarch closes his letter by listing three more cities taken by imperial troops and asks for the return of plunder and the release of captives taken by Frankish troops.

In letter 41 Romanus recounts the cities taken by imperial forces and their triumphant return to Ravenna with Lombard captives and hostages. In the province of Istria Duke Grisulf, the son of Grasulf of Friuli, deserted to the imperial side. As remarked, support arrived from the east with Nordulf and another duke, Osso, who retook many cities after consultation with Romanus. However the Franks had left and Romanus writes that if they returned quickly they could catch the Lombards at harvest and capture the whole of their market. He asks which routes the Franks will take and pleads that their army not pillage, take captives and burn their workshops but free the Exarchate and restore it to prosperity as a Christian nation for the defence of Italy.

Childebert by this time was tiring of the Italian campaigns and a Lombard embassy arrived to arrange for peace. Shortly thereafter other messengers arrived with the news that Autharis was dead. Instead of profiting by this with another invasion Childebert agreed to peace after consultation with Guntram.¹⁵ The next year Euin of Trient arrived on an embassy from the new Lombard king, Agilulf, to confirm the treaty.¹⁶ According to Fredegar the Lombards had been paying the Franks a yearly tribute of 12,000 solidi and Agilulf continued this payment.¹⁷

After the death of Chilperic there was a period of relative calm in Merovingian internal affairs. Guntram and Childebert had signed the Treaty of Andelot¹⁸ and later Guntram baptized Chilperic's son, the young Lothar.¹⁹ When Childebert accepted peace with the Lombards he turned his attention to domestic problems and with his uncle determined finally to rid their kingdoms of the rebellious nobles who had been involved with the pretender Gundovald. Desiderius had been killed earlier²⁰ but there still remained the troublesome group of Guntram Boso, Ursio, Berthefried, Egidius, Rauching and to a lesser extent Theodore. The Bishop of Marseilles had been imprisoned by Guntram because of his involvement with the plot but his position in the Church saved him and later he was released to return to his city.²¹

The insurgents Rauching, Ursio and Berthefried conceived a plan with some of the leading men of young Lothar's kingdom to assassinate Childebert.²² However this scheme came to the notice of Guntram who immediately notified his nephew. Rauching had planned to seek an audience with Childebert but the King now aware of the plot instead summoned the Duke to appear before him. Childebert was well protected leaving no opportunity for Rauching to make an attempt and begin the insurrection. The King heard and then dismissed the conspirator. As he left the royal chamber loyal troops tripped him up, killed him and threw the body out of the window. Ursio and Berthefried gathered an army together thinking that Rauching had carried out his part of the plan. However, they soon learned of his fate and quickly retired to fortified places.

Guntram felt this rebellion to be serious and prompted Childebert to act forcefully against the rebels. Thus both Kings ordered the execution of Guntram Boso.²³ He was trapped in a house which was set on fire and was cut down when he ran out to escape. After this Childebert sent troops to deal with Ursio and Berthefried.²⁴ Ursio died in a skirmish and Berthefried hid in a church-house but Childebert's men tore open the roof and hurled tiles down on him until he was dead. The quick and complete action of the Kings against the Dukes now compelled many of their supporters to flee.

Only Egidius was brought to trial.²⁵ Eventually he was convicted and confessed his guilt to treason but on the behest of some bishops his life was spared and he was sent into exile. The ambitious dukes had been eliminated but the wayward ecclesiastics suffered only imprisonment and exile.

CHAPTER X

Theudebert I and Childebert II, the two Merovingian kings during the sixth century who had major diplomatic contact with the empire did so while struggling to maintain their own positions. The constant feuding between families and the resultant increase in aristocratic power¹ as well as external events are the background to Austrasian diplomatic activity. Both Kings were faced on attaining their crowns with the treachery of uncles and Childebert also had to deal with serious unrest among his dukes. Even so both invaded Italy on the instigation of imperial schemes this did not bring the results calculated by the Empire. Nonetheless the situation in Italy would ensure continuing contact between Emperor and King.²

Byzantine diplomatic practice at this time applied certain techniques to direct foreign powers along the imperial path. For example, it was policy to involve one people against another by influencing particular parties with honorific titles, adoption, bribes, hostages and the support of pretenders or claimants to a throne. Of course, when these methods failed the emperor could, when necessary, resort to the force of imperial troops but not always effectively as is seen with the unfortunate Baduarius. Clovis had been made consul by Anastasius³ but Justinian and Maurice used a more effective technique with Theudebert and Childebert, namely adoption. Much gold was also sent westwards to influence the Franks and even the pretender Gundovald was allowed to return to Gaul for potential imperial advantage. The greatest pressure, however, was exerted when little

Athanagild fell into imperial hands and Childebert was induced to invade Italy four times. From the imperial position none of these attacks was a success but Childebert could claim that he was upholding his promises to the Emperor. The first incursion was at least profitable to the Franks, the second and third disastrous due to want of order among the dukes, and the last a failure because the Franks and Byzantines did not meet to coordinate a combined attack. Childebert succeeded in attaining and then maintaining his crown against many difficulties and yet led one invasion and ordered three others under imperial coercion. The most effective pressure to a Frank was a threat to a member of his family. Walter Goffart's criticism of the young King is overly harsh,⁴ for his ability to keep his crown and deal with imperial demands is at least notable if not remarkable. Unfortunately in spite of his efforts Athanagild is never heard of again and it was to be another Frank who would finally defeat the Lombards.

Although the contrast between the political structures of Empire and Kingdom was a characteristic feature of this age⁵ the association between the two was not political but personal. The Emperor controlled foreign policy⁶ and the King through his personal authority⁷ directed royal diplomacy. As seen in the letters this relationship demonstrates another feature of the period, the personal and familial hierarchy of diplomacy. The political systems were indeed characteristic and the interaction between them was not any regulated international process but a personal relationship within the framework of the family of kings.

NOTES

Abbreviations:

- HF Historiae of Gregory of Tours
 HL History of the Lombards by Paul the Deacon
 HW History of the Wars by Procopius of Caesarea
 MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica
 MPL Migne Patrologia Latina

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5. HW V.ii.17, V.ii.28.
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19. HW VI.xxv.
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21. HW VII.xxxiii.7.
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23. For example, see the Introduction to the Institutes of Justinian.
24. Agathias, I.4.3.

25. HW VI.xxviii.7-22.

26. HW VII.xxxvii.1-2.

27. Hodgkin, IV: 543.

28. HW VIII.xxiv.27.

30. HF IV.9;

Agathias, I.6.1.

31. HW VIII.xxiv.11-30.

32. HW VIII.xxxiii.7.

33. Agathias, I.6.2;

HF III.32:

Gregory records that Theudebert ordered Butilinus into Italy but he must have meant Theudebald. Agathias writes that the brothers accepted of their own accord but surely would need at least the implicit permission of the King for such an enterprise. Theudebald had nothing to lose: if the project succeeded he could claim territory as their regent, if not, only some renegades would be lost. Of course the Emperor would object but he could use the same excuse as his father when the Burgundians crossed the Alps.

34. Agathias, II.3.6.

35. HF IV.9;

Agathias II.9.11;

Marius of Avenches, *Chronica Auctorum*

Antiquissimorum, MGH Tomus XI ed. Theodorus Mommsen (Berlin: Weidmann, 1961), 225-239 sub 555.

CHAPTER III

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8. HF IV.23;
HL II.10.
9. Menander fr. 11.
10. Marius sub 569 (=568);
HF IV.41.
11. HL II.7 n. 2.
12. G. Reverdy, "Les Relations de Childebert II et de Byzance," Revue Historique Tome CXIV (1913): 63.
13. Hodgkin, V: 215.
14. Hodgkin, V: 198.
15. HF IV.42;
HL III.3.
16. HF IV.42;
HL III.4.

17. HF IV.42;
HL III.5.
18. HL II.6;
Hodgkin, V: 190.
19. HL III.6.
20. HF V.15.
21. HL III.6.
22. Marius sub 574;
Hodgkin, V: 218.
23. HL III.8;
HF IV.44.
24. Hodgkin, V: 223;
Fredegar, The Fourth Book of the Chronicle trans. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1960), IV.45.
25. HF VI.6;
HF VI.24.
26. John of Biclar, Chronica MGH Auctorum Antiquissimorum, Tomus XI pp. 205-220 ed. Theodorus Mommsen (Berlin: Weidmann, 1961), sub 576;
Hodgkin, V: 194.
27. Theophylact Simocatta, The History trans. Michael and Mary Whitby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), VI.10.10.
28. Fredegar IV.6.
29. HF IV.40.
30. Reverdy, 62.

31. W. Goffart, "Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice: the Pretenders Hermenegild and Gundovald (579-585)", Traditio 13 (1957): 77.
32. Ewig (1983), 28 n. 111.
33. HF IV.46 Ambassador Andarchius.
34. Goffart (1957), 77-80.
35. Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

1. Ovid, Metamorphoses Bk. VII lines 141-2. See Geary below: terrigenae is changed by me to marigenae;
 P.J. Geary, Before France and Germany (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 85 "...a sea god that was part sea beast, part man, and part bull, which seems to have been a particular family deity for the Merovingians....".
2. HF IV.47.
3. HF IV.49: Guntram did not involve his general Mummolus in these affairs but did employ him to attack Desiderius, one of Chilperic's commanders, in 576. He was no doubt playing a false game with Chilperic hoping to draw him out with promises of support and suddenly leaving him to Sigebert, a superior fighter.
4. HF IV.50.
5. HF VI.46.
6. HF VI.36;
 Fredegar IV.1.
7. HF IV.29.
8. HF IV.51;
 Marius sub 576 (=575).
9. HF V.2.
10. Hodgkin, V: 211.

11. HF IV.50, V.14, V.18.
12. HF V.18.
13. HF V.46.
14. HF VI.1.
15. HF VI.4.
16. HF V.18, X.19.
17. HF VI.11.
18. HF V.39.
19. Goffart (1957), 93.
20. HF VI.1;
Marius sub 581
21. P. Goubert, Byznace avant L'Islam 3 volumes (Paris: Editions A et J. Picard et Cie., 1965), II: 24.
22. HF V.13.
23. Menander fr. 25.
24. Goffart (1957), 77-80.
25. Ewig (1983), 28 n. 111.
26. E. Stein, Studien zur Geschichte des Byzantinischen Reiches, vornehmlich unter den Kaisern Justinus II und Tiberius Constantinus (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1919), 108.
27. Hodgkin, VI: 36.
28. HL II.32.
29. HL II.9.
30. Menander fr. 22.
31. HL III.9.

32. Menander fr. 24.
33. Stein, 108.
34. For another version see Hodgkin, VI: 46-47.
35. HF V. 33-37 During 580 Gaul was subject to floods, earthquakes, fire and epidemic; perhaps this slowed them down.
36. T.S. Brown, Gentlemen and Officers, Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy, A.D. 554-800 (British School at Rome, 1984), 72: Maintains that Grasulf acted as intermediary;
C. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1981), 32: Contends that Grasulf did defect.
37. HF VI.2.
38. Goffart (1957), 93 and 99.

CHAPTER V

1. HF VI.24.
2. HL II.30.
3. I. Wood, "Kings, Kingdoms and Consent," Early Medieval Kingship eds. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1977), 15;
HF V.20.
4. HF VII.36;
Thorpe, 420 n. 30;
Reverdy, 65.
5. Goffart, (1957), 102;
Stein, 115, n. 6;

Many writers suppose that Maurice financed this expedition, for example: O.M. Dalton, The History of the Franks by Gregory of Tours 2 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), I: 124; J.B. Bury, A History of the Later Roman Empire, from Arcadius to Irene, A.D. 395-800 2 volumes (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1966), I: 162; Samuel Dill, Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1966), 143. Goffart and Stein reasonably conclude that Gundovald left Constantinople before the death of Tiberius but the latter gives more meaning to Chilperic's embassy.

6. Goffart (1957), 101 n. 122.
7. For example, see above Chapter II concerning Theudebert's treachery in Italy.
8. HF VI.23.
9. HF VI.26.
10. HF VI.46;
Fredegar IV.3
11. HF VII.10.
12. HF VIII.5;
Goffart (1957), 104-5;
Goubert, II: 38.
13. HF VII.14.
14. HF VII.26.
15. Dill, 202;
Bury (1966), I: 161;
Goubert, II: 38.
16. HF VII.34.
17. HF VII.28;
Fredegar IV.2.

- 18. HF VII.33.
19. HF VII.9.
20. HF VII.35;
Gasquet (1888), 189.
21. HF VII.28.
22. HF VII.39;
Fredegar IV.4.
23. HL II.28, 31;
Marius sub 574.
24. HL II.32.
25. Epistolae MGH T.3 pp. 448-9;
Hodgkin, V: 239-40.
26. HL III.9.
27. MPL T.72, Pelagius II, Ep. I, pp. 705-6;
Hodgkin, V: 240-1;
Jones, I: 312-3.
28. HF VI.42;
HL III.17;
John of Biclar sub 584.
29. Diehl (1901), 206;
Hodgkin, V: 228;
Bury (1966), I: 163 n. 2.
30. Ewig (1983), 38;

- Goffart (1957), 110-113.
31. HF IX.10;
G. Tessier, Diplomatique Royale Française (Paris: Editions A. et J. Picard et Cie., 1962), 218.
 32. HF VI.24, 26.
 33. HF IX.10.
 34. Menander fr. 22.
 35. 1 solidus = 1/72 pound.
 36. Theophylact VI.3.8.
 37. HL III.16.
 38. HF VI.42;
HL III.17.
 39. HF VI.40.
 40. B.S. Bachrach, Merovingian Military Organization (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 56.
 41. HF VIII.18, 28;
HL III.21, 22.
 42. HL III.18;
Hodgkin, V: 244.

CHAPTER VI

1. HF IV.8;
Hodgkin, V: 250;
Bury (1958), II: 286-7.
2. HF IV.38;

Isidore of Seville, History of the Kings of the Goths, Vandals, and Suevi trans.
Guido Donini and Gordon B. Ford Jr. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), sec. 49.

3. HF IV.28.
4. Geary, 121.
5. Thorpe, 297 n. 66.
6. HF IX.20;
Hodgkin, V: 207-8.
7. HF V.38.
8. Hodgkin, V: 253.
9. HF V.38;
Isidore sec. 49;
John of Biclar sub 579 (=580).
10. HF VI.40;
HL III.21;
Goffart (1957), 107;
Hodgkin, V: 255.
11. HF VI.43.
12. HL III.21.
13. HF VI.40, 42.
14. HF VIII.28;
John of Biclar sub 585.
15. J.N. Hillgarth, "Coins and Chronicles: Propaganda in Sixth Century Spain and the Byzantine Background," Visigothic Spain, Byzantium and the Irish (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985): 483.
16. Hodgkin, V: 254.

17. HF V.38.
18. Hillgarth, 483.
19. HF VIII.46;
Fredegar IV.6.
20. HF IX.14.
21. John of Biclar sub 587.
22. HF VIII.21.
23. HF VIII.28;
Fredegar IV.5.
24. HF VIII.30;
HL III.21.
25. Cf. Livy preface to Book I of his history Ab Urbe Condita.
26. HF VIII.29, 43, 44.
27. HF IX.1, 16.
28. HF IX.31, 32;
Fredegar IV.10.
29. HF VIII.28;
HL III.21;
Reverdy, 68.
30. Goffart (1957), 116.

CHAPTER VII

1. Tessier (1962), 217;
Reverdy, 69;

- Goubert, II: 106-7.
2. F. Millar, The Emperor in the Roman World, 31 B.C. - A.D. 337 (London: Duckworth, 1977), 218.
 3. Variae Cassiodorus X.1.
 4. T.S. Brown, 131;
M. Silber, The Gallic Royalty of the Merovingians (Berne: Herbert Lang and Co. Ltd., 1917), 35.
 5. Letters 19 and 20;
Gasquet (1888), 156;
Bury (1966), II: 163;
Dölger, 43.
 6. Dill, 479;
James (1988), 189.
 7. L. Bréhier, Les Institutions de l'Empire Byzantin (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1949), 304.
 8. F.L. Ganshof, The Middle Ages, a History of International Relations trans. Remy Inglis Hall (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 42.
 9. D.J. Hill, A History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe 3 volumes (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), I: 40-41.
 10. Cassiodorus VII.33.
 11. Mitteis, 43;
Tessier, 15 n. 3.
 12. Hodgkin, V: 259.
 13. Letters 13, 16, 22, 48.
 14. James (1988), 186;
Millar, 227.

15. Ewig (1983), 43;
W. Gundlach, "Die Sammlung der Epistolae Austrasicae," Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde 13 (1888): 375.
16. Ewig (1983), 43 n. 185.
17. Reverdy, 70;
Ewig (1983), 44 n. 190.
18. Goubert, II: 110-112.
19. HF X.2;
HL III.31.
20. Cf. Iocundus and Ennodius.
21. Theophylact VIII.4.10.
22. Theophylact I.1.4.
23. Cassiodorus X.2.
24. Goubert, II: 114.
25. Theophylact I.10.2, VII.6.1.
26. Cf. letter 31.
27. Fredegar IV.6;
Ewig (1983), 44.
28. There is a precedent for this. A Gaul, Merobaud, had been made patrician before the reign of Clovis on an embassy to Constantinople;
R. Mathisen, "Patricians as Diplomats in Late Antiquity," Byzantinisches Zeitschrift 79 (1986): 47-48
29. HF IX.15.
30. HF III.32.

CHAPTER VIII

1. HF IX.20.
2. Hodgkin, V: 259.
3. Goubert, II: 132.
4. Gundlach, 374.
5. Ganshof (1960), 172 n. 29.
6. Goubert, II: 129;
Reverdy, 76;
Gundlach, 374.
7. Hodgkin, V: 259, 277-278.
8. Ewig (1983), 44.
9. HF IX.25;
HL III.29.
10. Goubert, II: 142.
11. Gundlach, 385;
Reverdy, 77.
12. Ewig, (1983), 45;
Goubert, II: 141.
13. Goubert, II: 143.
14. Goubert, II: 143.
15. Theophylact IV.14.5.
16. Stein, 85 n. 14.
17. Theophylact I.10.1.

18. Ewig (1983), 45;
Goubert, II: 154.
19. Goubert, II: 154.
20. Ewig (1983), 45.
21. Hodgkin, V: 278 n. 15;
Bury (1966), I: 165;
Goubert, II: 146.
22. Reverdy, 77 n. 4.
23. Stein, 62;
Goubert, II: 148.
24. Epistolae IX.27.
25. Theophylact I.1.3.
26. Epistolae I.30.
27. Goubert, II: 149-150.
28. Reverdy. 77 n. 4.
29. Bury (1966), I: 165.
30. Goubert, II: 152-3.
31. Hodgkin, V: 268 n. 17.
32. Menander fr. 17 n. 189.
33. Epistolae I.33, III.57.
34. Selected Epistles of Gregory the Great volume XII p. 84 n. 8 This is the note to letter 34 in this collection which is letter 33 in Gundlach's edition.
35. Reverdy, 77 n. 4.
36. Goubert, II: 158-159.

37. Ewig (1983), 46;
Hodgkin, V: 278 n. 14.
38. Goubert, II: 139-140;
Hodgkin, V: 260.
39. Goubert, II: 121;
Reverdy, 70 n. 3.
40. Hodgkin, V: 277 n. 1.
41. Ewig (1983), 43 n. 185.
42. Gundlach, letter 47.
43. Goubert, II: pl. XV facing page 192.
44. HF IX. 25;
HL III.29.
45. Horace Odes I.1 lines 23-25.

CHAPTER IX

1. HF X.2.
2. Goubert, II: 180 Laurentius was a champion of the Fifth Council which condemned the Three Chapters, however, many in the West disagreed with this position. Pelagius I succeeded eventually in upholding this Council against its Western critics.
3. Ewig (1983), 47;
Diehl (1901), 208.
4. Bréhier (1949), 99;
T.S. Brown; preface, x;

F.E. Shlosser, "Military and Civil Administration under Maurice, 582-602," Doctoral Thesis (McGill University, 1980): 105;

J. Richards, Consul of God (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 12.

5. Gregory I, Epistolae IV.2.
6. HF X.3;
HL III.31.
7. HF X.2;
Hodgkin V: 264-267.
8. HF X.4.
9. HF X.3;
HL III.31.
10. Hodgkin, V: 268.
11. Hodgkin, V: 269-270, VI: 29-30.
12. HF X.3.
13. Ewig (1983), 47.
14. Richards, 12.
15. HF X.3;
HL III.35.
16. HL IV.1.
17. Fredegar IV.45.
18. HF IX.11, 20.
19. HF X.28.
20. HF VIII.45.
21. HF VIII.12, 20.

22. HF IX.9;
Fredegar IV.8.
23. HF IX.10.
24. HF IX.12.
25. HF IX.19.

CHAPTER X

1. Geary, 122.
2. Reverdy, 63.
3. HF II.38;
Geary, 87.
4. W. Goffart, The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550-800) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 396-398.
5. Hartmann (1949), 9.
6. Jones, I: 321.
7. Hartmann (1949), 12.

APPENDIX I

A Working Translation of Selected Austrasian Letters (18-20, 25-48)

18 To our Distinguished, Celebrated and Triumphant Lord, always Augustus, Emperor Justinian, from King Theudebald.

We were pleased by the arrival here of your delegates, John and Missurius, recognizing your fruitful and established divine authority to grow and endure. Greetings, we point out that through your duty and service, for which we thank you in advance, your good-will remains a constant for us. In addition, for the abundance of favours which you delivered in the delight of faith and as we prosper by reason of the throne of our father, so by celestial influence we remain devoted to our indissolvable duties. But indeed, among all your letter bred annoyance greatly in our spirit because such a leader and such a conqueror of myriad peoples could be slandered in your letter soon after his hurried death. Promised friendship was preserved once by firm arrangement, unstained honour existing for emperors and kings as well as for all people. The contemplation of the Christian religion does not now, as you write, protect all regions as inviolable from great pagan destructive waste but the influence of Christ will in time prevail returning all to proper measure. We have been reproached without cause, Emperor, but God willing, joined by a shared faith, by countless triumphs, victory will be proclaimed. Our friendship of which you inquire is firm and will persist better by the invulnerable agreement of faith and then no obstruction will endure.

19 To our Distinguished Master, Most Excellent Lord and Father, Emperor Justinian, from King Theudebert.

On the arrival here of your servant Andreas we undertook this letter to your glory for we considered it honourable to demonstrate our support by sending three thousand men in relief of the Patrician Bregantinus. But in some manner your legate was delayed and he arrived here too slowly with your Excellency's correspondence on the 22nd of September, later than we had hoped which we then indicated to him. However, Andreas did arrive and we had general success through mutual understanding, thus we stand to preserve our esteem in your authority, God willing, so with the arrival of your embassy everything was confirmed for common advantage in our opinion and, God supporting, our respect for you is evident.

20 To our Distinguished Lord, Most Excellent Master and Father, Emperor Justinian, from King Theudebert.

The anticipated arrival of Theodore transpired with that of Solomon who brought letters which we accepted with complete regard and allegiance of spirit which rejoices in the mercy of your dominion. Your charge assists us in extending the loving friendship of God

to many races and in some provinces but now our enemies with the help of God have submitted to our authority. By the wish of the Lord, the Thuringians were controlled and their territories acquired, then in time their kings were abolished; next the North Sueves were subjugated, the Visigoths declared subdued and, by the grace of God, now Gaul is safe. As well, in the north region of Italy and then Pannonia the Saxons and Eucii delivered themselves to us by particular choice. Our rule extends from the Danube and the limits of Pannonia to the shores of the ocean through the protection of God. As confirmed by your letter, your August Highness, we are certain of the progress of the Catholics and rejoice in complete delight of spirit. For this reason, God granting your desires, longing in eager spirit we enjoin by plain proposition that your fame will endure and the friendship of former emperors is seen often in your assurance of kindness, therefore, let us join together for the common good.

25 Glorious Master, Devout, Universal, Celebrated, Triumphant and always Augustus, Father, the Emperor Maurice from King Childebart.

By your gentle prominence we choose to be united by means of a treaty, and if it should please God, to extend our affection for you peaceably and without restraint working together so that both sides may achieve the preservation of peace. From the dutiful obligation of general welfare through your most merciful placidity, by the utmost repute of your Highness thus we received your legates and we shall send ours in return, with the favour of Heaven. So then, we delegated the venerable Ennodius, that distinguished man, and the nobles: Gripo, the sword-bearer; Radan, the chamberlain; and Eusebius, the notary. We undertake to accomplish, according to definite protocol by the transcendence of your words, a successful mission and with a declaration restored and revealed, God inspiring, let the common interest advance.

26 Glorious Master, Devout, Universal, Celebrated, Triumphant and always Augustus, Father, the Emperor Maurice, from Queen Brunhild.

By the tranquill clearness of your sovereignty the letter to our most eminent son arrived in order to arrange for peace. Respecting therefore your most calm and venerable repute showing the height of service for the common welfare we have returned the party of your legates. In present circumstances, we the proposers are turned towards your clemency and your exalted rank so that we accept advice in the words that have been offered. Therefore, through this correspondence and by your beneficence and concordance let these declarations be worthy of us and an alliance profit all.

27 Renowned Lord, and with unutterable sighing and longing, Most Dear Grandson, King Athanagild, from Queen Brunhild.

He came to me, my most precious grandson, a great chance for happiness. Now frequently I long for his appearance and on his behalf I write with straightforward appeal. Since

transgression took my daughter away in his eyes I could remember her. That I don't lose her entirely, God providing, may my grandson be saved. Therefore, most kind Highness I anticipate your excellent mercy so we give appreciation for your benevolence and give thanks for your integrity. Most holy Emperor through our legates by particular terms and through some intimate words we entrust that they prepare and we recognize, Christ favouring, this arrangement courteously to be discharged.

28 Most Brilliant Young Master and everywhere Sublime, Most Charming Nephew, from King Childebert.

We are supported by the benefit of ready advantage, by means of which we show affection to our relations and even by the eloquence that we demonstrate in our correspondence. Therefore, by the notable fame of your grace, we who are near to you want assurance for your safety and our happiness which is a human desire and a private mystery. We sent our legates to the most calm Roman Emperor, by the grace of God, for our common advantage, through the intervention of Augustus or more fortunately by the mediation of God, then you will be able to realize now our anxious needs for the certainty of an agreement on your behalf. It remains then that peace is achieved through efforts on both sides, which governs human intentions and the establishment of order.

29 Renowed Mistress and Celebrated Augusta, Anastasia, from Queen Brunhild.

Your absolute serene rule, which God grants, manages the Roman state and by particular greatness governs conquered nations. We notify you that ambassadors of our most pre-eminent son, King Childebert, were sent confidently to you in the hope of general advantage, if Christ aids in our success. We trust completely that they will be courteously received and then commanded by the word of the Emperor revealing his absolute and firm decision on the matter. Thus the cause of peace is joined with united favour and established for the benefit of each state by their rulers.

30 No address

The superior rank of your calmness, which came to you through the guidance of good fortune, rules the state most auspiciously. This effectively encourages us, if Christ be pleased, to extend compacts of friendship. And therefore, with regard to your most fair fame we render our respect through most courteous greeting. So we direct with affection our ambassadors to the most devout Augustus and confidently consult him concerning the common interest. Let it profit the alliance of both peoples in the cause of peace, and accordingly to the will of Christ, equally join us in genuine fondness.

31 Reverent Lord and Apostle, Cherished Representative in Christ, John the Bishop, from King Childebert.

Your most happy inviability through the entirety of current belief is known through many lands; even around the northern regions in which we dwell the praise of your works is not unknown. Living far away it prompts us out of courtesy to write this page and its journey brings together the remoteness of places. And consequently, with respect to your apostolic crown and felicitous reverence, nourishing regards are extended with devotion, so with pious entreaties we seek earnestly by means of your attentive works and blessings the harmony of the peoples, and that it remains for us in our faith to embrace peace with the Roman Emperor. We sent our legates there in these circumstances for the common good and by your propitious favour this devout project may be realized. Thus, God warranting, this may profit the people and so benefit each race in permanent alliance.

32 Renowned Nuncio, Honoratus, from King Childebert of the Franks.

Glorious commendations of your lucid work the people have made known through courtesy to their fellow citizens and to foreign countries. Respectfully indicating the requirements for success and the highest regard for your reverence we deem it worthy to mention the interposition of holiness in requesting your blessing in the present circumstances for our delegates. They have been sent to the Roman Emperor in the hope of future harmony and of the common good and with your reverent assistance they will carry these commitments to him. So, Christ intervening, peace will be confirmed and profit accrue for both sides.

33 Bishop Domitian, Reverent, Pious and Excellent Lord, Exalted in Christ the Father, from King Childebert.

The extensive glory of your celebrated reputation inclines us to write particularly with regard to your venerable friendship. For we have completed happy prayers and we gain inspiration from the Emperor's message even as you acquire an increase of much esteem. Your apostleship for the prosperity of venerated welfare discharges its duties and as we deem it worthy to be in memory of holy intervention we request by means of copious entreaties the proclamation of your fame and the assistance for our agents in the common interest who have been sent to the first man of the most untroubled Roman state who easily accepts a petition. By your blessedness, when they come together to undertake our commission for the deliberation of benefits and by the authority of Augustus because each side, God favouring, may profit in common by a most sound alliance.

34 Renowned Master Theodore from Childebert, King of the Franks.

The ennobling merit of manifest office which is lawful in itself, is great as we recognize. It is more remarkable by the decree of the Emperor, it encourages us to join in friendship which we declare to have been foretold by worthy proceedings. And therefore, we hold fast to the responsibilities of welfare confidently by the fame of your distinction and through the soundness of your steady office we rejoice. We hope, as did our ancestors, the Kings of the Franks, to resolve to improve affection and to extend our esteem more

fully to the most untroubled and distinguished Roman state. In these circumstances we wish our legates to be sent before the above mentioned worthy with someone in his trust and be permitted to appear before him. So in this way by most devout consultation for the health of the first man and with deliberation on both sides the people will be joined together with affection in order to profit jointly. By united desires success increases in peace and prosperity is a partner and through well considered answers more will be gained.

35 From Childebert to John the Quaestor, this is for his consideration.

The account of your famous merit which raises you above is made even more evident through performance, so we thank you for preparing an audience since your influence is known for its excellence and we appreciate this. We have sent to the most mediatory Emperor of the Romans our legates for application of collective benefit which if realized through discussion and quietly resolved with Augustus then the seed of peace will be cultivated by each race and safeguarded by their descendants without compulsion so in our estimation it will profit both sides greatly.

36 From Childebert to Magnus the Curator.

Recognizing the distinguished worthiness of your esteemed Highness, we considered it suitable to undertake this correspondence which can be difficult due to long distances. By your renowned and honourable authority we hold you in respect and signify in the present state of affairs to have employed our agents by the Catholic application of faith to greet the most serene and devoted Emperor of the Roman state. If with a word entrusted to him, you in benevolence could assist this meeting the welfare of both peoples could be achieved. The Emperor agreeing, we may give thanks together for peace.

37 The Renowned and Distinguished Paul, who is the Father of the Emperor, from Childebert, King of the Franks.

The noble laudations of your renowned authority are well acquired and with the favour of the Lord your seed has happily produced the one who governs with imperial influence. He successfully sends pronouncements to us that we honour you with fondness and certainly we concur through our correspondence. And therefore with regard to your influence and most exalted fame we take care to make known our sincere commitment to friendship. Now we have sent our ambassadors to the most serene Roman Emperor and if this then pleases by the decree of God and by the just and pious cause of the common interest which by the grace of Christ then you will promote this endeavour and if Augustus agrees there will be harmony among the people who have assembled in peace. Auspiciously through this consultation benefits will accrue and we hope for your association in this alliance.

38 The Distinguished and Splendid Patrician Italica, from Childebert, King of the Franks.

Your reputation of famous merit is happily known to us and your repute is such that we in a friendly manner would like to enter into correspondence. And therefore in a laudable manner we extend greetings with respect to the established fame of your Highness so that with your assistance we attain prosperity and hope that in the present circumstances our legates will be will received by the most just Emperor of the Roman state, by the grace of the Son. We are confident in this endeavour for the general interest and through the propitiation of Heaven they will succeed with your encouragement. With the benefit of sound counsel both sides will be reconciled and this will serve equally your province and the royal dominions and let each party seek solace in reciprocal support.

39 The Patrician Venantius, Renowned and Esteemed Everywhere with Lofty Approval, from Childebert, King of the Franks.

With respect to your nobility it is right that we address this letter to you in which we solicit friendship. For the purpose of rendering honour with great devotion by your most glorious distinction we may pay court to the Emperor with your sponsorship. Constantly desiring this, we entrust to your experience to your experience to support our agents in their mission to his grace, the bright Emperor who governs the Roman Republic, Christ guiding. Now with your assistance for common benefit and peace established, both sides will be seen to have gathered together to undertake and realize this benefit through your great encouragement and venerable authority. Let your side and our side together profit by application to this endeavour jointly and indissolubly hereafter.

40 Here begins the Letter sent in the Name of the Emperor of the Romans to the Lord King.

All these things having been achieved with proper effort, as much for you as for the love of orthodox belief, and as much for the responsibility for the loss of Christian blood it is in your charge from the throne where others understand the highest honour of your fame and the trappings of kingship not only of your own incomparable methods but also managed by sons and grandsons. Truly knowing that excellence has called forth your Eminence which itself strives for the highest merit, we believe in strengthening our endeavour through which the durability of your kingship may be upheld by greater foundation, that the life of sons and grandsons is preserved and the renown of your rule is seen twice for you through a son, thrice protected by the reign of a grandson. By the full order of God.

Then with the arrival of the vir magnificus, Andreas, through your christianity, true esteem had brought him to us and by a greater understanding of his narration based on his experience, it was reported quite a while ago and we with supplication commenced to rejoice exceedingly. Out of this, therefore, which may extend to benefit through your disposition, you may anticipate our request but even more we believe you will anticipate

the desire behind our request. Therefore set forth for us that by most resolute courage or by unimpaired fidelity you in glory send the most flourishing army of the Franks for the liberation of Italy. From your dedication and most Christian concern and constancy through this you sincerely wish Italy to be delivered by most merciful leadership for my lord and for your sister, the most bright Augusta, just as Andreas, mentioned above, the eminent man, informed us as I reported.

In fact, before your dukes entered Italian territory through your encouragement and the affection of God, we took the city of Modena after a battle and entered as well the cities of Altino and Mantua by fighting and breaking down their walls then the army of the Franks appeared, God aiding. Afterwards we hastened so that it was not permitted that the race of the impious Lombards united against the Franks; and Henus, vir magnificus, remained behind near the city of Verona with 20,000 troops. We had hoped to join with him without delay and we were near at hand in order to do what was expedient to destroy that faithless tribe by an arrangement through common cause. But, as we learned later, by then Henus had dispatched an embassy to Autharis concerning an agreement for peace before your dukes could come to me. At the same time Leudefredus, Olfigandus and Raudigus, viri magnifici, sent to us those who were worthy on account of kindness shown in your fame to be received by us in a ceremony with all dignity.

And we had a consultation because Autharis had shut himself up in Ticenum (Pavia) and all the other dukes of his army had scattered and hid in various fortresses, as for us with the Roman army and the dromones with Henus in another part of the area, just as we said, remained with the 20,000 troops and we arrived at the fortifications of Autharis - whose capture would have been the greatest acquisition in victory - and at length we urged them to commit themselves as previously agreed. We believe the vigorous army of the Franks wished to do so, moreover, we asked and even pleaded but as your Christian renown is evident in copies of your letters and we did not push forward against the enemy of God without the advice of your dukes and as was mentioned in the beginning we consulted them but they were remiss with us by making peace with the enemy, in fact through a desire for gain and ostensibly committed to the welfare of the army, the dukes decided to leave and the army suddenly marched away.

And this thing was approved and rewarded by you so we lament because if they had stayed longer today Italy would be free from the most faithless of races and all that the most impious Autharis owned would now be yours for it was certain that the Lombards did not think themselves safe even within the walls nor did they anticipate to resist the Franks.

While rendering the requirements of greeting with the most proper tribute, we hope the Christianity of your rule prevents the taking of Christian blood and protects the priests who have been able to escape their destruction; they met in time your worthy dukes who carried out your instructions and directed the army. The promise you made to your father should be accomplished before the most unholy clan is able to gain triumphs and certainly rewards.

As well as the cities mentioned above, but others such as Parma, Regia and Placentia with their dukes and most of the Lombards there God restored to the Holy Roman Republic adding to the reputation of your monarchy. Moreover, since your fame increases we require the restitution of Roman plunder taken by the Frankish army and the release of captives on account of your reputation and that of your sons and grandsons. Because we had agreed to an oath of allegiance so that your father, the most Christian of leaders, by this action daily he will be delivered from worry about you.

41 To the Most Outstanding Lord and Most Distinguished Childebert, King of the Franks.

Everyday the Christianity of your monarchy increases which shows the gratification of God. Much that we think and do for the delivery of Christians relies on your support and holy work increases through the teaching of the Lord, so by the clear and promised mercy of God may He induce your Excellency to participate in the reaping of reward and great praise. At times, moreover, we believe to have heard from you concerning the cities of Motena, Altino and Mantua because they are Republics of great and pious fame. We have indicated that when we were setting out to the besieged cities of Parma, Regia and Placentia where the Lombard dukes were established and in the city of Mantua they met us to put themselves under the Holy Republic. After this, we took them as slaves and taking their sons as hostages we returned to Ravenna resolving that later we would go into the province of Istria against our enemy Grasulf. Arriving in this province, Duke Grisulf, vir magnificus, son of Grasulf, wishing to show himself better in his youth than his father, met us and with all piety to the Holy Republic with his nobles and entire army submitted, as it happened.

Now the renowned Patrician, Nordulfus, coming into Italy by the favour of our lords, collected all his men together for service to our most serene lords and with that famous man, Osso, with his army retook diverse cities after consultation. And because you promised once to your lord father support in both pledge and allegiance we are not sure of assistance for it is known that you were displeased because your commands were not carried out by the dukes and in your anger now order them to return at all speed. By your father, our most devout lord, you are promised that our regard will be worthy after completion of this task, so if they leave now they may come upon the whole produce of the enemy's market. And inform us by which routes and what time they may be observed by us and we hope above all that when happily the Franks march down, the Romans for whom we ask your assistance then should not be subject to pillage and captivity but in time they will be freed and the province restored and so they may prosper in the future and take care that your men not burn our workshops and it will be understood by all that what we have is in aid of a Christian nation for the defence of Italy.

42 In the Name of our Lord God Jesus Christ, Emperor Caesar Flavius Mauricius Tiberius, Steadfast in Christ, Gentle, Greatest, Generous, Peaceful, Conqueror of the Alamanns, Goths, Antici, Alans, Vandals, Heruls, Gepids and Africans; Devout, Successful, Renowned, Vanquisher, Conqueror, always Augustus, to Childebert, Vir Gloriosus, King of the Franks.

By receipt of your letter through Iocundus, Bishop, and the Chamberlain Cothro, disclosed to us that you in your glory maintain permanent friendship and in fact good relations and filial affection for us and our most inviolable Republic. This and other letters through other legations discloses our sense of responsibility. And it seems wonderful to us if the race of the Franks has virtuous and ancient purpose and declares approval for Roman authority but nothing of this quality as yet is seen in your prominence. Concordance is shown through friendship while in letters by steady, vigorous promises and by dreadful oaths like those of a priest although in time nothing of value has been achieved. And if this is so, through so much distance of the earth and of the sea why do you uselessly hinder your indispensable ambassadors with youthful bluster which introduces nothing of profit but is merely boasting? However, conforming to the amity of the Empire we received the previously mentioned legates although we didn't know them but with credentials we accepted and heard them, intimating by gentle whispers, and we related that by other ambassadors your illustriousness is already made clear. And we advise that if you wish to strive for friendship, vehemently and without delay to discuss all things and not only with debate to expound but to firmly explain just as a king ought to accept and expect similarly our affectionate kindness. Therefore it becomes your glory that these written words please us and now are brought to completion. Through this opportunity more and more the accord of your race is accomplished with our most fortunate Republic and may no contention arise between us. In fact not through unfriendliness mention of agreement is made by us but through the continuance of lasting and undiminished concord. By Manuel. That the divine quality preserve you for many years, from a father most Christian and loving, dated at Constantinople on the first of September by the divine Emperor Mauricius Tiberius always Augustus.

43 Written to the Son of the Emperor in the Name of our Lord, Delivered by Babo and Gripo.

Deliverance is achieved by a sharing in divine trust as the spirit of affection is applied equally as much as possible so that we are worthy of Christ's suffering when He descended from Heaven. Assuredly we Catholics choose eagerly to turn more completely to the mildness and compassion of divinity around us. For the common interest in the present state of affairs we sent our legates, distinguished men, to our most placid and devout father, your father, the Emperor Maurice to seek permanent peace. Also, since unforeseen chance brought my young nephew to the imperial city, we request that you may help us so that he may not live through the years of minority as an orphan without relations. It is better that he grow to manhood under the charming guidance of an uncle and when he reaches maturity may support himself. Until you happily attain rule let our plea be heard by your father, the most devout Emperor, on behalf of the ward and we

shall do whatever we are able in his support. And do not let him experience the misery of more lamentable wanderings so we intercede through your intervention to your father in order to return him home.

44 In the Name of the Lord, to the Empress.

The desired time has arrived for me most serene Augusta, God defending, and it is now announced that a friend of your rule, my most eminent son, King Childebert, has attained his majority. With regard to the most upright Emperor, your husband, he has studied the opportunities for each race, legates were sent in most sound fruitfulness because it was advantageous, God aiding, that he achieve strength in consequence of your prayers for the best part of his years. Our agents, our confidants in these matters will be able to bring to mind the words of your reverences, God helping, and important exchanges will begin if Christ assists, and for the profit of the true Catholic people we wish to undertake a good beginning. And because most calm Augusta, by chance I learned of the wandering of my very young grandson and that innocent child of tender years is now your guest I request for the sake of the Redeemer of all men that you would not see your most devout Theodosius carried off and so dear a son not separated from the embrace of his mother, so always his presence will charm your life as his birth delighted you. With your assistance, Christ furthering, I hope for the return of my grandson as I have lost my daughter, my heart is cool, grave sadness overcomes me and so that I don't lose her entirely I may be comforted that with your help my grandson may return. Consider my lament for that innocent child, and through God who is the Redeemer of the world, you may accept the regard of fame by the release of the dear captive and so through this between each people affection may grow, by the grace of Christ, and the frontiers of accord increase.

45 The Patriarch of Constantinople in the Name of the Lord.

The distinguished reputation of your renowned apostleship which has been acclaimed in many different regions even travelled through Germany to us, accordingly this compelled us to respect your authority and to prevail upon your integrity confidently for our entreaties. And therefore entrusting our most genuine devotion to your most prosperous crown we extend greetings, as we entreat those worthy of the people in manifold ways, supplicating we pray to God who established you the fathers to assist many and benefit all. It has reached us by chance that our very young nephew has been taken to the imperial city from a mother cheated and there he remains an orphan away from home at the court of the most devout Augustus in accordance with his order. As is proper may you fitly work for his return to the fatherland or may he be turned over to his relations as he is unsuited for compelled wandering. As the Vicar of Christ your duty lies in his freedom and through lasting peace fruitful calm will endure without end between our kingdom and the Roman state.

46 The Patriarch Laurentius, in the Name of the Lord.

Your deserved and prosperous reputation increases in direction everywhere, emulating to equal the blessed martyr of the same name, thus by amends that he return safe here through you and that the inviolable assembly dispenses money and the register increase allowances for the sake of the needy. The good of such work among the people is known to us and we give thanks for celestial mercy that you contribute through duty so reward will honour you in future. Depending on the requirements for greeting your venerable apostolic office we offer confidently approbation as worthy for your fulfillment of holy memory. We hope imploringly that because divine mercy strengthens us in time that our support is not wanting for the Catholic side. In consequence of a promise to the Roman state and to our most hallowed father, the Emperor, we arranged misfortune for the Lombard race and their false religion and most unjust belief. Through your responsibility to that most lofty man, Smaragdus of Ravenna, we entreat you to inform him quickly and as well instruct that area of the Republic which is capable in itself to send an army of relief against the enemy, as the Lord directs, then events may be favourable and we will accept divine guidance. Since others will have returned, if Christ pleases, for this reason we choose to send an army which should arrive soon, in so far as the hand of the Lord by your exhortations will deign to destroy the loathsome tribe who outrage the venerable and kill the loyal in profusion with their armed might in bloody cruelty. Trusting that you will inform the distinguished Smaragdus concerning our intentions so that with this information he may move quickly to the determined place at the imperial city where they could meet us promptly, Christ protecting. If this is suitable, send back word rapidly if they remain there, then through the spirit of peace and divine favour, jointly let these things be set in order.

47 It begins in the Name of the Lord to the Emperor.

By your most devout and serene benevolence we are urged to these things which we believe are an opportunity for us so that in confidence we may intimate them to your ears. And since we sought to know that servant of yours, our relative, the son of Scaptimundus to stay with us in the royal city where we are strong thus we entreat by most pious prayer he who would act through your example in governing the Roman state very happily by succession so allow his longings by your tranquillity for his own relations for either his life is deemed worthy and has eternal majesty to fulfill when you order the servant himself by your calmness to be released to us then he will arrive by the consideration of divinity or by the future result of retribution so that you permit this because of our courteous entreaties and thus you raise the aspiration for your name and for mercy.

48 From Gogo to Grasulfus in the Name of the King.

Your Highness related the necessary and convenient proposal vigorously for the parties through your relation Billulfus that it is reasonable by fixing a return to order and to establish quickly an assault to curtail obstinacy. Also it is right that the most reverent

Emperor declared to our returning chief inviolable legates that he wished his embassy forthwith to turn from their path to us so that we trust in their arrival any day and we desire greatly to achieve this with encircling vows but because we wish no delay to develop through disputation then let us unite in this endeavour by completion. Select one course from two: either protect an area of the Republic and hold it as proper security or fulfill our expectations and then immediately the highest sum of money will be produced on completion of the agreement. Accordingly all these things having been performed by acceptable arrangement and, as well, then we attempt to claim by the vengeance of God and the blood of our Roman ancestors, Christ protecting, to achieve the security of peace for the remaining persons on each side then it will be established for prosperity .

However even if the vigour of a pontifex does not exist in you in the present circumstances still you are able to begin to confidently intensify and complete these affairs, just as rational order finishes. So from the side of the Emperor most upright men will advance when they are strengthened with certain others of strong purpose in their permanent goal but since stormy winter breaks up the passage of ships, then through your assistance if the embassy is sent directly and then transferred to our borders and prepared with discipline as is worthy of them to arrive and that they are directed on their journey through these areas by advantageous determination. In this way we propose that they come forth in this authority enjoined by hand and by spirit since the lord Emperor has informed our legates in reply that delay will not begin to satisfy or finish this matter. And that if it is not said that our side displayed some slowness then extend your help not hindrance and let us see by excellent consideration or composure that you advance from the frontiers of the state and we will be ready to rise with you against the enemy in vengeance. We seek a plan so that we show by our actions that our beloved Emperor in some way allows us courteously to his counsel and that he recover us, his sons in body.

APPENDIX II

Glossary of Names

- Agilulf: Lombard King after the death of Autharis in 590.
- Alboin: King of the Lombards who invaded Italy in 568. d. 572.
- Albsuinda: Daughter of Alboin by Chlodosind.
- Amalasantha: Queen of the Goths, daughter of Theodoric.
- Amatus: Burgundian Patrician killed by the Lombards.
- Amo: Lombard duke who invaded Gaul.
- Anastasia: Empress, wife of Tiberius, mother of Constantina. Letter 30
- Andreas: Frankish ambassador to Romanus.
- Andreas: Imperial legate to Theudebert.
- Atalaric: Son of Amalasantha and Theodoric.
- Athanagild: King of the Visigoths (554-567).
- Athanagild: Son of Hermangild and Ingund.
- Audovald: One of Childebert's commanders who invaded Italy.
- Audovera: First wife of Chilperic.
- Aunacharius: Bishop of Auxerre.
- Autharis: Lombard King from 584 to 590.
- Babo: Legate of Childebert.
- Baduarius: Commander and son-in-law of the Emperor Justin killed by the Lombards.
- Baian: The title or in fact the name of the Chief of the Avars.
- Belisarius: Byzantine general under Justinian.

Berhefried: Rebellious Austrasian duke.

Billulf: Relative of Grasulf. Letter 48.

Bodegiselus: Legate to Constantinople for Childebert with Gripo and Evantius.

Brunhild: Daughter of Athanagild and Goiswinth, wife of Sigebert and mother of Childebert.

Butilinus: One of the two Alamanni brothers who invaded Italy during Theudebald's reign.

Cedinus (Henus): A commander of Childebert who invaded Italy. Letter 40.

Childebert I: King of the Franks d. 558.

Childebert II: King of Austrasia d. 595. Ingund's brother.

Chilperic: King of Neustria. d. 584.

Chosroes I: Persian Emperor at the time of Justinian.

Cleph: Lombard King from 572-574.

Chlodosind (Chlothsind): Sister of Childebert married to Alboin.

Chramnichis: Frankish duke who invaded Tridentum.

Clovis: Son of Chilperic and Audovera.

Constantianus: A Byzantine general under Justinian who replaced Mundus.

Constantina: Augusta, wife of Maurice, daughter of Tiberius. Letters 29 and 44.

Constantius: Bishop of Milan.

Cothro: Chamberlain, legate of Childebert. Letter 42.

Cunimund: King of the Gepids, father of Rosamund.

Desiderius: Duke, military commander of Chilperic.

Domitian: Bishop of Melitus, cousin of Maurice. Letter 33.

Egidius: Bishop of Rheims.

Ennodius: Bishop and legate of Childebert. Letter 25.

Euin: Duke of Trient, legate from Agilulf to Childebert.

Eusebius: Legate of Childebert to Constantinople with Gripo and Bodegiselus.

Firminus: Legate of Sigebert to Constantinople.

Fredegund: Chilperic second wife and queen.

Gisulf: First Lombard duke of Friuli, brother of Grasulf and nephew of Alboin.

Goiswinth: Queen of Athanagild and Leuwigild, mother of Brunhild and Galswinth.

Godigisel: Austrasian duke.

Gogo: Governor of Childebert.

Grasulf: Lombard duke of Friuli, brother of Gisulf.

Gregory: Pope, after death of Pelagius II in 590.

Gripo: Sword-bearer, legate of Childebert. Letter 25.

Grisulf: Lombard duke, son of Grasulf of Friuli. Letter 41.

Gundovald: Austrasian duke who saved young Childebert from Chilperic.

Gundovald: The pretender brought back from Constantinople by the Austrasian nobles.

Guntram: King of Burgundy d. 593.

Guntram Boso: Rebellious Austrasian duke.

Hermangild: Son of Leuwigild, husband of Ingund and father of Athanagild.

Ingund: Daughter of Sigebert and Brunhild, wife of Hermangild and mother of Athanagild.

Iocundus: Bishop, legate of Childebert. Letter 42.

Italica: Sicilian patrician, wife of Venantius. Letter 38.

John: Imperial legate to Theudebald.

John: Quaestor. Letter 35.

John the Faster: Patriarch of Constantinople. Letter 45.

Justinian: Byzantine Emperor from 527 to 565.

Justin II: Byzantine Emperor from 565 to 578.

Laurentius: Patriarch of Milan. Letter 46.

Leander: Bishop of Seville, brother of Theodosia.

Leontius: Imperial legate to Theudebald.

Leuardus: Envoy of Theudebald to Justinian.

Leudegisel: General of Guntram who killed Mummolus.

Leutharis: One of the two Alamanni brothers who invaded Italy during the reign of Theudebald.

Leuvigild: King of the Visigoths from 572 to 586.

Liberius: Justinian's general in Spain.

Lothar I: Father of Sigebert, Guntram and Chilperic d. 561.

Lothar II: Son of Chilperic and Fredegund. d. 629.

Lupus: Duke of Champagne, supporter of Brunhild.

Magnus: Curator. Letter 36.

Marcias: Gothic general under Wittigis.

Maurice: Byzantine emperor from 582 to 602.

Merovech: Son of Chilperic and Audovera, married Brunhild.

Missurius: Imperial legate to Theudebald.

Mummolus: Burgundian general who defected to Gundovald.

Mundus: Byzantine general under Justinian.

Nordulf: Mercenary Lombard general. Letter 41.

Olo: One of Childebert's generals who invaded Italy.

Osso: Imperial general. Letter 41.

Paul: Princeps Senatus, father of Maurice. Letter 37.

Pelagius II: Pope from 578 to 590.

Peter: Envoy of Justinian to the Goths.

Radan: Chamberlain and Legate of Childebert. Letter 25.

Rosamund: Daughter of Cunimund, wife of Alboin and Theodatus.

Rauching: Rebellious Austrasian duke.

Recared: King of the Visigoths after the death of his father Leuwigild in 586.

Rigunth: Daughter of Chilperic and Fredegund.

Rodan: Lombard duke who invaded Gaul.

Romanus: Exarch of Italy from 589 to 596.

Solonius: Bishop of Embrum.

Sagittarius: Bishop of Gap.

Secundinus: Legate of Theudebert.

Sigebert: King of Austrasia, father of Childebert. d. 575.

Sisinnius: Imperial Master of the Troops at Susa.

Smaragdus: Exarch of Ravenna from 585 to 589 and again in 602.

Solomon: Imperial ambassador to Theudebert.

Syagrius: Burgundian count, legate to Constantinople.

Sisbert: Assassin of Hermangild.

Teias: King of the Ostrogoths after Totila.

Theodatus: Nephew of Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths.

Theodore: Imperial ambassador to Theudebert.

Theodore: Bishop of Marseilles.

Theodore: Magister Officiorum. Letter 34.

Theodoric: King of the Ostrogoths from 471 to 526.

Theodosia: Queen of Leuvigild, mother of Hermangild and Recared.

Theodosius: Eldest son of Maurice. Letter 43.

Theudebald: Frankish King from 548 to 555, son of Theudebert.

Theudebert I: Frankish King from 534 to 548.

Theudebert: Son of Chilperic and Audovera.

Theuderic: Frankish King, father of Theudebert I. d. 534.

Tiberius: Byzantine emperor from 578 to 582.

Totila: King of the Ostrogoths from 541 to 552.

Ursio: Austrasian Duke.

Venantius: Sicilian patrician, husband of Italica. Letter 39.

Wandeln: Childebert's second governor.

Warinar: Legate of Sigebert to Constantinople.

Wittigis: King of the Ostrogoths from 536 to 541.

Zaban: Lombard duke who invaded Gaul.

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