

THE LANGUAGE OF THE FRANKS ¹

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I

IN the last few years of the reign of Louis the German (840-76) the first German poet known by name, Otfrid, a monk and teacher at the monastery of Weissenburg or Wissembourg, completed his verse epic on the life and teaching of Christ. He wrote his *Liber Evangeliorum* or gospel book not in Latin but in his vernacular, which he called "frenkisg". The Franks, he explained, were as great and brave as any nation, as the Romans and the Greeks, the Medes and the Persians: "Why then should the Franks alone not sing God's praise in Frankish?"

"Uuánana sculun Fráncon éinon thaz biuuánkon,
ni sie in frénkisgon bigínnen, sie gótes lób singen?" ²

Proud of being a Frank Otfrid calls his own language each time he mentions it in the vernacular "frenkisg".³ But when he refers to his mother tongue in Latin he uses, with one exception ("francisce"), the word "theotisca". In this different practice lie both an anachronism and a new reality not then perhaps fully recognized. His "frenkisg" was the anachronism, his "theotisca lingua" the new reality. Yet, who was to know that the empire of the Franks, which had for the first time in history brought together Gaul and Germany, and in its last hundred years Italy too, was nearing its end? It is true the *regnum Francorum* had been divided a generation before Otfrid's time. But partitions had formed part of Frankish political history since the foundation of the empire nearly four hundred years before Otfrid. He could not know that the Frankish Empire had now broken

¹ A lecture delivered in the Library series of public lectures.

² Otfrid. I, I, 33-34. Extracts in W. Braune—K. Helm, *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch* (13th edn., 1958), where bibliographical details are found.

³ "In frenkisgon": I. I. 34, 46, 126; III. 7, 13. Also with reference to language: I. I, 114; I. I, 122; I. 3, 46; V. 14, 3.

apart for good. He and his contemporaries must have thought that it still existed just as he thought that his vernacular was still "frenkisg". He used the word in a way, however, which makes it clear that he meant the language of the whole "ôstarrîhhi" or eastern half of the Empire, i.e. the new German language. In Latin, it seems, he could no longer call his language by its ethnic name.¹ "Francus" and "franciscus" denoted a political and legal concept, and "Francia" was acquiring a narrower meaning. His Latin term "lingua theotisca" had been in existence for about a hundred years. But the German word "diutisk" does not seem to have been available to him.² At any rate it is not attested before the year 1000 when it is first used by Notker Teutonicus of St. Gall. Thus it appears that just as the *regnum Francorum* had irrevocably declined without Otfrid knowing it, the "Frankish" language had also given way to a new reality: German. He may not have realized this either. Historians tell how the Frankish Empire declined and finally broke apart. It is the linguist's task to trace the Frankish language.

II

In the centuries immediately preceding the emergence of the German language the one linguistic phenomenon which overshadows all else is the so-called Second or High German Sound Shift.

As a result of this sound shift "p" "t" "k" of Primitive Germanic became "ff" or "pf", "ss" ("z̄z̄") or "ts", "ch" or "kh" in High German. It thus accounts for the differences in the cognate words English "open", "water", "make" and German "offen", "Wasser", "machen" or "pound", "tin", "can" and "Pfund", "Zinn", "kann" (older "chan") or "help", "heart" and "helfen", "Herz".

It is this phenomenon more than any other which

¹ It is perhaps significant that the designation 'f' = "francisce" which is found in a group of East Franconian and Alemannic glosses in the first half of the ninth century disappears later in the century. Cf. B. Schreyer, "Eine althochdeutsche Schriftsprache", *Beitr.*, lxxiii (1951), 351-86.

² In this I follow the argument of H. Eggers, "Nachlese zur Frühgeschichte des Wortes *deutsch*", *Beitr.* (Halle), lxxxii (1961), 157-73.

immediately marks off High German from the other Germanic languages. It occurred in the preliterate centuries between the fall of the Roman Empire and the emergence of a written vernacular, not before 400 and not after the middle of the eighth century. It is this period of time which saw on the one hand the rise of the Franks as *the* successor nation to the Western Roman Empire and on the other hand the formation of the German language, in which process the consonantal shift was the foremost step. The sources which give us information on this period and must answer our questions concerning the time and place of origin are sparse. They are exclusively Latin or Byzantine, providing German place-names, personal names or, more rarely, appellatives. From these few hundred words recorded in Greek or Latin, more correctly in the Vulgar Latin orthography of those centuries, it is generally concluded that the Second Sound Shift arose in the south: in Bavarian according to the older view¹; in Bavarian and Alemannic according to Schwarz and others²; in Langobardic and Alemannic according to Steche³; or in Alemannic according to Mitzka.⁴ The Alemannic origin is now

¹ See K. Wagner, *Deutsche Sprachlandschaften*. Deutsche Dialektgeographie, xxiii (Marburg, 1927), 40 ff. ("Südosten"); A. Bach, *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache* (4th edn., Heidelberg, 1949), § 59; H. Brinkmann, *Sprachwandel und Sprachbewegungen in althochdeutscher Zeit* (Jena, 1931).

² See E. Schwarz, "Die althochdeutsche Lautverschiebung im Albairischen", *Beitr.*, I (1927), 242 ff.

³ Theodor Steche, "Zeit und Ursachen der hochdeutschen Lautverschiebung", *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, lxii (1937), 1-56; "Die Entstehung der Spiranten in der hochdeutschen Lautverschiebung", *ibid.* lxiv. 123-48. See also W. Betz, "Das gegenwärtige Bild des Althochdeutschen", *Der Deutschunterricht* (1953), 6, 94-108.

⁴ Walther Mitzka, (1) "Zur Frage des Alters der hochdeutschen Lautverschiebung", *Festschrift Helm* (Tübingen, 1951), 63-70; (2) "Die althochdeutsche Lautverschiebung und der ungleiche fränkische Anteil", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, lxxxiii (1951), 107-13; (3) "Die Begründung der althochdeutschen Sprachgeschichte durch die Alemannen", *Grundfragen der alemannischen Geschichte, Vorträge und Forschungen*, I (1955), 53-63; (4) "Stammesgeschichte und althochdeutsche Dialektgeographie", *Wirrendes Wort*, II (1951-2), 65-72; (5) "Das Langobardische und die althochdeutsche Dialektgeographie", *Zeitschrift für Mundartforschung*, xx (1951), 1-7; (6) "Hochdeutsche Mundarten" in *Deutsche Philologie im Aufriss*, I (2nd edn., 1957), 1599-1728; (7) "Hessen in althochdeutscher und mittelhochdeutscher Dialektgeographie", *Beitr.*, lxxv (1953), 131-57.

most widely accepted. From this original core the features or at any rate some of the features of the Second Sound Shift are assumed to have spread outwards : to Bavarian in their entirety, to Langobardic and Frankish partially. The wave-theory of the dialect geographers has been elaborated in greatest detail by Theodor Frings,¹ while others are satisfied with the broad assumption of monogenesis in the south and gradual and graded spread northwards. Frankish is thus seen in historical times to straddle three linguistic types : in the north the unshifted type called Low-Franconian, representing so to speak the pure unadulterated form of Frankish² ; in the centre Middle Franconian³ with a limited amount of shifting and so-called relic forms (“ it ”, “ dat ”, “ dit ”, “ wat ”, etc. for High German “ es ”, “ das ”, “ dies ”, “ was ”, etc.) and in the south Rhenish Franconian with a limited amount of shifting but no “ relic words ”. The last two types are therefore believed to be those Frankish dialects which were exposed to a powerful southern linguistic thrust which broke them out of their older Frankish-Westgermanic context and made them High German albeit with certain exceptions.⁴ I accept the argument of E. Schwarz⁵ that East Franconian derives essentially from the same basis as Alemannic and Bavarian, that is the Elbe Germanic group. East Franconia was a political notion and had little to do with the “ Franks ” and “ Frankish ”.

While the question of the place of origin is answered more

¹ E.g. in numerous publications now collected in *Sprache und Geschichte* vols. i and ii (Halle, 1956) and *Grundlegung einer Geschichte der deutschen Sprache* (3rd edn., Halle, 1957) ; earlier “ Über das Alter der Benrather Linie ”, *Beitr.*, xxxix (1914), 362-76 ; “ Mittelfränkisch—niederfränkische Studien. I. Das ripuarisch-niederfränkische Übergangsgebiet ”, *Beitr.*, xli (1916), 193-271 ; “ Zur Geschichte des Niederfränkischen ”, *ibid.* xlii (1917), 177-248.

² Cf. Mitzka, *op. cit.* (4) “ . . . Niederfranken . . . eigentliche, unvermischte Franken ”. . . (p. 66) ; “. . . die eigentlichen Franken, das sind die salischen ” (p. 69).

³ This division goes back to W. Braune, “ Zur Kenntnis des Fränkischen und zur hochdeutschen Lautverschiebung ”, *Beitr.*, i (1874), 1-56.

⁴ This assumption was also made by C. Karstien, *Historische deutsche Grammatik* (Heidelberg, 1939), pp. 33, 123 ff., while P. Lessiak, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des deutschen Konsonantismus* (Prague, 1933), p. 169, thought that the medial fortis stops might have undergone an “ organische Entwicklung ” in Middle Franconian.

⁵ “ Die elbgermanische Grundlage des Ostfränkischen ”, *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung*, xv (1955), 31-67.

readily the chronological question is treated cautiously by most experts. Theodor Frings however was willing to offer a tentative chronology.¹ Between Strasbourg and Speyer Franks and Alamans were facing each other. The Franks took over the Second Sound Shift since 500 but not the shift of "p" > "pf", the spread of which was arrested along the old tribal boundary and has stayed there since 800. The other features advanced further north, but by 1000 the great wave of the Sound Shift was still to the south of Cologne and the northernmost isogloss of the Sound Shift was not established before 1500. In Hesse, he believes, the transition to shifted forms was completed by 1000. The formation of the present-day dialect areas has, according to Frings, nothing to do with the tribal dialects of the Age of Migration. It is entirely a reflection of late medieval territorial history between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. According to the wave-theory of the linguistic geographers the Frankish Rhinelands are a kind of funnel for southern or Alemannic consonantal innovations. If we accept this view we understand why Otfrid's "frenkig" of the ninth century was already an "Alemannized" Frankish. But what was Charlemagne's language around 800? Did he speak what, somewhat anachronistically, we should call Netherlandish or did he speak High German? His own family estates lay between the Meuse, Moselle and Rhine, and Aix-la-Chapelle was his favourite capital. We would thus expect the early Carolingians or Arnulfings and Charlemagne himself to have spoken Netherlandish rather than High German if Frings is right.²

Theodor Steche³ ventured an even more detailed chronology. He gave the following dates for the shift of the voiceless Germanic plosives: in Langobardic between 548 and 573, in southern Alemannic between 554 and 580, in Alsace by 610, in the area of the Rhine-Franks between Metz and Speyer by 640, in the area of Trier by 715. Mitzka (op. cit. 7) mentions the middle of the eighth century for Hesse.

¹ *Grundlegung*, pp. 15, 38.

² Braune, op. cit. thought that the Sound Shift spread rapidly immediately after its inception and that Charlemagne spoke Middle Franconian.

³ Op. cit. pp. 18-19, 141-3.

III

The theory of monogenesis and largescale spread rests on the following foundations. First, dialect geographers assume that the core of the Sound Shift must be much smaller than its Old High German or present area. They are doctrinally committed to the view of a core and subsequent radiation.¹

Secondly, the earliest sources showing the Sound Shift hail from the south. W. Mitzka² gives the Alemannic Runic inscription from Wurmlingen, "Idorih", of about 600 as the earliest datable piece of evidence. But O. Höfler³ has cast serious doubt on the usefulness of this name since the Germanic unstressed suffix "-ik" (including "-rik") has its own history and shows a widespread development to "-ich", which is not connected with the Second Sound Shift.⁴ Gregory of Tours at the end of the sixth century mentions an Alemannic duke "Buccelenus"⁵ who was killed in 554 and a Langobardic duke "Zaban"⁶ who invaded Gaul in 573. Both these names seem to contain an affricate "ts" which must have arisen from an earlier plosive "t". In fact, in about 558, the Byzantine historian Agathias gave the name of the Alemannic duke as "Butilinos" while in about 593-4 his countryman Evagrius recorded the form "Buselinos".⁷

The Fredegar Chronicle of the seventh century in a section from 614 provides forms for the word "Alsace" which undoubtedly point to a pronunciation with a fricative or affricate.⁸

¹ Mitzka (2): "Eine derartig grosse Fläche kann nicht gut der Entstehungsraum sein" (p. 109).

² E.g. in W. Braune—W. Mitzka, *Althochdeutsche Grammatik* (9th edn., 1959), §1, Anm. 1; §83.

³ "Die zweite Lautverschiebung bei Ostgermanen und Westgermanen", *Beitr.*, lxxix (1957), 295 ff.

⁴ This argument is accepted by R. Schützeichel, *Die Grundlagen des westlichen Mitteldeutschen* (Tübingen, 1961), p. 279.

⁵ *Decem Libri Historiarum*, iii. 32; iv. 9.

⁶ *Ibid.* iv. 44.

⁷ Cf. Steche, *op. cit.* pp. 2, 125-6.

⁸ J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Fredegarius. The fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (London, 1960), "Alesaciones" (p. 29), also "Alsatius" (p. 29), "Alesacius" (p. 36), "Alesasis" (p. 121). The Germanic root contains a "t", cf. English "sit" or the analogous place-name "Somerset".

The oldest Langobardic law, the *Edictus Rothari*¹ of 643, the oldest manuscript of which dates from around 700, also attests the Second Sound Shift. In a charter of 665 from Metz or Speyer "p" is shifted.² At the end of the seventh century the anonymous geographer of Ravenna records "Ziurichi" (Zürich), "Ziaberna"³ (Zabern < "Taverna", now Saverne) and much further north "Anternacha" (Andernach < "Antunnacum") and the river "Arnefa" (Erft, "Arnapa"). Shifted forms occur also in the earliest Weissenburg documents from the end of the seventh or the early eighth century. In a letter of about 738 from the pope to Bonifatius the name of the Hessen (Latin "Chatti") is given as "Hessis" (dat. pl.) with an undoubtedly shifted form. An original charter of 782 further provides the form "Berinscozo"⁴ ("Bärenschoß") for the area of Marburg, Hesse.

In the western Moselle valley many unshifted place-names have survived to the present day, e.g. "Ettelbrück", "Tawern" (< Taverna). It has been convincingly demonstrated⁵ that the western Moselle valley stayed Romance speaking for several centuries after the Frankish conquest. When these areas eventually became German speaking the place-names remained in their unshifted forms. This, of course, proves that Moselle Franconian possessed the features of the Second Sound Shift before the extinction of Romance. Robert Bruch⁶ believed that German gained the upperhand over Romance in the course of the seventh century and that this presupposed the existence of the features of the Second Sound Shift in Moselle Franconian by 600. Rudolf Schützeichel thinks this dating much too early and believes that Romance speech lingered on until 1000 and that certain proof for the presence of the Second Sound Shift in the western Moselle valley is not to be found before the end of the ninth century.⁷

¹ G. Baesecke, "Die deutschen Worte der germanischen Gesetze", *Beitr.*, lix. 84-94.

² Cf. Steche, *op. cit.* pp. 132 f. "stopha".

³ Cf. Steche, *op. cit.* pp. 13, 137 f.; Mitzka (1), p. 69.

⁴ Cf. Mitzka (7), p. 136.

⁵ For a summary see Rudolf Schützeichel, *Die Grundlagen des westlichen Mitteldeutschen* (= *Hermaea*, N.F. vol. x, Tübingen, 1961), pp. 199-238.

⁶ "Die Lautverschiebung bei den Westfranken", *Zeitschrift für Mundartforschung*, xxiii (1955), 129-47.

⁷ See Schützeichel, *op. cit.* p. 237.

But even this is a century before the time which had hitherto been assumed likely.

As to the boundary between Low German and High German it has already been stated that the dialect geographers, e.g. Frings, assume that it arose between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, to be exact between 1029 and 1386.¹ The place-name evidence adduced in support of this date is extremely weak. Schützeichel² is convinced that this northernmost High German dialect, known as Ripuarian, had the features of the Second Sound Shift in their specifically Central German realization by the end of the ninth century.³

On the face of it it cannot be denied, therefore, that the written evidence points to early occurrence of the Second Sound Shift in the south and later occurrence in the Rhineland between Mainz and Cologne. To some extent this is surely due to the fact that we simply have more early documents from the south than from the north. To some extent it is also an indication of a genuine difference in time. This difference may, however, well be no greater than about 250-300 years. Any exact dating of the occurrence of the Sound Shift such as that attempted by Steche is largely illusory. It is at best a dating of orthographic changes.

The evidence of early shifted forms must however also be compared with the evidence of early unshifted forms. Gregory of Tours's "Strateburgum" (IX. 36; X. 19) for Strasbourg shows such an unshifted form. It is generally assumed that this proves that the shift had not yet occurred towards the end of the sixth century along the northern and western fringe of Alemannic.⁴ But where would Gregory of Tours have had his German from? From the Merovingian courts surely, to whose entourage he often belonged. Strasbourg was a city of some importance to the Merovingians from the time of Clovis's victory over the Alamans. They would have had their own name for

¹ Op. cit. *Beitr.*, xxxix. 374.

² Op. cit. pp. 298 ff.; id. "Neue Kunde zur Lautverschiebung im Westfränkischen," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, xciii (1964), 19-30.

³ Frings, op. cit. gives the ninth and tenth centuries for Ripuarian.

⁴ Cf. Steche, op. cit. pp. 5 f.; W. Braune—W. Mitzka, *Althochdeutsche Grammatik*, § 83, Anm. 3.

this important city. And their Salian Frankish would, of course, have had unshifted consonants. That Gregory should give foreign, e.g. Alemannic or Langobard, personal names ("Buccelinus", "Zaban") in their foreign form is understandable, especially if such names were not also current among the Franks. For towns, however, he would surely use the Salian Frankish form. His "Strateburgum" can therefore not be proof that the Alamans of Strasbourg had not yet shifted Germanic "t" to "zz" in his time. Further early unshifted forms must also be seen in this light.¹ And the possibility of Latinization is, of course, always present.

The doctrinal assumption of monogenesis and the evidence of the earliest sources are not the only props for the theory of the dialect geographers. There is, thirdly, the evidence of Old High German phonology as it is revealed in the literary documents. Bavarian and Alemannic documents not only show the shift of the Germanic voiceless stops to fricatives or affricates more completely than Franconian or Langobardic but also the complementary shift of "b" "d" "g" > "p" "t" "k" and of Gmc. "th" > "d" earlier than any other German dialects. It is this which has earned Alemannic and Bavarian the designation of "Strengalt-hochdeutsch". The assumption, however, that the more far-reaching the change the earlier it must have occurred and that this area alone can therefore be regarded as the area of origin and spontaneous evolution is nevertheless unproved and unwarranted. All linguistic change should first of all and primarily be considered in the light of internal structural conditions.

The fourth argument is the one dearest to the heart of the dialect geographers. The present-day dialect map shows that the dialects north of Düsseldorf show no signs of the Second Sound Shift, that the dialects south of say Speyer show it in its entirety and that the dialects in between show a partial participation. The nearer to Alemannic the more, the further away the

¹ E.g. Gregory: "Gripo, genere Francus" (x. 2), "Erpo" (v. 14), "Chilpericus". "Beppolenus" (v. 29; viii. 33), "Chuppanis" (v. 39), "Chuppa" (vii. 39) if they contain Germanic "—pp—" would not be shifted anywhere in Frankish. But compare Gregory's "Gripo" with "Grifo", the name of one of the sons of Charles Martel, who witnessed a diploma in 742 which is preserved in the original.

less. It is this graded participation expressed visually on the dialect maps by the so-called Rhenish Fan which has seemed such a strong argument for monogenesis in the south and subsequent victorious advance of the Second Sound Shift into the old Frankish areas to beyond Cologne. The isoglosses which form the ribs of the fan are, however, of very unequal significance. Two are of great weight : the Benrath line in the north, separating High German from Low German, and the " p " / " pf " isogloss in the south. North of the latter isogloss, which most scholars consider to coincide approximately with the ancient boundary between Alamans and Franks, a limited type of the Second Sound Shift is found. But the internal isoglosses of the Franconian dialects between the two important isoglosses can be regarded as minor. They concern only small isolated groups of words, e.g. the predominantly unstressed particles " what ", " that ", " this ", " it " and words with the relatively rare sound group " rp " like " warp ", " thorp ". In the case of the particles early lenition of Germanic " t " to " d " removed these words from those to be affected by the Sound Shift. Höfler ¹ makes the valid point that these " relic words " have characteristically undergone a special development in English and Scandinavian, too. In English " th " has become voiced, in Scandinavian it has developed to " d " not " t " as is otherwise the rule. Jean Fourquet, Bruch and Schützeichel ² agree that these words are not to be regarded as " relics " which survived a northward thrust but as forms which are to be understood as conditioned by syntactical circumstances.

That there has been and still is a gradual advance of High German northwards is a fact. What is remarkable about this advance is its extraordinary slowness in the last thousand years. If the dialect geographers are right the advance of the features of the Second Sound Shift in the last two or three pre-literary centuries must have been characterized by an absolutely unprecedented speed.

¹ See *op. cit.* pp. 290 f.

² J. Fourquet, *Les mutations consonantiques du germanique* (Strasbourg, 1948), p. 98 ; R. Bruch, *op. cit.* pp. 139-40, 147 ; R. Schützeichel, *op. cit.* pp. 287-91, 314-16.

IV

Are there any historical reasons why the Franks of *Francia Rinensis* or Austrasia should adopt Alemannic linguistic features at such an unprecedented speed in something like three centuries, between say 550 and 850? The answer is a definite no.

The Franks¹ emerged into history in the middle of the third century when their name is mentioned for the first time. In 256-7 they invaded Gaul. In the third century three great Germanic warrior leagues had taken over the role of the small, disorganized Germanic tribes of the first century. Hardly any of those tribes and their names² had survived the offensive warfare of Rome and the internecine struggles of the first century. In the course of the second century the tribes appear to have re-organized themselves in big but loose warrior confederations: the Alamans in the south, first mentioned in 210; the Franks facing *Germania Inferior*; and behind them the Saxons. These new names seem to express the new organizations: the Alamans, meaning "all men" or perhaps simply "confederates"; the Franks "the free", "the unattached", "the independent",³

¹ General reference is here made to: W. J. de Boone, *De Franken van hun eerste optreden tot de dood van Childerik* (Amsterdam, 1954); E. Ewig, "Die Völkerwanderung, Merowingerzeit, Karolingerzeit" in P. Rassow, *Deutsche Geschichte im Überblick* (1953); *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. i (Utrecht, 1949): Ch. Verlinden, "De Frankische kolonisatie", 215-51, F. L. Ganshof, "Het tijdperk van de Merowingen", "Het tijdperk van de Karolingen", 252-366; F. Lot, *Les invasions germaniques* (3rd edn., 1945); F. Petri, *Zum Stand der Diskussion über die fränkische Landnahme und die Entstehung der germanisch-romanischen Sprachgrenze* (Darmstadt, 1954); E. Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne d'après les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire*, vols. i-iv (1950-9); L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stämme bis zum Ausgang der Völkerwanderung*, vol. ii (2nd edn., 1938); E. Schwarz, *Germanische Stammeskunde* (1956); F. Steinbach, "Das Frankenreich" in *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, i (8th edn., 1954); Ch. Verlinden, *Les origines de la frontière linguistique en Belgique et la colonisation franque* (Brussels, 1955); J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West* (London, 1957); id. *The Long-haired Kings* (London, 1962).

² The name of the Frisians is an exception. But the survival of the name does not necessarily imply the identity of the original and of the later bearers of the name.

³ Most recent authorities connect "francus" with German "frech" ("proud," "arrogant"). In Old Norse there was a cognate "frakkr" ("courageous"), e.g. F. Kluge—W. Mitzka, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (18th edn.,

i.e. tribesmen who had escaped submission to Rome or forced allied status¹ in the first and second centuries; and the Saxons, the "sahsnōtas" or "sword companions", perhaps "the sword league".² The typology of tribal nomenclature seems to me to point to "free", "independent" as the meaning of the name of the Franks.

After their first irruption into Gaul the Franks took possession of the land between the Rhine and the Waal which Rome abandoned. By the end of the third century Franks were in Batavia up to the Scheldt. But these Franks now recognized Roman sovereignty as "dedititii". At the same time numerous groups of tribesmen appear to have been settled as "laeti" behind the Roman frontier. After a period of consolidation lasting until about 341 a northern group of Franks whose name is given as Salians took over Toxandria (about 350) which is Dutch Brabant. Under the Emperor Julian they were confirmed in their new lands as "dedititii" or as "foederati". The leading families of the Franks then played a big part in Roman affairs.³ Merobaudes became "magister peditum praesentalis", Mallobaudes a "comes domesticorum", although he held at the same time the kingship of *Francia*, Richomerus was "magister utriusque militiae", Bauto the son-in-law of Emperor Arcadius, Arbogastes chose an emperor (Eugenius) and negotiated for the Empire with other Frankish "reguli". It is not surprising that when the year of the great invasions, 406, came, the Franks were among the defenders of the Empire. The Rhine-Franks, however, were still on the right bank of the Rhine as late as the middle

1960); J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, i (1959), 845; see also J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West*, p. 67; id., *The Long-haired Kings*, p. 149. There is, of course, no reason why the etymon should have had the same meaning in Frankish. In Merovingian Latin "francus" designated the freeman, i.e. any free subject of the Merovingians irrespective of race. Perhaps this extension occurred because the Salians were still aware of the meaning of "free". Cf. F. Lot, *op. cit.* pp. 255 ff.; G. Kurth, *Études franques*, i (1919), 100.

¹ Subject tribes seem to have been the Usipetes, Batavi, Tencterii, Tungri, Canninefates and Frisians.

² Cf. Schützeichel, *op. cit.* pp. 72 f.

³ Cf. Verlinden, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 226 f.; K. F. Stroheker, "Zur Rolle der Heermeister fränkischer Abstammung im späten vierten Jahrhundert", *Historia*, iv (1955), 314-30.

of the fifth century, while the Salians concluded again a treaty with Rome as "foederati" in 451. This did not seem to have stopped them from occupying Cambrai and Tournai for good in 454. For something like 200 years the northern or Salian Franks had thus been living on former Roman territory in close political and military relations with the Romans when the Rhine-Franks at last in 457 took Cologne definitively. Even under Childeric who died in 479-80 at Tournai the Salians appear to have still been "foederati", rapacious but also occasionally protective allies of the struggling Romans. The Salians undoubtedly became much more romanized but also much more advanced politically and militarily than the Franks living still beyond the Rhine. While the Rhine Franks appear to have been battering against the Romans around Cologne for nearly a century the northern Franks were quiescent. The Salians were "dedititii" inside the Empire, the Rhine Franks alternately allies and enemies outside the Empire¹. The Rhine Franks, although like their northern neighbours, in close contact with Rome, fighting for instance against the Huns under Aëtius in 451, were less affected by Roman influence and continued rubbing shoulders with their close associates the Hessians and their enemies the Alamans. In their own tribal origins they appear to have been near to the tribes who became Alamans.² The Salians and other northern Franks, such as the Chattuarii and Chamavi, had their closest ethnic links with the North Sea group of Germanic tribes, although history made them later appear very different from the Saxons and Frisians.³ The war leagues of the third to fifth centuries were undoubtedly composed of very disparate elements, which does not mean that sub-tribes can be easily identified. There can be no question of a common ethnic origin of the Franks.⁴

On account of different historical and cultural development any original ethnic and perhaps linguistic differences between

¹ Cf. Verlinden, *Frontière*, pp. 57 ff.

² Cf. Schützeichel, *op. cit.* pp. 56 ff.

³ Cf. Schützeichel, *op. cit.* pp. 74 ff.

⁴ Cf. Schwarz, *Stammeskunde*, p. 220; Verlinden, *Geschiedenis*, p. 251; M. Schönfeld—A. von Loey, *Historische Grammatica van het Nederlands* (1959), pp. xxvi-xxviii; F. Steinbach, *Das Frankenreich*, p. 3: "An gemeinsame Abstammung der Franken kann heute niemand mehr denken. Die fränkische Gemeinschaft ist ohne Frage aus vielerlei Völkerschaften zusammengewachsen."

the northern Franks and the Rhine Franks became even greater.¹ The *Francia* of the Salians was Roman extending from the "Silva Carbonaria" in Belgium to the Loire. In 481 Chlodowech or Clovis became king at Tournai and in 486 he took over the kingdom of Syagrius. Now the small people of the Salians spread as overlords over northern Gaul, like the Goths in Italy and Spain, the Vandals in Africa, the Burgundians in "Sapaudia". And they all shared eventually the same fate. Flanders, its coastal regions inundated or swampy, was left almost deserted. According to Verlinden² the Salians contributed nothing to the later colonization and reclamation of Flemish Belgium. The Netherlands had in the sixth century been largely abandoned by the Franks. Low Germany north of Nimwegen was in the hands of the Saxons and Frisians. There is thus much evidence which helps us to understand the formation of a decisive linguistic boundary between Ripuarian High German and Netherlandish. The emigration of the northern Franks or most of them, above all the Salians, created a gap³ between the Rhine Franks and the Frisians, Saxons and other North-Sea Germanic tribes who settled north of the confines of the Merovingian Empire in the former homeland of the northern Franks.⁴

¹ Making a distinction between northern Franks and Rhine Franks is, of course, not the same as assuming the existence of a "Ripuarian tribe" as opposed to a "Salian tribe". On this see E. Ewig, "Die Civitas Ubiorum, die Francia Rinensis und das Land Ribuarien", *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, xix (1954), 1-29.

² *Frontière*, "Il est tout à fait impossible, dans ces conditions, que les Saliens, qui par-dessus le marché étaient dispersés, aient exercé une action quelconque sur la colonisation de la Belgique flamande et, par conséquent, sur la fixation de la frontière linguistique en Belgique et dans le Nord de la France" (p. 69). The evacuation of Flanders and Brabant by the Franks in the fifth and sixth centuries is also mentioned by Steinbach, *op. cit.* pp. 15-17.

³ The settlement of northern Rhine Franks in Kent, propounded by C. F. C. Hawkes (cf. "The Jutes in Kent", *Dark-Age Britain*, ed. D. B. Harden (London, 1956), pp. 91-111) and earlier by E. T. Leeds and J. E. A. Jolliffe, would of course widen the "gap" and provide further explanation.

⁴ Cf. F. Steinbach, *Das Frankenreich* pp. 26 f.: "Reichsfränkische Kulturströmungen haben die germanisch-romanische Sprachgrenze am Nord- und Ostrand der alten Kulturräume Galliens vorbereitet. Sie haben aber weit darüber hinaus auch die Zweiteilung des deutschen Sprachgebietes in Niederdeutsch und Hochdeutsch verursacht; denn die Grenze des Hochdeutschen (Mitteldeutsch und Oberdeutsch) gegenüber dem Niederdeutschen liegt in der Grenzzone des Merowingerreiches gegen die Friesen und Sachsen. Ganz

The gradual formation of the different dialects and the course of the Low German or Netherlandish—High German dialect boundary are, of course, the result of various historical and cultural factors operative during the following centuries. But the ultimate contrast between the two types of West Germanic languages can best be explained by the facts of early Frankish and Merovingian history.

In the first half of the sixth century Clovis and his successors incorporated all Frankish warrior groups in their kingdom, defeated the other competitors in Gaul, the Visigoths and Burgundians, and the Alamans, Thuringians and Bavarians. Clovis's victory over the Alamans (probably 506) created a mixed Frankish-Alemannic region south of the Main towards Speyer and united the Alamans and the Rhine Franks in the eastern half of the Empire. Gradually the eastern kingdom, *Francia Rinensis* later Austrasia, rose with its own law, the *Lex Ribuaria*, collected probably in the fourth decade of the seventh century. This was in force, characteristically, up to the Scheldt and "Silva Carbonaria" in the west. This eastern kingdom had Frisians and Saxons as its northern, Alamans as its southern neighbours and subjects and was almost wholly German. It is evident, however, that the power and influence of the Merovingians remained weak east of the Rhine.¹ Having defeated the Alamans the Merovingians seemed to have been satisfied with nominal overlordship. It was left to the Carolingians in the eighth and ninth centuries to incorporate the regions east of the Rhine politically and ecclesiastically in their Empire. It is they who encouraged and enforced the conversion of the Germans to Christianity, from the Alamans in the south to the Frisians and Saxons in the north. There is, however, no doubt that if anybody had any power to influence others it was the Austrasian Franks. Although the Merovingians might have exercised little power over the Alamans and less over the Bavarians the relationship was never reversed.

Mitteldeutschland aber zwischen Niederdeutschland und Oberdeutschland von der oberen Mosel über das Rhein-Main Gebiet bis nach Thüringen ist durch eine fränkische Sprachschicht zusammengefasst worden und seine Südgrenze gegen Oberdeutschland ist eine Stufengrenze des reichsfränkischen Kultureinflusses".

¹ Schützeichel, op. cit. pp. 155-6.

From the early eighth century onwards nobody could have had any doubt as to where power lay.¹ There is thus no historical basis for the assumption of an Alemannic linguistic expansion into the regions of the Rhine Franks.

V

To consider the literary evidence we must first eliminate from the body of Old High German literature² all those documents which belong without doubt to the Alemannic, Bavarian or so-called East Franconian areas. What remains must be associated in one way or other with the Franks. In view of the general orthographic confusion of Old High German and the innumerable cross-currents of tradition and imitation these Franconian texts reveal an astonishing similarity. The difficulty is that hardly any documents can be localized with any degree of certainty. This is especially true of the larger literary works.

One document stands out from the rest: the so-called Malberg Glosses consisting of over 200 Germanic words in the *Lex Salica*³ of the early sixth century. Unfortunately these words are hopelessly distorted. As far as any safe conclusion can be drawn one can say that they represent an archaic form of West Germanic showing particular affinity neither with the later Anglo-Frisian nor the later High German branches of West Germanic.

¹ The Alemannic laws, the *Pactus Alamannorum* and the *Lex Alamannorum*, both dating from the first third of the eighth century, depend on the *Lex Salica*, contain Frankish words and were written down under Frankish guidance. Cf. G. Baesecke, "Die deutschen Worte der germanischen Gesetze", *Beitr.*, lix (1935), 26-37.

² On Old High German literature the following studies may be found useful: J. Knight Bostock, *A Handbook on Old High German Literature* (Oxford, 1955); H. de Boor, *Die Deutsche Literatur von Karl dem Grossen bis zum Beginn der höfischen Dichtung. 770-1170. Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, i (4th edn., 1960); G. Ehrismann, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, I. *Die althochdeutsche Literatur* (1932). The Franconian documents are listed in J. Franck, *Altfränkische Grammatik* (Göttingen, 1909).

³ See Schützeichel, *op. cit.* p. 124 where an up-to-date bibliography on the problem is given. On the language of the West Franks see further: E. Gamillscheg, *Romania Germanica*, vol. i (1934); E. Mackel, *Die germanischen Elemente in der französischen und provenzalischen Sprache* (1887); W. Waltemath, *Die fränkischen Elemente in der französischen Sprache* (1885).

They must represent the West Germanic of the Salian Franks or West Franks. They neither prove nor disprove the occurrence of the Second Sound Shift among the West Franks. They simply pre-date it. I indicated above, on historical grounds, that it is unlikely that the language of the Salian Franks had special affinities with those West Germanic dialects which later underwent the Second Sound Shift. But in any case it is highly unlikely that it continued to be spoken¹ by the time the Second Sound Shift took place in the northern regions.

Of the remaining documents two are very closely connected with the Carolingian Court. They are Einhard's *Vita Caroli Magni* (approx. 817-21) in which the German words for the months and the winds are given. Charlemagne is stated to have himself translated the Latin terms into his own language ("iuxta propriam linguam").² The other is the text of the *Strasbourg Oaths*³ of 842 recorded by Nithard. There Charles the Bald of the Western Kingdom swears an oath to his brother Louis the German in the German which must surely be the form spoken by the Carolingian kings themselves. The third text directly connected with the Carolingian kings is the *Ludwigslied* of 881-2. It is a poem in praise of the West Frankish King Louis III and his victory over the Vikings at Saucourt near the mouth of the

¹ The only reference which Gregory of Tours makes to languages actually spoken in Gaul does not mention Frankish. When King Gunthchramnus, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, arrived at Orléans (4 July 585) Gregory states, vii. 1: "Et hinc lingua Syrorum, hinc Latinorum, hinc etiam ipsorum Iudaeorum in diversis laudibus variae concrepabat, dicens: Vivat rex, regnumque eius in populis annis innumeris diletatur." His Germanic loan-words and other references prove nothing as to spoken Frankish, e.g. iii. 15: "Ecce enim *dies solis* adest—sic enim barbaries vocitare diem dominecum consueta est—"; iv. 51: "cum cultris validis, quos vulgo *scramasaxos* vocant"; ix. 13: "*morganegyba*, hoc est matutinale donum"; ix. 28: "cum duobus pateris ligneis, quas vulgo *bacchinon* vocant." The four letters which King Chilpericus added to the alphabet (v. 44) were, of course, meant to improve the spelling of the Latin of his time, not of Frankish.

² See H. Naumann—W. Betz, *Althochdeutsches Elementarbuch* (Berlin, 1962), p. 97. A useful list of Franconian texts is given on pp. 48 f. The Old High German *Isidor* is there given as Alemannic, with which many scholars would now disagree.

³ The text is found in Naumann—Betz, *op. cit.* p. 89 or in W. Braune, *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, with bibliography. For a discussion of the Old French version of the oaths see W. D. Elcock, *The Romance Languages* (1960), pp. 334-44.

Somme. The remarkable fact about these texts from the vicinity of the Carolingians is their similarity to each other. They represent a fairly homogeneous type of Old High German dialect traditionally known as Rhenish Franconian. This Rhenish Franconian is characterized among many other features by a restricted participation in the Second Sound Shift. Medial and final voiceless Germanic stops appear as fricatives, but in the initial position only the dental stop is shifted. The former " b " " d " " g " are not shifted to " p " " t " " k ", nor does the shift of the interdental fricative " th " to later " d " appear to have progressed very far, if at all. This Old High German dialect would seem to be the language of the Carolingians and of the Frankish Austrasian magnates from Aix or Aachen to Metz and Speyer. Otfrid of Weissenburg's language from the southernmost fringe of this area is characteristically very nearly the same, showing a few features reminiscent of Alemannic. This is what one would expect of a dialect from a border area.

One of the most intriguing texts of Old High German is the translation of Isidore of Seville's treatise *De Fide Catholica contra Judaeos*.¹ It probably dates from about 800 but it is impossible to localize. Murbach in Alsace, Metz, Mainz and Tours, even Orléans, have been suggested as possible places of origin. It is true there are more orthographic devices in *Isidor* than in any other Old High German document which are reminiscent of Merovingian Latin and early Romance spelling habits. A number of scholars have therefore seen its place of origin in Neustria (Sievers, Bruckner, W. von Wartburg, Eggers) and have called its language West Frankish. Seen purely linguistically the language of the *Isidor* stands closest to the Rhenish Franconian of the Carolingians. Wherever the translation may have originated it is therefore unavoidable that we must regard it as Austrasian Frankish. Since we do not know what West Frankish or Salian Frankish was like in the late eighth century, nor even whether such a language existed at that time, it seems

¹ Edition by G. A. Hench (Strassburg, 1893). See further J. Knight Bostock, *op. cit.* 107-13; Schützeichel, *op. cit.* 113-21; Hans Eggers, *Vollständiges lateinisch-althochdeutsches Wörterbuch zur althochdeutschen Isidor-Übersetzung* (Berlin, 1960), Einleitung.

unwarranted to call the language of *Isidor* West Frankish. Those scholars who, going even further,¹ state that the *Isidor* and the Old High German *Pariser Gespräche*² show that later West Frankish underwent the same linguistic developments as the Frankish along the Moselle and the Rhine, are caught in a complete vicious circle.

Old High German literary documents confirm only one thing, namely that Austrasian Frankish was a High German dialect which, all things considered, was amazingly homogeneous and showed no signs of having just emerged from the impact of a most powerful Alemannic thrust.

VI

Assuming for the sake of argument that the view of the southern origin of the Second Sound Shift is correct, how would the adoption have proceeded in Rhine Frankish? Mitzka³ suggested that the graded participation in the features of the Sound Shift is to be explained by the sound system of Frankish. It accepted from Upper German what it already possessed but rejected what was strange to it. Thus he points out that "ts" existed in the Frankish, indeed also the Saxon, sound system, while "pf" did not. However, he leaves completely out of account the distributional pattern. In initial position Frankish had no "ts", only medially and finally. His adoption theory therefore makes no sense structurally. English-speaking learners of German have no difficulty in producing "ts" medially or finally, for instance in German "Witz". They have "wits" in their own language. To produce "ts" in initial position, in say German "Zinn", "Zug", is an entirely different matter. This would have been the case in Rhine Frankish. The affricate "ts" would have been new in initial position as much as "pf" or "kch". Furthermore Mitzka weakens his own case in accepting

¹ E.g. Robert Bruch, op. cit. p. 139.

² See W. Braune—K. Helm, *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch*, pp. 9 ff.—I note that W. Mitzka, "Die mittelfränkischen Denkmäler in der althochdeutschen Literatur", *Zeitschrift für Mundartforschung*, xxx (1963/64), 31-6, also concludes that the language of the *Isidor* is Austrasian Franconian ("Mittelfränkisch der Oberschicht").

³ W. Mitzka, (2), p. 111.

that the shift of " p " in medial and final position proceeded via the affricate stage (" pf "). The affricate " pf " would, of course, have been alien. But even if the shift did not proceed via the affricate to the fricative, the fact is that the new fricatives, at any rate the dental and labio-dental ones, did not coincide with the old ones. In fact in the dental series the Second Sound Shift led to such an overcrowding at first that no dialect is ever likely to adopt such a system from outside. It must have evolved from its own structure. After the Second Sound Shift High German, especially Franconian, possessed three dental fricatives " th ", " s ", " z̥ " (" z̥z̥ ") of which " s " occurred as a geminate as well.

Adoption or borrowing from outside means imitation. This is directly dependent on human intercourse. So-called market words would therefore show the new form first while there would always be laggards, so-called relic words. Relic words there are in the present-day Middle Franconian dialects, as we have already seen, while all words with " p~ " instead of " pf~ " in the Franconian dialects would strictly speaking also be relics. None of these relics, however, are relics because they are rarely used in human intercourse. Höfler¹ has pointed out convincingly that the relics form structurally special classes. The whole graded participation of the Franconian dialects is structurally conditioned and not at all subject to the whims of imitation and migration. Migration would have produced an entirely different sort of grading. It would have left those words intact which had only the most restricted currency. Instead what is left intact are sounds and sound groups according to an entirely rational principle: the greater the opening effect² of the surrounding sounds the more extensive, phonetically and geographically, the shifting. " P ", " t ", " k " between vowels are shifted further (to fricatives up to the Benrath line) than " p ", " t ", " k " after liquids and nasals or in initial position. After fricatives they are not shifted at all. In each case the dental shift is more widespread than the labio-dental or velar. Whatever the causation

¹ Otto Höfler, *op. cit.* pp. 274-349 ; also Schützeichel, *op. cit.* 189-92, 284-95.

² Höfler, *op. cit.* pp. 276 ff., makes an " increase in expiratory pressure " responsible, caused by " Intensivierung des Lebensgefühls " ! Schützeichel, *op. cit.* 246-7, following Jean Fourquet, speaks of " Lockerung des Verschlusses " .

may have been the effect is structurally rational from Alemannic in the south to Ripuarian in the north.

For linguistic reasons, therefore, we must conclude that Rhine Frankish underwent its own autochthonous sound shift, which had its own rules and evolution but probably the same cause as the Upper German sound shift.¹

VII

To sum up, I believe, we can say of the language of the Franks :

1. That just as there was no close ethnic homogeneity among the Germanic tribes adhering to the Frankish warrior confederation there was no easily identifiable linguistic uniformity : no language of the Franks.

2. That though the differences between the northern Franks and the Rhine Franks may originally have been negligible they became more and more pronounced with the advance of time. The Salians shared early absorption or extinction with other conquering tribes such as the Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Burgundians, and Vandals. The Rhine Franks and their language became German. The linguistic boundary to the north of them reflects the Merovingian boundary against various North Sea Germanic

¹ This is put forward by Schützeichel, *op. cit.* p. 275 ; Höfler, *op. cit.* p. 342 ; and was supported by Robert Bruch, *op. cit.* pp. 146-47, in the context of an admittedly quite different hypothesis. Bruch sees in West Moselle Franconian (Luxemburgish) a last off-shoot of West Frankish because he believes in a circular movement of the Franks : from Betuwe to Toxandria, then to the Paris area and back eastwards to the Meuse, Moselle and Rhine with cultural and linguistic radiation right across Central Germany to Thuringia and Saxony. Cf. his *Grundlegung einer Geschichte des Luxemburgischen* (1953) ; *Das Luxemburgische im westfränkischen Kreis* (1953) ; " Westfränkische Sprachströmungen in Mitteldeutschland ", *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter*, xxi (1956/57 = *Festschrift Adolf Bach*), 14-44. The article by H. Kratz " The Second Sound Shift in Old Franconian ", *Modern Language Quarterly*, xxiv (1963), 66-78, which has come to my notice at proof stage, rejects the hypothesis of a Franconian Sound Shift and suggests that the High German dialects of Franconian are *Mischsprachen* compounded of Franconian and Alemannic elements. While there is, of course, a good deal of linguistic and ethnic mixing, Kratz's theory rests too strongly on the idea of linguistic and ethnic separateness of Franks and Alamans. It resurrects, in fact, the *Stammbaumtheorie* and does not take sufficient account of the findings of linguistic geography.

tribes among whom non-Franks were predominant. The Rhine Franks had during both the Merovingian and Carolingian periods the ascendancy over the Upper German tribes whom they at the beginning may have influenced little but by whom they can have been influenced even less.

3. That the early documents showing the inception of the Second Sound Shift in the south are so scarce and so subject to accidental survival that they cannot be used to prove that the Sound Shift is not also autochthonous in Austrasian or Rhine Frankish. The time lag is at most two to three centuries, and anyway early is not synonymous with original, nor is late synonymous with adoptive.

4. That the evidence of Old High German literature makes it clear that the Carolingians themselves spoke the Rhenish Franconian dialect of High German and that this Rhenish Franconian dialect had a characteristically developed, identifiable form.

5. That the particular Rhine Frankish variant of the High German consonantism is only fully understandable as the result of an autochthonous internal-structural evolution and that it shows no signs of having been imported from outside.

Adapting Henri Pirenne's thesis to the linguistic situation, it may be said that while in the age of Clovis Latin and Germanic held the stage, in the age of Charlemagne French and German were the new realities. And just as Frankish and the Franks had been godfather to French, so Frankish and the Franks had participated most actively in the formation of German.