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Merovingian Queenship in Early Nineteenth-Century French Historiography

Heta Aali

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Abstract

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In my Ph. D. thesis I examine the way French historians represented Merovingian queenship in their historical narratives between 1814 and 1848. The French monarchy was re-established in these years and it changed considerably in the early decades of the nineteenth century, from an imitation of the Old Regime to a bourgeois and constitutional monarchy. These changes forced historians and politicians to rethink both the history of France and the function of the monarchy. My objective is to gain new perspectives on the period's historiography by looking at the way in which the early medieval queens were represented and how the representations were affected by the contemporary political and historiographical discussions about the French monarchy. The representations varied according to the author and the intended readership. A historian's task was to write about events and persons worth remembering, and the Merovingian queens Clotilde (died in 545), Fredegonde (died in 597) and Brunehilde (died in 613) were among those persons. At the same time they functioned as mere types and instruments for the early nineteenth-century historians. The queens were categorized to certain types depending on the historians' political and cultural affiliations. All historiography had a political aspect and the queens were not studied or written about for their own sake, but used by historians to make moral and political claims, to teach and instruct the reader. The political aspects of historiography were visible in the way the new, or redefined, nationalistic agenda affected historians' narratives about the Merovingian period. A *history* of queenship was essential to construct a shared past. One of the leading motivations for the ways in which the queens were represented was the historians' desire to prove that women could not and should not govern in France. Women could be seen as good rulers *despite* their gender, but never *because of* their gender. Women who surpassed their gender were extraordinary and yet simultaneously very dangerous, because they had not stayed in their "natural" place. This was a paradox because, while rivalling the masculine gender was admirable given male superiority over the female gender, it was perceived as very dangerous for society. The Merovingian queens and their representations offered something for everyone in nineteenth-century France; barbarous and morally upright actions, love and passion, scheming and devotion, destruction and civilisation.

Keywords: Cultural history - France - historiography - queenship - monarchy - 19th Century - Merovingians - Early Middle Ages - gender - medievalism - nationalism

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Tarkastelen väitöskirjassani, miten ranskalaiset historioitsijat käsittelivät merovingikuningattaria vuosien 1814 ja 1848 välisenä aikana. 1800-luvun alussa monarkia palautettiin Ranskaan ja runsaassa 30 vuodessa se läpikävi muutoksen ennen suurta vallankumousta vallinneen hallitustavan imitaatiosta porvarilliseksi ja perustuslailliseksi monarkiaksi. Nämä muutokset monarkiassa pakottivat aikakauden historioitsijat uudelleenarvioimaan koko Ranskan historian sekä monarkian roolin historiassa. Tutkimukseni tavoite on tuoda uusia näkemyksiä aikakauden historiankirjoitukseen tarkastelemalla, miten varhaiskeskiaikaisia kuningattaria käsiteltiin historiankirjoituksessa ja miten heidän käsittelyyn vaikutti aikakauden keskustelu monarkian roolista ranskalaisessa yhteiskunnassa ja historiassa. Kuvaukset kuningattarista vaihtelivat kirjoittajan ja aiotun lukijakunnan mukaan. Historioitsijan tehtävänä oli kirjoittaa huomionarvoisista tapahtumista ja henkilöistä, ja merovingikuningattaret Klotilde (kuoli vuonna 545), Fredegunda (kuoli vuonna 597) ja Brunhilde (kuoli 613) olivat tällaisia henkilöitä, koska merovingit nähtiin ranskalaisen monarkian ensimmäisenä dynastiana. Samalla he kuitenkin olivat instrumentteja 1800-luvun alun historioitsijoiden käsissä. Kuningattaret luokiteltiin erilaisiin tyyppeihin riippuen historioitsijoiden poliittisista ja kulttuurisista sidoksista. Kaikella historiankirjoituksella oli poliittinen aspekti ja kuningattaria ei tutkittu heidän itsensä vuoksi vaan historioitsijat käyttivät heitä perustelemaan moraalisia ja poliittisia näkemyksiään sekä opettamaan lukijoita. Historiankirjoituksen poliittiset aspektit olivat erityisesti näkyviä siinä, miten nationalistiset ajatukset vaikuttivat merovingiajan kuvauksiin. Yhteinen historia oli tärkeä osa nationalistista historiankirjoitusta ja kuningatarten historia oli osa tätä jaettua historiaa. Yksi tärkeä osa kuningatarten jaettua historiaa oli naisten pois sulkeminen poliittisesta vallasta. Historiaa, myös varhaiskeskiaikaa, käytettiin osoittamaan, etteivät naiset soveltuneet käyttämään julkista valtaa Ranskassa. Naiset, mukaan lukien merovingikuningattaret, saatettiin kuvata hyvinä hallitsijoina huolimatta heidän sukupuolesta, mutta ei koskaan sukupuolensa ansiosta. Naiset, jotka ylittivät sukupuolensa, nähtiin erityisinä mutta samalla hyvin vaarallisina, koska he eivät pysyneet “luonnollisella” paikallaan. Tämä oli paradoksi, sillä vaikka naissukupuolen ylittäminen oli tavoiteltavaa, johtuen näkemyksistä miehisen sukupuolen paremmuudesta, se myös koettiin vaarallisena yhteiskunnan vakiintuneelle järjestykselle. Merovingikuningattaret tarjosivat 1800-luvun alussa kaikille jotain: barbaarisia ja moraalisia tekoja, rakkautta ja intohimoa, juonittelua ja hurskautta, tuhoa ja sivilisaatiota.

Asiasanat: Kulttuurihistoria, Ranska, historiankirjoitus, kuningattaret, monarkia, 1800-luku, merovingit, varhaiskeskiaika, sukupuoli, medievalismi, nationalismi

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Completing this thesis has been a long process, but a fascinating intellectual journey in which I have become acquainted with early nineteenth-century historiography and the Merovingian Queens; at the same time I know that it is only the beginning of a much longer journey and the foundation for a much deeper acquaintance. I would not have been able even to begin this journey without the assistance of the many individuals I mention here. I would like to start by acknowledging my enormous debt to the supervisors of my dissertation, Professors Marjo Kaartinen and Hannu Salmi from the Department of Cultural History. They have supported my research project with their valuable guidance and constructive comments and questions.

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Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Questions

All narratives have a beginning. For a historian the beginning is always a question of choice; a decision which has a significant impact on the entire story.[1] The beginning for a narrative in the early nineteenth-century historiography of the French monarchy could often be found in the Merovingian period, either in the conversion of Clovis[2] in the 490s or even earlier, perhaps the conquests of his father, King Childeric I, who died in the early 480s. Questions related to the beginning of the French monarchy were important in the first half of the nineteenth century because historians[3], authors and politicians looked to history to find answers for contemporary issues. History and politics[4] had a close relationship because history was often written by the same people who were involved in politics.

I will examine how French historians represented Merovingian queenship[5] in their historical narratives. I have chosen to analyse the historiography from the period 1815 - 1848 because the French monarchy was re-established in those years and the period also saw struggles that forced historians and politicians to rethink both the history of France and the function of the monarchy. The objective is to gain new perspectives on the period's historiography by looking at the way in which the early medieval queens were represented in 1814–1848, and how the representations were affected by the contemporary political and historiographical discussions about the French monarchy.

[1] Roberts 2001, 17.
[2] For the genealogy of the Merovingian dynasty, see Appendix 1 p. 228.
[3] There was no clear distinction in early nineteenth-century France between "historian" and "author", or even between these and "politician". The historian Laurent Avezou has argued convincingly that even in the 1870s almost all of the published historiographical material came from "enlightened" amateurs: lawyers, nobles, clergy, and people who were forced to abandon their political carriers after 1830. Avezou 2013b, 333-5. One person could therefore have all these roles and there were very few "professional" historians.
[4] "Politics" can signify several things, but in this work I refer to ideas related to the way government or society should be run and especially how monarchy was seen, accepted or rejected. Politics can refer also to a set of beliefs and attitudes about the way the government should work (Macmillan Dictionary: http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/politics, accessed July 17 2015). Also; the political opinions or sympathies of a person (Merriam-Webster: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/politic, accessed July 17 2015).
[5] The concepts "Merovingian queenship" or "Merovingian queen" are used here as conceptual tools, although neither was in use in the nineteenth century or in the early Middle Ages. I use "Merovingian queens" as a term of reference for all the queens that lived in the kingdom(s) ruled by members of the Merovingian dynasty. The concept is explored in depth in Chapter III.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the French monarchy went through several adjustments and was eventually overthrown only three decades after it was restored. The tumultuous political atmosphere and the emergence of new ideas on monarchy were visible in all aspects of society, including historiography and historical literature. Memories of the Great Revolution and of the execution of the king were still vivid in people's minds and writings. These memories affected the political culture of the Restoration and the July Monarchy periods.[6] Many historians examined historical kings and kingship in their works and discussed the king's role in contemporary French society. As in today's France, two hundred years ago historians were highly esteemed as commentators on social and political questions and in public debates. Historians worked, and still do, within society, not outside it or on its margins, and the principles of historiography changed along with French society in the era of the Restoration (1814/1815 – 1830) and the July Monarchy (1830 – 1848).

There were in fact two Restorations in early nineteenth-century France: one before Napoleon's Hundred Days and the second after the Hundred Days.[7] Starting from 1815 two major political groups fought for the votes. The ultra-royalists wanted, for example, to restrict some of the liberties granted by the charter and to restore certain privileges to the Catholic Church. The liberals, on the other hand, wanted to hold on the the liberties granted in 1789 and required the king to respect the charter. The first group consisted mostly of aristocrats who had endured exile, whereas the second group consisted largely of representatives of the middle class, "bourgeoisie".[8] Neither of the groups was very united, both having internal differences of opinion. There were also other groups between these two extremes: the constitutionnels and the doctrinaires. The men in these two groups wanted reconciliation between the charter, the monarchy, and the king.[9] Yet the constitutional regime was not stable between 1815 and 1830. The murder of the Duke of Berry, the youngest son of the future Charles X, in 1820 and the death of Louis XVIII in 1824 were milestones that increased the ultra-roylists' power and diminished liberties such as the freedom of the press. During the reign of Charles X troubles like the economic crisis that started in 1827 and created dissatisfaction among the people accumulated, and ultra-royalist ministers such as Jean-Baptiste de Villèle (1773-1854) imposed unpopular laws on the press. In 1828 Villèle was defeated in the elections but that did not

[6] Rausch 2013, 225.
[7] Unless otherwise stated, when I use the term Restoration in this work I refer to the second one.
[8] According to Olivier Tort, the representatives of the right were disproportionately from the noble class. See Tort 2006, 216.
[9] Monnier & Jardin 1960, 367-369.

bring calm. After the elections in 1830 King Charles X decreed four ordinances that sparked a new revolution.[10]

The revolution of 1830 brought a new king to the throne, Louis Philip (1773-1850), who reigned from 1830 to 1848. His wife, Marie Amelie of Naples and Sicily (1782-1866), became the new queen of the French. The revolution itself was instigated by a small group of republicans who had hoped for something other than monarchy, but a constitutional monarchy was again established. The regime had the charter of 1840 only slightly modified, so that, for example, Catholicism was no longer the state religion and freedom of the press was re-established. Also, in order to reject symbolically the Old Regime, the tricolour flag was returned to use.[11] In 1831 the hereditary peerage was abolished. The prime ministed changed several times early in the regime and in 1832 two of three key figures in the government were historians: Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877) and Francois Guizot (1787-1874). The regime faced threats from three (political) groups especially. The legitimists, who wanted the son of the late Duke of Berry (who had died in 1820) on the throne, the bonapartistes, who promoted the memory and family of Napoleon Bonaparte, and the republicans, who were the most influential group of the three. The republicans only became more popular when the government, against its promises, decreed laws against the freedom of the press in 1835.[12] The politicians of the July Monarchy can be roughly divided into two groups: those who wanted to increase the parlementary aspect of the regime, the liberals, and those who wanted the state to have more authority, the conservatives. All the politicians, however, wanted a balance between democracy and a strong monarchy. After internal and external political problems and several difficult phases, Thiers retired in 1840 and Guizot stepped up to take power. He had changed his stance since the 1820s, when he was a liberal historian, and was now a *conservateur* who opposed many political reforms France would have needed. France was plunged into an economical crisis in the 1840s and by 1848 the social, political, and economical problems had accumulated sufficiently to lead to yet to another revolution and the end of the French monarchy.[13]

After 1814 politicians and historians were divided according to their views on the legitimacy of the monarchy and the Charter, a constitution established by King Louis XVIII in 1814. French history

[10] Monnier & Jardin 1960, 374-375, 379. The ordinances decreed, among other things, that no newspaper could be published freely. They also changed the electoral laws and disbanded the newly elected Chamber. Ibid, 374.
[11] One historians referred to the change of the flag in his work by writing "did they know what they were doing?" See Peyronnet 1835 (I), 58. "[…]savait-on ce que l'on faisait?"
[12] Monnier & Jardin 1960, 393-398. On the freedom of the press in 1835, see also Chacón 1988-1990, 16.
[13] Monnier & Jardin 1960, 399-405.

was used to justify different political standpoints.[14] I argue that historians' views on the newly restored monarchy affected their historical imagination and implicitly their reader's historical imagination. Their views on the restored monarchy can be found on their historiographical works, including those discussing the early medieval Frankish rulers. The German historian Stefan Berger (2015) has noted that especially queens were "singularly popular among the male historians of the nineteenth century"[15]; one reason for this popularity was the ambiguous position the monarchy had in France from 1814 onwards. Historians' views on the contemporary French monarchy affected how they saw the monarchy's history and similarly historians' political opinions influenced the representations of the queens.

Prior to the nineteenth century many historians were clergymen, but after Napoleon's fall the number of secular historians steadily increased. At the same time educational possibilities increased outside congregations and clerical circles. According to the French historian Jacques Juillard (1996), only in the French Revolution did intellectuals became involved in politics and in the early decades of the nineteenth century intellectuals and writers were confirmed as a political force. [16] Their involvement in politics, however, did not last very long, because in the Third Republic intellectuals were pushed aside from political spheres.[17] Therefore the decades from 1810s to the 1840s offer us a very well-defined period in French historiography: the time of the historian-politicians. The American historian Ceri Crossley (1993) has argued that the years 1815-1830 saw intense historical activity and history became the language of politics.[18] The two regimes, the Restoration and the July Monarchy, had a lot of differences but also a great number of similarities. Both regimes had opposition. Although the opposition of the 1820s became the leaders of the July Monarchy, they did not manage to reform the regime and political system as society required. Both regimes saw economic and social troubles that aggravated the political problems. There were no political parties, but instead loose political groupings that often had internal conflicts of ideals.

In the nineteenth century which has been called the century of history, all branches of historiography saw a remarkable growth. Modern historical research was born and it started to evolve and develop as an academic field within educational institutions. The amount of material written about the history of France grew throughout the century, even though the growth occurred

[14] On the conflict between royalists and liberals in 1814, see Rausch 2013, 232. History was also used to justify the July Monarchy's legitimacy in France. See Hamnett 2011, 137.
[15] Berger 2015, 127.
[16] Or, to use Agnès Graceffa's French term, many historians were "engagés". Graceffa 2009b, 59.
[17] Juillard 1996, 593-594.
[18] Crossley 1993, 15.

unevenly. Between the years 1811 - 1825 the number of historical works with religious topics grew.[19]In the 1810s the first professors of history appeared in educational institutions and consequently the whole field of history started slowly to professionalise.[20] Branches of historiography such as general history, biography, contemporary and ancient history, the history of nations and states, local and religious history, and the history of literature expanded and the number of published works grew alongside readers' interest.[21] Historians not only informed but sought to instruct and to improve their readers.[22]

Especially in the 1820s and during the July Monarchy the nascent historical research started to blossom. For example, the *Committee of Historical and Scientific Works* was founded in 1834 on the orders of François Guizot, then the minister of education. Several other learned societies were established during these years, such as the *French Society of Archeology* in 1830. Learned publications were launched, such as the *Revue des Études historiques* in 1834 and the *Revue archéologique* in 1844. In addition, some famous *grandes écoles* were founded, such as École des chartes in 1816. In 1835 École des chartes established a library uniquely for medievalists and Guizot started the collection of sources related to the history of France, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'Histoire de France*[23], which comprises more than 300 volumes to date. In 1837 a *Commission of Historical Monuments* was established, which aimed to classify and preserve historical monuments. At the same time adjunct fields of knowledge emerged: egyptology, orientalism, numismatics and paleography.[24]

My focus is on textual sources, but the interest in material aspects of history and especially towards the history of the Merovingian period was of significance too. Historians often relied solely on written sources and the publications on archaelogical findings did not have large visibility in historiographical works.[25] The public was interested above all in the history of the Revolution, but secondly in the Middle Ages. The interest in the Middle Ages was partly stimulated by the Musée des monuments francais created by Alexandre Lenoir in 1795.[26] The monuments in the museum included, for example, a twelfth-century tomb of Clovis I (d.511) and a later staue of Clovis II

[19] Den Boer 1998, 4-5.
[20] A chair of history was established in the Sorbonne in 1812. Hamnett 2011, 31.
[21] Madelénat 2006, 259.
[22] Hamnett 2011, 47.
[23] "Inedited Documents Related to History of France"
[24] Castex & Surer 1954, 798.
[25] See Effros 2012, 313-4.
[26] Jardin & Tudesque 1983, 77.

(d.657).[27] The museum was closed in 1816 and only in 1824 did the Louvre open its doors. Some Merovingian royal graves had been found already in the mid-seventeenth century, when the grave goods from the tomb of Childeric I (d. 482) were removed. In 1656 several Merovingian remains were identified at Saint-Gérmain-des-Près, including those of Queen Fredegonde. Even though the identification was based on very frail evidence, the stone tombs were subsequently covered with royal symbols.[28] Many early nineteenth-century historians knew about these findings, but only rarely did they explicitly point out their importance in their interpretations ofthe Merovingian royal history.[29]

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The study of the representations of the Merovingian queens must start from the basics: the concepts. I argue that *queenship,* an English word which has no French equivalent, as an institution[30] was primarily perceived through individual queens and depicted in their representations.[31] I further propose that certain historical queens were seen more as types than as persons. I concur with the historian of French queenship Fanny Cosandey (2000) that besides anecdotes and biographies, French queenship as an institution did not interest researchers until the growth of gender history, and before that women's history in the late twentieth century.[32] For this reason I approach queenship through representations of the individual queens whose lives did interest the historians. Cosandey criticised some recent works on the history of French queenship for focusing too much on the femininity of the royal spouses instead of their roles as sovereigns (especially in the case of the female regents), a product of the influence of gender history.[33] Indeed, it is important to take into consideration the political and religious power many queens wielded, and to study them as sovereigns, not just as women using power. In the nineteenth century the gender defined the rulers;

[27] Effros 2003, 50.
[28] Effros 2003, 14, 38-40.
[29] Stephen Bann wanted to "question […] the conventional assumption that historical discourse is essentially […] confined to the historical text in the narrow sense of the term." Bann 1984, 78. I certainly agree that historical discourse can be based on text understood as material historical objects too, but for practical reasons I must restrict my thesis to the textual level in its strict understanding.
[30] By an institution I mean (this is only one possible definition): "An institution was defined as an interlocking double-structure of persons-as-role-holders or office-bearers and the like, and of social practices involving both expressive and practical aims and outcomes." Miller 2014.
[31] The American historian Katherine Crawford, who has specialised in the history of French queens and regents, has noted that even today "[P]erhaps we inevitably see the collectivity of queens through individual women […]". Crawford 2012, 8. Hélène Becquet and Bettina Frederking, two historians who have written about the nineteenth-century French monarchy, have argued that "to write the history of royalty [royauté] is also to write the history of the kings and queens who are at the centre of the institution". Becquet & Frederking 2009, 11. " […]faire l'histoire de la royauté, c'est aussi faire l'histoire des rois et des reines qui sont au coeur de l'institution." All translations from French to English are mine unless otherwise stated.
[32]Cosandey 2000, 8.
[33] Cosandey 2000, 8.

women especially "had" a gender but as we will see, some women could surpass their "lesser" gender.

I have chosen to analyse especially the representations of Merovingian queenship(s) because the early nineteenth-century historians considered the Merovingian period as the cradle of the French monarchy. The dissertation is structured thematically and the first theme is ideal queenship. The second theme is nationalism and queenship, and the third theme is queenship and power. In examining these themes I will draw examples from depictions of three Merovingian queens: Saint Clotilde (d.545), Brunehilde (d.612/613), and Fredegonde (d.597). These three were the most popular Merovingian queens in early nineteenth-century France and there were more references to them in the period's historiographical works than to other Merovingian queens such as Saint Bathilde or Saint Radegonde.

The relationship between the queens and the representations of queenship(s) is a complicated one because the representations not only depicted past queens but also constructed their history and influenced contemporary society and monarchy. Therefore, my use of the concept "representation"[34] does not refer simply to images. It is mainly inspired by the definitions of this concept used by the French historian Roger Chartier. Representations "describe and shape the cultural and social world" and "exist always in plurality, contradictions and interdependency" which can lead to various conflicts among groups of representations.[35] Another French historian, Dominique Khalifa, highlights the need to think about the world and representation together, not as separate spheres, and to remove the traditional juxtaposition between "objective" practices and "subjective" representations.[36]

I do not deny the subjectivity of the representations, but I do not accept that they were uniquely affected by their creator's individual mind. I understand that the representations of queenship(s) and the representations of the individual queens both shaped and were shaped by contemporary nineteenth-century society and its historiographical practices. Chartier states that representations depend on their reception as well; the representations do not appear objectively similar to all

[34] The French historian Sylvain Venayre has also written an interesting article about the concept of representation. He argues that in modern usage the concept has been replaced with one of "invention". Venayre continues that often the charge of "invention" was related to changes in established systems of representation. Venayre 2005, 35-41. If French queenship were considered an established system of representations, I would title my dissertation "The Invention of Merovingian queenship in early nineteenth-century France".

[35] Jörg Feuchter on Chartier's concept of representation, Feuchter 2011, 18-19. See also Chartier 1989, 1505-1520; Chartier 2009, 203-218.

[36] Khalifa 2010, 877-882. See also Khalifa 2005, 78.

recipients.[37] Subjective reading thus exists on two levels in the presentations; when the creator interprets the object (the Merovingian queen, for example) through texts (previous representations), and when the recipient, a reader, interprets the resulting representations.[38] Naturally, the interpretation of the representation is quite different when the reader is a contemporary of the historian and when she is from the twenty-first century.

According to the literary historians Marie-Ève Thérenty and Alain Vaillant, cultural history and literary history both study representations, but the difference between literary historians' and cultural historians' approaches to representation is that the former concentrate on form and content whereas the latter focus on the public reception of the representations. Thérenty and Vaillant suggest that cultural historians should analyse the process of interaction between the form and the contents instead of simply looking at the resulting text. They also rightly point out that cultural historians, unlike literary historians, do not establish hierarchies, or value some cultural representations or practices over others.[39] My aim is to examine both how the form affected the contents of the representations and the interaction between the representations and the historiographical traditions in early nineteenth-century French society. In addition, I will analyse how certain social practices, norms and political affiliations such as marriage patterns, gender norms and royalism affected the representations. The representations were sometimes contradictory, but the contradictory nature was not unique to representations. For example, ideals related to gender in early nineteenth-century France were contradictory as well. Ideals in general were affected by, and themselves affected, the society and its historiography. In fact, the whole relationship between representations and ideals was one of interdependence and contradictions.

There were not one but several simultaneous interpretations of early medieval queenship in nineteenth-century France. As the historians Elizabeth Emery and Laura Morowitz have argued, several French collective memories and several different kinds of interests in the Middle Ages existed simultaneously and therefore, logically, there were multiple interpretations of the history of queenship and especially of Merovingian queenship.[40] As noted, there were two major focuses for French history in the nineteenth century: the Revolution and the Middle Ages. Therefore, when I

[37] Chartier 2009, 221.
[38] Ian Wood has argued that the sometimes conflicting images of the Merovingian queens such as Brunehilde and Bathilde as Jezebels, or Radegonde as an ascetic, are products of writers as well. Wood 1994, 139. The representations of the nineteenth-century historians, and historians of today, are based on earlier representations rather than on "objective" sources.
[39] Thérenty & Vaillant 2005, 275-6, 286.
[40] Emery & Morowitz 2003, 2.

write about representation of queenship I am always referring to a multitude of individual representations and interpretations unless I refer to the work of a specific historian.

In the chapter about ideal queenship I will discuss how the features emphasised in the historiographical representations of the queens changed from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century along with the whole institution of French queenship. This change can be related to the multitude of ways in which the whole of France changed in these years. New ideals related to the bourgeois[41] family, to women and to queens were present in historiography and affected the way queens such as Saint Clotilde[42] were represented. I analyse the qualifications for French queenship(s): exclusion from power, marriage, motherhood and sanctity. Together with the general growth of historiographical material, the increasing use of sources, especially of the early medieval sources such as the *Ten Books of Histories* written by Bishop Gregory of Tours (538 - 594), gave a more detailed textual picture of Merovingian queenship, which made the representations of the queens more variable. In addition, in this chapter I focus on three specific branches of historiography; text books, biographies, and historical novels. The focus on the text books exemplifies the way the image of a saintly royal couple was constructed, or de-constructed, for the pupils, whereas the second and the third genres were essential in constructing the image of a saintly queen as a role model for early nineteenth-century French bourgeois readers. I have found themes related to saint queens especially in the second and third genres, so I examine them separately. Since the Merovingian period produced more than one saint queen, in this chapter I touch upon the representations of Saint Radegonde[43] (d.587) and Saint Bathilde[44] (d.680), even though they were given less space in historiography 200 years ago than Saint Clotilde. I examine the kind of

[41] The notion of "bourgeoisie" can be problematic because it has several meanings and can refer to different things. Even though it did not appear often in early nineteenth-century historiography in the context of Merovingian royals, the notion is essential in order to comprehend French society. The historian Jo Burr Margadant has argued that the notion had at least two meanings in the first half of the nineteenth century: First the "bourgeoisie", a historical actor whose origins were found in the Middle Ages by François Guizot and Augustin Thierry, who championed the liberal cause in the early nineteenth century. The second meaning was related to an image of a close family, "bound by affection, reciprocal duties, and the attractions of home, whereas aristocratic presumed a familial style based on obedience and respect with spouses leading separate social lives." Margadant 2008b, 306.

[42] On Clotilde in the nineteenth-century historiographical imagination, see Amalvi 2011, 28. Clotilde (d. 545) was a Burgundian princess. She was the spouse of the first Christian (Catholic) Merovingian king Clovis (d. 511) and often considered, even prior to the French revolution, as the agent for her husband's conversion to Christianity.

[43] On Radegonde, see, for example, Dumézil 2008, 477, 237, 12 & passim. Radegonde was a Thuringian princess, captured as "booty" by Clothar I, Clotilde's son. Clothar I later married her, but eventually she founded a convent in Poitiers.

[44] About Bathilde, see Folz 1975, 369-384. See also Joye 2009, 39-52. Even though Joye states that at the end of the nineteenth century Bathilde was sometimes presented as a "bad stepmother", this was not the case in my pre-1848 material. Bathilde was of Anglo-Saxon origin and she was married to king Clovis II to whom she bore three sons, all of whom became kings in turn. She spent her final years in the Abbey of Chelles.

queenship her image promoted and the ways her queenship(s) was related in historiography to the contemporary Queen Marie Amelie, spouse of King Louis Philippe.

In the third chapter I investigate the ways in which nationalistic ideas interacted with the historiography and especially with the representations of the Merovingian queens. How did the historians and authors express their nationalistic historical views in their representations of the early Middles Ages and how did they use the Merovingian queens as part of a larger nationalistic schema of France? Undeniably the growing importance of national history had an enormous influence on the history of the early Middle Ages, a consequence of the increasing number of historiographical studies and the new interest in nationally valuable sources. The concept of civilisation was closely associated with the nationalistic schema and with the history of the Merovingians, so these themes too are analysed in the same chapter. In addition, I explore in this chapter the ways the narrative form affected the contents of historical representations. Brunehilde[45] was an ambiguous figure in early nineteenth-century historiography: on the one hand she represented the lost Roman civilisation amongst the barbarian Franks, but on the other hand she was seen as a cruel murderer. I examine the contradictions related to her figure and how historians either accused or defended her. Brunehilde and Fredegonde are especially interesting figures as their histories were always tied together in the minds of the historians. They were made to represent to nineteenth-century readers the conflicting forces of civilisation and barbarism, feminine and masculine in women.[46]

In the fourth chapter I discuss the representations of queenship and power, especially regency, because many of the Merovingian queens ruled on behalf of their young son(s). The negotiation concerning the boundaries of queenly political and public power was obvious in historiography, especially at this time when the monarchy had to re-negotiate its position and power in France. I argue that the negative features associated especially with the representations of Queen Fredegonde unveil the fears many historians had about a society where women could have direct access to power. Many historians depicted her as abusing power. One such was Augustin Thierry (1795 -

[45] Originally a Visigoth princess, Queen Brunehilde married the Merovingian king Sigebert (d. 575) in 566 and she was executed in 613 by Queen Fredegonde's son Clothar II (d. 628). Dumézil's *La reine Brunehaut* (2008) is one of the most comprehensive studies about her. She is the only one of the three queens about whom such a lengthy work has been written. It is clear that today she is perceived as the most important Merovingian queen. For Brunehilde and Fredegonde, see Dumézil 2008, 15, 112 & passim. See also Graceffa 2009a, 25-38. There is little modern research about Fredegonde, see, for example, Aali 2013, 14-16. Queen Fredegonde, a Frank, died in 597[45] and was married to King Chilperic (d. 584), Sigebert's brother.

[46]See, for example, Augustin Thierry's famous *Récits des temps mérovingiens* (1842a (I)), from page 363 onwards. See also Chrysanthe Ovide Des Michels, who wrote in 1828 that "[h]atred between Brunehilde and Fredegonde sparked a civil war that tore France apart for half a century […]". Des Michels 1828, 26. "L'inimitié de Brunehaut et de Frédégonde alluma une guerre intestine qui devait déchirer la France pendant un demi-siècle […]"

1856), well known for his poetic history[47] of the Merovingian period, *Les récits des temps mérovingiens*[48]. In addition, I see historiography as using Fredegonde's Frankish and barbarian nature to symbolise the Germanic threat to France and to civilisation, both in the Merovingian period and in the nineteenth century. I suggest that many of the representations of the Merovingian queens demonstrate the rise of bourgeois historiography and the construction and re-construction of gender ideals in French society.

1.2. Historiography, Queenship, and Gender

A central concept in my research is *historiography* and I follow a definition made by the Dutch historian Pim Den Boer:

> […] a minimum sense of chronological order is needed by anyone writing history. Historiography that does not satisfy this condition cannot possibly be classified as history. This constriction leads us to an exclusive definition of historiography. Stories set in the past are not necessarily historiography, nor are the many recorded oral histories set in any particular period. Historiography proper was and is largely the work of a literate (and hence) elitist culture. Historiography is an artefact, an artificial memory, and something other than a spontaneous recall and vague understanding of the past.[49]

This definition perfectly describes my understanding of the concept in this study because, even though exclusive, it does not refer to historiography as uniquely "scientific"[50] or "academic". I use *historical writing* as a synonym for historiography in the context of early nineteenth-century France. Not all historiography at that time presupposed historical research, so I use the latter term to refer mainly to works that involved the study of first-hand sources and made an attempt at objectivity. In the context of early nineteenth-century France, historiography can be visualised as continuum with the works of authors such as François Guizot at one end, and a historical novel that had clearly

[47] Poetic history is a form of historiography that is strongly influenced by the historical novel but without such fictive elements as invented characters. It was a melange of "science" and "imagination", as Thierry himself wrote. See Mazurel 2010, 598-599.
[48] "Tales of the Merovingian Period"
[49] Den Boer 1998, 10-11.
[50] According to the literary historian Marie-Emmanuelle Plagnol-Diéval scientific historiography evolved into its modern form in the nineteenth century: this form she defines as a work that aims to be objective, resting on first-hand sources. In this field of scientific historiography women's place as historians was problematic because they were not often seen as writing about history in an official way. Plagnol-Diéval 2007, 296. This might apply in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Women's place was indeed problematic, but in my opinion no more so than that of many contemporary male "amateur" historians.

invented characters and focused entirely on the *individual* in history at the other.[51] Especially in the late 1820s, Guizot's works were regarded as the best of historical research. Most history writing of the period was somewhere between the two extremities, having features both from historical research and from the historical novel. In the first half of the nineteenth century no such thing as clearly defined scientific historiography existed

Indeed, I do not restrict my sources to the emerging historical research written by men with formal education. The range of early nineteenth-century historians' backgrounds was still rather narrow and as French historian Blaise Wilfert-Portal has stated (2010), the majority of the French population has left no trace of their opinions: since most relevant sources are written, they represent only the literate.[52] With a few exceptions, the historians came from well-off families that had the means to educate their (male) children and most authors and historians had another (non-manual) profession as well. They were judges, lawyers, teachers, researchers and so on.[53] There were exceptions, such as the historian and text book author Chrysanthe Ovide Des Michels, who was a son of a baker from Digne.[54] Many historians did have a classical education of languages and literature.

French nineteenth-century historiography has been examined by Bonnie G. Smith in her *The Gender of History*, where she identified two types of historians. Smith's two types were gendered: the amateurs and the professionals,[55] the former group mostly consisting of women and latter mostly of men who had an education in geography, in languages or in law. Smith tried to understand how the traditions were valued in their own time and in the twentieth century. The nineteenth-century historians and intellectuals saw the historical novel and narrative history as acceptable, especially for women, and explanatory historiography as proper for institutionally affiliated and educated men. The professionalization of history as an academic field was part of a wider modernisation process that accelerated towards the end of the nineteenth century in France and in many other countries.

It is very difficult to draw any conclusion as to how the social class of the historian affected his or her representation of the Merovingian queens. The middle class or noble background did at least

[51] "Invented characters" can of course have more than one meaning: those invented by the nineteenth-century author/s as fictional representations of people of the era they wrote about, and those that were thought in the nineteenth century to have existed in that era, possibly because they appear in older sources, but are now known to be mythical or invented.
[52] Wilfert-Portal 2010, 1098. In 1831 some 53 % of men and 40% women were literate in France. Smith Allen 1991, table A.6 & table A.7.
[53] There is no information about many historians, but happily some of them did define their own position in their works.
[54] Den Boer 1998, 138.
[55] Smith 1998, 37 & passim.

enable certain individuals to have a formal education, which allowed them to have the time and the means to study and/or write history. According to Pim Den Boer, between 1866 and 1875 the biggest groups (that could be defined) of producers of historiography were professional historians (23%), nobles (20%) and Catholic or Protestant clergy (16%). By professional historians he refers to those who earned their living by teaching history in higher or secondary education, or working in archives, for example. None of them could earn their living just by writing history. The beginning of history teaching in schools in the 1810s naturally increased the number of professional historians, because it made it possible to earn a living with history. It is difficult to define conclusively who was a noble because the members of other categories could be nobles as well, and there is no clear consensus on what a noble signified in various periods of French history.[56] I consider Den Boer's statistics very useful, even if they refer to a period slightly later than my research. They indicate the share of the different categories, even though the number of professional historians was smaller during the Restoration and July Monarchy period. In addition, the women are missing from the statistics.[57] Den Boer himself aknowledged the inadequacies of the statistics, which were originally created by Charles-Olivier Carbonell in 1976. It is important to highlight what Pim Den Boer wrote about elitist culture. Writing history was possible for only a certain group of people who came from a sufficiently wealthy background. The creation of representations was therefore in the hands of a small group of French people. As a great number of French people did not know how to read or write in the first half of the nineteenth century, I am forced to concentrate on the ideas of an educated minority.[58]

The historian Harry Ritter has given two definitions for the concept of *historiography*: "1. Written history; the writing of history. 2. The study of the development of historical scholarship; the history of history as a general branch of learning, or the history of historical interpretation of particular periods and problems."[59] I classify my nineteenth-century sources under definition number one and my own study under definition number two. With the broad definition of historiography my aim is

[56] Den Boer 1998, 21-22, 32, 118.
[57] They are most likely included in the category of "Others or unknown" which existed besides the professional historians, nobles, and Catholic or Protestant clergy.
[58]Some estimations of literacy level in nineteenth-century France have been made by researchers. Of course, it is difficult to define what "literate" meant in the nineteenth century and who would read what and how much. In addition, not all who could read would read actively. According to James Smith Allen, the literacy rate among French men in 1841 was 61% and among women in the same year 46%. In 1840, for example, only 1,3 % of boys in the 12-17 age group went to a Lycée or Collège. In literacy skills there were a lot of regional and class related differences, but literacy levels were in general higher in urban areas. Furthermore, in the early nineteenth century many living in rural areas had a language other than French as their first language, which obviously affected their literacy skills. Smith Allen 1991, 61, 64, 67, 69, tables A.6 and A.7.
[59] Ritter 1986, 188.

to deconstruct hierarchies between historians[60] of the early nineteenth century and to avoid considering some historians more "professional" or "trustworthy" than others.[61] All authors, whether or not they were writing biographies of the French queens or large histories of France, took part in the discussion about the queenship and influenced the way Merovingian queens were perceived in early nineteenth-century France.

French historical writing has long traditions.[62] It is important to understand that the idea of writing national history of France was not born in the nineteenth century but was created three hundred years earlier, and it was only transformed into something approaching its modern form after the Revolution. In the sixteenth century the first histories of France were written and medieval history started to attract the erudites. The national historiography of France was started by the historian and erudite Étienne Pasquier, who published his *Recherches de la France* in 1560. It was reprinted until 1621. In the mid-seventeenth century François Eudes, sieur de Mézeray, published his influential work *Histoire de France* which, together with its abridged version(s), was very popular for almost a century. Mézeray, who died in 1683, was not so much famous for using new sources but for constructing a history of France following the "royal races", Merovingians, Carolingians and Capetians, and for having more of a nationalistic than a royalist perspective in his historiography.[63] "Nationalist", of course, did not mean the same thing in the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, even though the "royal races" were still strongly present in the early nineteenth-century historical writing. After the Napoleonic reign "national" usually referred to the bourgeois nation-state, which sought its legitimacy from history.[64]

In the eighteenth century Benedictines, members of the monastic order of Saint Benedict, created collections of medieval and early medieval sources which were still in use in the early nineteenth century. *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*[65], started by dom Bouquet in 1717,

[60]There are several words to designate people who wrote about the early medieval Merovingian queens and their queenship: historian, author and writer. These terms carry value judgements as some of them suggest a higher level of professionalism than others. The terms thus create hierarchies of interpretations - what a *historian* wrote is more trustworthy than a *writer's* perception of the early medieval queens. Therefore it is important to highlight that here I use the terms as synonyms and do not imply and any valuing by the use of one or the other. According to Gérard Noiriel, all early nineteenth-century historians were primarily authors and writers, and "scientists" only in a secondary sense, if at all. Noiriel 2010, 520.

[61] According to Bonnie Effros, the label of amateur did not have demeaning meanings in the first half of the nineteenth century. Effros 2012, 25.

[62] Hayden White mentions three kinds of historical representation, annals, chronicles and history proper. I use (early nineteenth-century) historiography to signify White's history proper and not medieval annals or chronicles. White 1987, 4-5.

[63]Amalvi 2004, 219-220, 248-9.

[64]Crossley 1999, 49.

[65] "Anthology of Historians of the Gauls and France"

assembled for the first time all the significant sources concerning the Merovingian period. The first volume of *Recueil* was published in 1738 and during the same decade another Benedictine, dom Rivet, started a collection entitled *Histoire littéraire de la France*[66] which compiled information about the French and Frankish writers. Rivet published a short biography of Bishop Gregory of Tours along with the bishop's many works, including the *Ten Books of Histories,* the most important sixth-century chronicle of the reigns of Clotilde, Fredegonde and Brunehilde.[67] The representations of all these three queens had their origins in Gregory's chronicles. Their images subsequently evolved through the medieval and early modern periods and texts, eventually to achieve their early nineteenth-century forms.

The early nineteenth-century discussion about the history of the French monarchy had its immediate roots in the eighteenth-century historiographical works. The early nineteenth-century discussion and representations about the Merovingian queens was related to the larger debate about the Franks in the early Middle Ages. Two historians from the first half of the eighteenth century are of especial importance, Henri de Boulainvilliers (d. 1722) and Jean-Baptiste Dubos (d.1742). According to Boulainvilliers, the French aristocrats were descended from Frankish conquerors that arrived in Gaul during the fall of the Roman Empire, whereas according to Dubos the French aristocrats were the inheritors of Roman traditions of ruling.[68] This dichotomy, although based on only one aspect of each of the two historians' ideas, became significant in the historiographical traditions of imagining the Frankish rulers in French history and was highly visible in early nineteenth-century historiography. The theories divided later historians into two camps – those who saw the conquering Franks as the forefathers of the French aristocrats and those who saw the French monarchy as inheritors of Roman traditions. The monarchs of the Merovingian period were interpreted as being the first Christian[69] rulers of the area. However, because the Merovingians were a Frankish and a Germanic dynasty their position in historiography was very ambiguous. The early nineteenth-century historians were well aware of this debate about the Franks, and therefore it has to be taken into consideration when examining the representations of the Merovingian queens.

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A premise I have is that historiography and representations of historical persons and societies were (and still are) gendered. Much of the theoretical framework I use in my dissertation leans on gender

[66] Sgard 2006, 36.
[67] Congrégation de Saint-Maur 1866, 372-397. The collection was continued by multiple authors after the death of Rivet. Even in the twenty-first century, it is still unfinished.
[68] Sgard 2006, 36. About this debate, see also Wood 2009, 94-95.
[69] More specifically Catholic in the minds of the nineteenth-century historians.

studies and gender history, and accordingly I outline the relevant aspects of it below. For most early nineteenth-century historians, only the actions of women were explained by their gender on the rhetorical level. Men, unlike women, were not negatively affected by their gender, even though they were judged according to the ideals attached to masculinity. Historical men were, more than women, judged according to their age, social class and race. Race in the context of early nineteenth-century historiography was used often as a synonym for terms such as dynasty, family, or ethnic group. For example, the "race of Sigebert" referred to the family of Sigebert. The French historian Anne Cova has argued that "[…] the majority of Europeans during the centuries […] thought that only two sexes existed, even though historical studies reveal that already in eighteenth-century France attention was paid to questions concerning the construction of gender."[70] The interplay between masculine and feminine genders was especially visible in the representations of Fredegonde, because some historians saw her as breaking the norms of feminine gender with her vindictiveness and lust for power.

Furthermore, according to historian Joan Scott, "gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power."[71] Indeed, in the representations of the early medieval queens, the thirst for power and perceived excessive use of power were features that made historians define certain queens as breaking the gender norms. Scott's definition is obviously pertinent to queenship as sex is the perceived difference that distinguishes between persons who could have the supreme power in France. Power was perceived as gendered. The representations of gendered power, of direct political and executive power, related to the Merovingian queens were visible in historiography, and their different forms will be analysed especially in the chapter about queenship and power.

As noted, it is necessary to study not only the feminine character of the queens and royal spouses but also their sovereignty. This is important because there was a tendency in early nineteenth-century to see queens uniquely as gendered persons and not as sovereigns. The representations of the queens in early nineteenth-century French historiography were very much gendered and influenced by the contemporary gender norms and this makes it challenging *not to see* all women as defined uniquely by their gender. The twenty-first-century perception of history is still heavily

[70]Cova 50, 2009. Footnote 8. " […]la plupart des Européens au cours des siècles […] pensaient qu'il n'exista que deux sexes, même si les investigations historiques révèlent l'attention déjà importante portée aux questions concernant la construction du genre au XVIIIe siècle en France."
[71] Scott 1999, 42

gendered and I would argue that this is an inheritance from nineteenth-century gendered perceptions of history. Historical persons should not be divided into humans and women, but they all should be humans.

The gender of queens was not, however, always feminine because in the representations the negotiation between fluid gender boundaries was obvious. Historians could give masculine features to certain queens. This was an act of defining gender boundaries, which was also visible in regard to the feminine gender. Not only did historians describe the existing gender norms or attribute these to historical persons, but they simultaneously participated in defining the boundaries.

The problematics related to gender(s) are visible in three dimensions. First, gender must be considered because the focus is on queens, who as women were seen as "gendered" in nineteenth-century France. Men too, obviously, have a gender, but the general acceptance that they represented the "human norm" or "complete human" meant that they were not discussed as a gender in the same way that women as anomalous humans were. Secondly, the historians themselves were also bound by contemporary gender norms, even when they could define those norms themselves. Yet the gender norms influenced what they could or could not write, what kind of education they had, and what (social and physical) means they had to produce historiography. Thirdly, one must consider the readership. Different readings and representations were offered to male and female, young and mature readerships. All these three dimensions of gender affected and shaped the final outcome of the representations. In addition, the interpretations of the final representations would vary according to the reader, but that is another question that I cannot embark on here.

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France did not have a queen during the reigns of Louis XVIII (1815 - 1824) and Charles X (1824 - 1830) because both of them were widowers by the time they reached the throne.[72] Only after the July revolution in 1830 did France acquire a new queen, Marie Amelie, who was very different from the queens of the Old Regime. Her role and (public, yet private) image are testimony to a change in queenship which also affected the representations of the queens in historiography. Thus,

[72] In the absence of a queen, the wife of the heir to the throne represents the queen. In Restoration France the place of the queen belonged to Marie Thérèse Charlotte of France, daughter of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI and wife of Louis Antoine, who was the eldest son of the future Charles X. Becquet 2009, 137. Napoleon I had had two wives, the first was Joséphine de Beauharnais (d. 1814) and the second Marie Louise of Austria (d. 1847). There were differing opinions about the empress; Prus seemed to criticize Marie Louise whereas Dubern praised her conduct as the empress of France. See Prus 1846 (II), 287; Dubern 1837 (II), 319-330.

prior to 1830 the last *queen of France* in people's minds was Marie Antoinette, a very controversial figure among historians and politicians.

The institution of queenship, like historiography, changed considerably in the tumultuous decades between the 1810s and 1840s. Even the title changed from queen of France to queen of the French (corresponding to the king's titles). The change in the title referred to the king's position as head of France: earlier he had been the head of the kingdom, and after 1830 he was the head of the French people. The changes in French monarchy were not, however, embraced by everyone. On the one hand, according to the historian Ceri Crossley, who has specialised in French nineteenth-century history, the liberal historians, including Augustin Thierry, wanted to use French history to legitimise the post-revolutionary nation-state.[73] The meaning of the term "liberal" in the context of early nineteenth-century French historiography and politics is not very clear, but in 1838 the text book author Laure de Saint-Ouen defined it as "men attached to the constitutional principles". [74] On the other hand, after the 1830 revolution the more conservative historians expressed their dissatisfaction about the change of dynasty by writing French histories that represented the absolute monarchy as the best thing for French society. One good example of such history writing is Pierre Denis de Peyronnet's works of the 1830s, which I will examine more thoroughly in the following chapters.[75]

In one study, *Writing National Histories: Western Europe since 1800* (1999), the idea of the early nineteenth-century French historiography is summarized very aptly:

> During the Restoration and the July Monarchy, the Revolution and its consequences formed the point of departure from which historians attempted (with varying degrees of success) to establish the legitimacy of the post-revolutionary nation-state. Those histories endorsed specific governments and policies and sought to demonstrate to the French that they belonged to a progressive community which had remained essentially the same through the vicissitudes of historical change.[76]

This insight is very useful in understanding the starting point of my research – that it was in the historians' interest to promote the permanence of the monarchy and its continuity in the history of French queenship. The idea of progress was visible in all narratives of French history, but the meaning, or direction, of progress varied from one author to another. It was in the historians' interest to promote the idea that French queenship had not fundamentally changed in the course of

[73] Crossley 1999, 49.
[74] Saint-Ouen 1838, 240. "[…] les hommes attachés aux principes constitutionnels."
[75] Peyronnet 1835.
[76] Berger et al 1999, 47.

its history in order to justify the exclusion of women from inheriting the throne and more generally women's exclusion from power.

Because of the interpretations of the Salic law, originally an early medieval collection of laws, and "natural law", a principle that defined women as subordinate to men by "natural" order, women have never been able to inherit or transmit the throne of France to their heirs, so that *queen* has almost always referred to the wife of a king.[77] However, this definition of the queen as a mere king's wife excludes the historical perspective of a French queenship that never ceased to mutate according to the needs of the society. Many early nineteenth-century historians wanted to emphasise that *women* in particular had always been excluded from the throne, even if this was a false presupposition. Queenship was closely associated with another similarly problematic concept, regency. Regency was slowly institutionalised in the late medieval and early modern period, but the word was often employed by early nineteenth-century historians to describe early medieval queens governing on behalf of their sons or grandsons. The difference, however, is that both a man and a woman could become regents and therefore it was not a gendered concept, even though the French word always indicates the gender of the regent: *régent* or *régente*. An examination of early nineteenth-century historiography makes it clear that there was no simple definition of either queenship or regency, and both concepts had many layers and dimensions.

Concepts can exist without an equivalent word and such is the case with queenship. There is no doubt that the institution of queenship existed in nineteenth-century France and earlier during the Old Regime. Following the ideas of the Finnish historian Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen (2006), a word is the linguistic equivalent of a non-linguistic concept.[78] Not only has the word evolved from medieval *raïne* to modern *reine*, but the concept or idea has also evolved.[79] However, it must be kept in mind that any change in the concept does not necessarily imply a change in the word, and vice versa. And as Kuukkanen has explained, a concept does not even need a linguistic equivalent, a word, to exist.[80] Distinguishing between words and concepts is a general philosophical and historical problem, because it is almost impossible to determine where one ends and the other starts. Concepts are neither stable nor immutable, and they transform according to time and space, and the concept of queenship is no exception. This is, however, a modern premise and not something that was

[77]Salic law was used as a basis for women's exclusion from French throne in the late medieval period and "natural law", the theory that men had greater political capacities, was used as a basis for exclusion during the early modern period. See Hanley 2003, 2-16.
[78] Kuukkanen 2006, 3 & passim.
[79] On the idea of a concept, see Delacroix 2010, 700-701.
[80] Kuukkanen 2006, 3.

considered in early nineteenth-century France. Queenship is an analytical term borrowed from English to present a concept without a linguistic correspondent.

Women's exclusion from the throne is one shared feature in the French concept of queenship and it was common in all the variations of queenship found in nineteenth-century historiography of the history of France or French/Frankish queens. It is as if the historians wanted to persuade their readers that queens have *always* been excluded from the throne in order to justify the continuation of women's exclusion from many public roles. The different attributes referred to the variations in the concept *queenship* and they were used to categorize and describe certain women at specific historical times. I argue throughout my study that the attributes and the variations of the concept *queen* as used by early nineteenth-century historians were politically motivated, and by choosing a certain attribute, and simultaneously a variation of a concept, historians implicitly committed themselves to ideological interpretations of the history of France.

The institution of queenship did *not* exist in the Merovingian period as the French historian Sylvie Joye has stated.[81] Janet Nelson has argued that women were indeed excluded from the throne in the early medieval period, but this exclusion was not so much due to women's biological sex but to the fact that *only* members of the Merovingian (male) dynasty could inherit the power. There were many men as well who were excluded from the throne.[82] It was only later that women were excluded from the throne because of their sex. In the nineteenth century this exclusion from power was one of the most important features defining queenship. Specific laws in 1814 and in 1830 excluded women from the throne. What I understand by queenship, and what I am studying in the early nineteenth-century material, are the expectations, roles, and religious, political, or social power associated with the early medieval queens by the writers of that material.

The institution of queenship, however, is more than the exclusion from rulership. Already in the Carolingian period queens were consecrated and blessed along with the kings, signifying that their role too was official. From this period there are written sources describing queens' duties and position. The sources give the impression that the queen's status was stable.[83] Thus by the Carolingian era the queenship was in a sense institutionalized with rituals, position, special duties,

[81] Joye 2009, 43-44.
[82] Nelson 1986, 44. "In comparing her position with that of a female aristocrat, we observed the queen's special character. And while her position had its disadvantages these are hard to attribute specifically to her femininity. The weakness of ineligibility for kingship she shared with all non-Merovingian men; that of the non-institutionalisation of her power, with even very powerful male contemporaries, including mayors of the palace."
[83] Nelson 1997, 301-304.

and written information, but the exclusion which strongly defined queenship in the nineteenth century was not included in the institution until the late medieval period, and until the discussion that followed the invention of the Salic law in the fourteenth century

Even though women could not inherit the throne, for different reasons in different eras, as the French historian Eliane Viennot has argued, queens were not completely excluded from power as regents and as spouses.[84] After the fourteenth century, there were several powerful women ruling in France as regents, such as Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589) who reigned on behalf of her sons and husband in the sixteenth century, and Anne of Austria (1601–1666) and Marie de' Medici (1573–1642) in the seventeenth century. These women could not wield power directly because they were obliged to rule through their male family members. Yet their lives and reigns affected greatly how French queenship was perceived by the early nineteenth-century historians. Especially in the fourth chapter I examine how images of the early modern regents and other notorious queens affected the early nineteenth-century interpretations of early medieval queens ruling on behalf of their sons. With the help of intertextual references certain queens were classified as the opposite of an ideal queen, wife and mother. The importance of the Merovingian queens and the early modern regents for French history becomes obvious in a text book from 1836, where the author summarised all important persons from the history of France. Among the "Hommes célèbres" we find queens such as Clotilde, Radegonde, Brunehilde and Fredegonde, but after Bathilde in 680 the reader has to wait until the thirteenth century before another woman appears on the list. In addition, it is remarkable that only six women, of whom four were queens, appeared on the list after the thirteenth century and prior to 1500.[85]

I agree with the French medievalist Alain Boureau who has stated that "[…] the figure of the monarch gives expression and substance to collective themes and serves to bring together very different sets of beliefs. […] This narration opened the way for a categorization of monarchs - as good or bad, strong or weak - subject to all kinds of variations depending on the rehabilitations or indictments underway at a given moment."[86] Boureau is referring to the image of the French kings after the Revolution, but these ideas can be applied to early medieval queens as well. Thus at a given moment, from 1815 to 1848, the Merovingian queens were categorised in historiography with "black and white" binary concepts (such as French or Frankish, saint or non-saint). These concepts

[84] Viennot 2006, 580 & passim.
[85] Loriquet 1836, 13-27. The two non-royal women on the list were of course Christine de Pizan and Jean d'Arc.
[86] Boureau 2001, 190-1.

were seldom neutral, almost invariably carrying value judgements.[87] On the other hand, the representations were rarely completely black and white because even the most negatively perceived women were often given some positive features. Conversely, the saints could have flaws as well as virtues. Thus the categories where queens were fitted were flexible and varied from one writer to another, from one year to another, just as they do in modern historiography. In my thesis I will examine the "rehabilitions" and "indictments", as Boureau wrote, that affected the representations of queens between 1815 and 1848.

1.3. Sources and Twenty-First-Century Research Field

A great number of sources are required in order to discover the meanings associated with Merovingian queenship(s) in Restoration and July Monarchy France. With a few exceptions, these sources were published or printed in France in the period 1814 – 1848. The exceptions are important historiographical works that were published in French but in a neighbouring country. My sources include 79 titles from 58 historians. In each work one or several of the Merovingian queens are discussed.[88] Most of the works were not only about the Merovingian queens but focused on larger themes, such as the history of France or famous women. The large number of sources, however, permits me to draw general conclusions about the representations of the queens. In addition to various large histories of France, I have included in my sources, and under the definition of historiography, biographies, historical novels and text books, but I have left out journal articles, serials, theatre plays and pictures. The use of theatre pieces in particular would have required additional research into the history of French theatre. Images, comics and pamphlets are used only to demonstrate the context of the culture which embraced the writing of the historiographical works. The dissertation thus includes a very large proportion of French monographs where Merovingian queens were examined or referred to, making it unique and very representative in the field of historiographical studies.

[87] On value judgment, see Harry Ritter's definition "[t]he (tacit or explicit) assessment of past individuals, events, or circumstances from the standpoint of some set of ethical norms." Ritter 1986, 447.

[88] The numbers are approximate because it is not always clear who the author of the work is or if there was more than one author. The exact dates of writing are not always known, so I will usually use the years of publication. In general, I have excluded works which were only reprinted during the period of 1814-1848. There are some exceptions like the text books by Gaultier, as they were used and rewritten during the period in question though originally published during the eighteenth century. In some works there are only a couple of pages about the queens, whereas in other works there are over 200 pages dedicated to them. The exact number of works is difficult to calculate because some works were published in several versions and it is often difficult to determine whether a new version is still the same work or a new one. I have, for example, used three versions of Augustin Thierry's *Lettres sur l'histoire de France* (1855, 1827, 1842b) but I have counted them as one work.

History writing and historiography were not yet established as an academic practice in France before the 1850s and most works bear remarkable similarities in their narrative and chronological forms. Certain fictional elements such as perception descriptions were present in many genres of historiographical writing. Most works do not explain or focus on specific, well defined problems. They describe historical events and persons. Next I present a short description of the primary sources published between 1814 and 1848.

Most of the works that I use as sources can be classified as general history, which includes several subcategories such as historical research, financial history, legal history, encyclopaedias and local histories. These subcategories can overlap in certain works because the categories that I use did not exist in the early nineteenth century. Good examples from this largest group are the works of Jules Michelet[89] (1798 - 1874), who published general and legal histories of France, Philippe le Bas[90] (1794 - 1860) who published encyclopaedias and dictionaries, and Édouard Laboulaye[91] (1811-1883), who published a political history of women. All the works in this category were written by men.

The sources include works by thirteen female authors. They published text books, biographies, devotional literature and historical novels. In early nineteenth-century France women did not have the same opportunities to study history or become historians as men did, which explains why there are so few works written by women. There were a lot of prejudices against literate women in the nineteenth century, and women historians had fewer choices between the historiographical genres if they wanted to publish because it was perceived that women were less capable of examining

[89] Michelet was one of the most famous French nineteenth-century historians. He made a long career in the national archives from the 1830s to 1850s. He had a chair of history and morals in the Collège de France from 1838 to 1851. He was also a member of the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*. His most important historiographical works were the *Histoire de France* which started in the 1830s and was reprinted several times, and *Histoire de la Révolution française* which started in 1847. During the July Monarchy, especially in the 1840s, he strongly opposed the Catholic Church and the Jesuits. According to Encyclopedia Britannica he had a strong hatred for priests and kings. See http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy.utu.fi:2048/EBchecked/topic/380015/Jules-Michelet.

[90] He was a Hellenist, translator, and an archaeologist. Tutor of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, the future Napoleon III, in the 1820s and in the 1830s, he taught (maître de conference) in the École normale supérieure. He was also in the 1840s a librarian and an administrator in the Sorbonne library. He became the president of Institut de France in 1858. His father had committed suicide after Robespierre had fallen from power.

[91] He was a jurist, politician and an anti-slavery activist. He was accepted to l'Académie desinscriptions et des belles-lettres in 1844 and in 1849 he became a professor of comparative law in the Collège de France. He was famous for his interest in the United States of America and he gave many lectures about the country in France. He only became politically active after 1848 and his politically most active years were in the 1870s.
According to Stephen W. Sawyer, Laboulaye rejected neither the July Monarchy nor the Second Republic. Sawyer 2013, 11.

"scientifically" the history of France.[92] To make matters worse, not all archives were open to women, or to men outside the "academic circles".[93]

Nine titles are collective biographies and most of them are clearly devotional literature. Collective biographies include biographies of famous women, mostly, but not all, queens. Examples from this category are the work of Louis-Marie Prudhomme[94] (1752 - 1830) *Biographie universel et historique des femmes célèbres mortes ou vivantes*[95] from 1830, which includes biographies of both "virtuous" and "notorious" women, and that of Joséphine Amory de Langerack[96] entitled *Galerie des femmes celebres* from 1847. The women in the latter work are almost all French queens. Devotional historiography refers to works which have a clearly religious, Catholic, agenda. It is important to keep in mind, as historian Rebecca Rogers (2007) has argued, that in nineteenth-century France, alongside the growing "laïcisation", a strong Catholic or generally religious tendency emerged which was visible, for example, in the number of pilgrimages to Lourdes. [97] My sources include also six individual biographies of Merovingian queen-saints. A good representative of this category is the work *Clotilde, ou le Triomphe du christianisme chez les Francs*[98] published by Caroline Falaize[99] (née Jacquemain, 1792–1852) in 1848. The emphasis in these works is on the person's religious deeds rather than on historical deeds.

[92] See, for example, Smith 1998, 6. See also Smith Allen 1991, 223.
[93] Smith 1998, 105.
[94] Prudhomme was an active revolutionary in Paris in the late eighteenth century, though originally he was from Lyon. A well-known bookseller and publisher, he edited famous reovlutionary journals in the 1790s. After Napoleon's reign he continued to work as a bookseller until his death. In the 1790s he published several works presenting the monarchy and its history negatively. It seems he was no longer active in politics in the 1820s. For more about his writing during the late eighteenth century, see Zizek 2003.
[95] "Universal, Historic, Biographic Repertory of Famous Women."
[96] According to the introduction of the *Galerie*, Joséphine Amory de Langerack was an eighteen-year-old girl when she wrote these biographies. Langerack would publish other works as well and there she would deal with issues such as the Catholic faith, female education and women's moral existence, as in *De l'existence morale et physique des Femmes, ou Essais sur l'education et les conditions des femmes* ("Women's Moral and Physical Existence, or Essays on Women's Education and Conditions",1849). See also *Catalogue general de la librairie française*, where it is stated that Langerack was in fact born in 1831. Champion & al. 1867 (I), 40. According to the Bibliothéque nationale de France, Langerack was born in 1800. There is no source there for this piece of information. See "Joséphine Amory de Langerack". Isabelle Ernot mentioned this study in her article about female biographies (2006, 83). *De l'existence morale* is a very unusual work to be written by a twenty-year-old woman, but there are no indications of other writers. However, even Ernot did not mention anything about her age. http://data.bnf.fr/13012386/josephine_amory_de_langerack/ accessed October 23, 2015.
[97] Rogers 2007, 124.
[98] "Clotilde, or the Triumph of Christianity among the Francs"
[99] Falaize was a similar author to Joséphine Amory de Langerack, to the extent that almost nothing is known of her beside her works. Christian Amalvi (2001), one of the rare modern historians to mention her, describes her as "femme de lettre catholique", who had her books published mainly in denominational publishing houses. Amalvi 2001a, 105.

Ten of my sources are text books about the history of France. From this category a good example is the work entitled *Histoire de France* published in 1827 by Laure Boen de Saint-Ouen[100] (1778 - 1837). This text book was in use in French schools until the 1880s.[101] I have also included in my sources historical novels set in the Merovingian period, all written prior to 1830. One such work is Augustine Gottis'[102] (1776–1857) *L'Abbaye de Sainte-Croix de Radegonde, reine de France*[103] from 1825. In addition to these works, I will analyse commentaries on early medieval sources. Most of these commentaries were written on Gregory of Tours' *Ten Books of Histories*. This category also includes the comments for the new translations and editions of the the early medieval sources. The most important translation of Gregory's *Ten Books* was entitled *Histoire des Francs*, signed by François Guizot[104] (1823). I have classified certain early nineteenth-century sources as poetic history, which I use to refer to a melange of historical research and historical novel. The most famous example of poetic history is Augustin Thierry's[105] *Récits des temps mérovingiens* from 1840. The general categorisation of sources presented above is only one possibility and is used uniquely as a practical tool in order to help construct a clear picture of the types of sources I have used.

A closer look at the publishing years of the sources reveals that prior to the 1820s there are only two titles, whereas from the 1820s there are almost ten times this number. [106] The growth in numbers within only few years was thus considerable. From the 1830s and 1840s I have approximately the

[100] A popular school manual author, she published a liberal text book in history, *Histoire de France*, in 1827 which became immensely popular. According to Christian Amalvi, she was a liberal author and she also published in the 1830s a new text book on Napoleon, *Histoire de Napoléon*, which aimed to balance the picture the confessional text books gave of the emperor. See Amalvi 2001, 247.

[101] Lyons 2008, 26. According to Martyn Lyons, who has studied the best-sellers of nineteenth-century France, the educational market of books grew throughout the century and that is why a textbook of history like Saint-Ouen's work, is to be found among the list of the nineteenth-century French best-sellers. Lyons 2008, 36.

[102] Augustine Gottis was an author whose life is obscure, but she wrote a great number of historical novels. Her *L'Abbaye de Sainte-Croix ou Radegonde, reine de France* was published in 1823. Louis Marie Prudhomme has an entry on Gottis in his *Biographie Universelle et Historique des femmes célèbres mortes ou vivantes* (1830). According to the entry, Gottis was rather popular in her time and she was especially known, according to the biography, for historical novels. She wrote on historical persons such as Charlemagne, the mistress of the French king François I, Marie Leckzinska, and Catherine I of Russia. Prudhomme 1830 (II), 474-475.

[103] "Abbey of Saint-Croix of Radegonde, Queen of France"

[104] Guizot was a "professor of modern history in the Academy of Paris" as he titled himself in 1823, but he had been appointed to the University of Paris already in 1812. He was a proponent of the constitutionel monarchy and a liberal, especially in the 1820s. During the July Monarchy he became an active politician. First he held the post of minister of education and in 1847 he became a prime minister for couple of months before the revolution. After the 1848 revolution he withdrew from politics and dedicated his life to historiography. See http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy.utu.fi:2048/EBchecked/topic/249050/Francois-Guizot, accessed April 30, 2016.

[105] He was a great supporter of a constitutional monarchy. Augustin Thierry studied in École Normale in Paris and he was briefly secretary to Henri de Saint-Simon, an early socialist theorist, in the late 1810s. Thierry had worked as a journalist before concentrating on historiographical writing. In 1830 Thierry became blind but he continued to publish historiographical works. In 1841 he received the Prix Gobert from the French Academy. See http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy.utu.fi:2048/EBchecked/topic/592070/Augustin-Thierry, visited April 30, 2016.

[106] More than two of the titles were *first* published before 1820, but I use versions printed after 1820.

same number of titles as from the 1820s, but I have not always been able to use the first editions of the works.[107] In some cases it is not even clear when the first edition was published, and the time span between two editions could be rather long. After 1819 there was relevant material published every year except for 1824 and 1845.

The length of the works and the number of authors grew throughout the period and the histories of France became larger and more comprehensive.[108] Almost all French authors in the early nineteenth century had something to say about the country's history, and French history almost always included the birth of the monarchy, the Merovingian period. It is, however, difficult to say which works were truly read and which works were ignored by contemporary readers. The historian Martin Lyons has studied the best-sellers of early nineteenth-century France and argued that among French readers religious history and eighteenth-century century authors were most popular, together with historical novels and textbooks that were read in schools.[109] Indeed, this is why one should not focus only on "academic historiography", as it was not the only genre affecting French readers' historiographical imagination and knowledge of the early Middle Ages.

Nineteenth-century writers did not write their books for a homogeneous audience. Some of them wrote for other academic historians, some wrote for pupils of varying age, some for young girls and some for religious readers. The intended audience affected the way queenship was presented. Some works were directed to a working class audience but most, it seems, were for the authors' peers - well educated readers. [110] Some works, such as biographies and devotional literature, were intended almost exclusively for a female audience. One must remember that often the queens were not studied for their own sake, because in general history was rarely studied in this way in early nineteenth-century France; it was studied to find answers to current social or political problems, or to offer moral lessons to readers so that they could improve themselves. The historians who wrote textbooks were almost the only ones who clearly defined their audience. For example, in 1836

[107] For example, the work of Adélaide Celliez saw its second edition in 1851, but I don't have the first edition published in 1846. In addition, one work published in 1834 under the name of François Guizot, *Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France: depuis la fondation de la monarchie française jusqu'au 13e siècle* actually seems to be a work written by an author who died in the late eighteenth century. All the sources were first published prior to 1848 but the version I have at my disposal might be from a later date.

[108] These histories of France were often entitled "Histoire de France", and they started from the Merovingian period or even earlier, and went all the way to the 1789 Revolution.

[109] Lyons 2008, 20-27.

[110] There has been quite a lot of research about the readers of the nineteenth century. See, for example, the works of Martyn Lyons, Christina de Bellaigue, and James Smith Allen on various readerships. François Guizot also aimed his works on Civilisation at male university students, and some of the works were originally lectures. See, for example, Guizot 1828, XIX.

Amable Tastu[111], (1798–1885), wrote this of the audience of her text book, *Cours d'histoire de France*,[112]: "[t]his book, aimed for young people, could be, I think, of some use for the pupils of our colleges […]. I also hope that I have managed to come up with the expectations of the mothers who asked me for readings for their daughters […]."[113]

Tastu's works are a good example of the way the intended audience affected representation, because Clotilde was mentioned in the text book very briefly, and only in a positive manner, "full of virtues and goodness"[114], which is a very different image than the one Tastu created of Clotilde in another work, *Chronique de France* (1829), where she was a proud queen and not saintly at all. The late 1820s work seems to be composed for a more mature audience than the text book from the 1830s. It is impossible to say which representation the author thought more truthful, or whether they were both merely tools for the education for different audiences.[115] In addition, the early nineteenth-century French historians most likely had extensive networks that included other historians, intellectuals and erudites, and no doubt these networks affected the way history was written and the opportunities or resources the historians had at their disposal. However, I examine the networks only insofar as they were visible on the textual level concerning the representations of the Merovingian queens.

In addition to the early nineteenth-century historiographical works, this research draws on a lot of other sources, mostly works that were used as sources by the early nineteenth-century historians. This group includes historiographical works from the early medieval period, such as Gregory of Tours' chronicles from the late sixth century and the anonymous chronicles known as Fredegar's chronicles from the seventh century, and from the early modern period, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The works from both periods are important to take into consideration because early nineteenth-century understandings of Merovingian and later French queens were not created *ex nihilo*, but were built on the foundations of earlier works that were used as sources.

111 Sabine Casimire Amable Voïart, a famous poetess. She was highly productive writer and she published poetry, history, and didactic works for young readers, as well as, for example, travel literature. Initially she started writing to support her family after her husband's business did not succeed. The masculine pseudonym was chosen to increase the number of readers.
112 "The Course of the History of France."
113 Tastu 1836, 5-9. "Ce livre, destiné à la jeunesse, pourra être, je le pense, de quelque utilité aux éléves de nos colléges […]. J'espère aussi avoir répondu à l'attente des mères de famille, qui me demandaient des lectures pour leurs filles […]."
114 Tastu 1837, 13.
115 *Cours d'histoire de France* was a text book and *Chronique de France* a work of poetry. There is more about *Chronique de France* in Chapter II.

The growth of the middle class was undoubtedly one of the main factors in the popularity of history that brought a sharp increase in the number of readers in the first half of the nineteenth century: more and more people had the means to study and consume history, especially their "own" history.[116] The nationalist ideal of knowing one's history was steadily propagated through the towns, even though most workers did not have the possibility to read vast studies of French history. The period of the July Monarchy, which slowly but steadily improved educational possibilities for French youth, was in many ways a period of hope, for example, the hope for women's rights in Saint-Simonianism.[117] However, these hopes were temporarily destroyed by the Revolution of 1848.

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Studying the representations of early medieval queenship brings together some of the most popular research themes in European history. These include the rise of the bourgeoisie, the slow liberalisation of political and social life, nationalism, and the interminable discussion about men's and women's hierarchical roles in marriage and in the patriarchal family.[118] All these themes are present here to a greater or lesser extent, but my main focus remains the different aspects of gender in early nineteenth-century French historiography.

Nicole Pellegrin has edited a study entitled *Histoire d'Historiennes* (2006), which includes articles about French female historians, especially the nineteenth-century *historiennes*. Many early nineteenth-century French *historiennes* are not very well known, so this collection has proved to be very useful and inspiring. Because the concept of gender is one of the key notions in my research, I draw on many kinds of theoretical discussions of the application of gender research in history and historiography in France. In the theoretical field, I have used mainly the works of Joan Scott, *Gender and the politics of history* (1999) and *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (1996). Bonnie G. Smith's study, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (1998) which examines the gendered practices of historiography in the nineteenth century, has also been of value. This study reveals the limitations historians had in writing history and how men and women, both as objects and as authors, were perceived differently in the field of historiography. The study explores how this situation affected the genres of historiography and the representations historians created of historical figures.

[116] About consuming history, especially medieval history, see Emery and Morowitz 2003, 15-16.
[117] A movement following the ideas of Claude Henri of Rouvroy, count of Saint-Simon (1760-1825), a utopian socialist movement and forerunner of scientific socialism. This controversial movement had strong feminist tendencies, but other factions had a strong political influence as well. See Callahan 2005, 386-387.
[118] Popular themes according to Cova 2009, 51.

French queenship has most often been studied in the context of the medieval or early modern periods with an emphasis on the queenship of the Old Regime.[119] Because only one person became queen in the early nineteenth century, the period has usually been left out of these works. Even the early nineteenth-century historians themselves tended to discuss historical queens rather than the contemporary queen. Nevertheless, there are some recent articles about nineteenth-century French queenship, notably by Jo Burr Margadant, and these have been very useful in my research.[120]

The French historian Agnès Graceffa has studied the Merovingian queens and the Merovingian period in the context of nineteenth-century historiography.[121] Her works are of great importance to my research because they are the only ones that discuss almost the same topic as I do. Whereas she has focused in her first relevant work only on Fredegonde and Brunehilde and in her second on the Franks generally, I am taking a middle road with the three queens.[122] In her second work, *Les historiens et la question franque,* she concentrated on the emerging academic historiography in France and in Germany from 1800 to the twentieth century, whereas in the article about Fredegonde and Brunehilde she focused on the *longue durée* of their representations and referred to only a few sources from the early nineteenth century. Only in the article did she have a clear gender focus; she examined men looking at famous historical women. Graceffa has elsewhere argued that the Merovingian period was not perceived in the early and middle of the nineteenth century as the "origins" of the French nation, but that the era was rather seen as a moment of crisis. In the later nineteenth century the Gauls, not the Merovingians, were seen as the ancestors of the French.[123] I accept the argument that historians in the nineteenth century increasingly distinguished the history of the French nation from that of the French monarchy, even though this distinction did not immediately become visible in all branches of historiography because many branches still continued to draw on influences from the eighteenth-century historiographical traditions.

There is also recent research about Merovingian royals other than women in the context of nineteenth-century historiography that I find useful. The most famous Merovingian king was Clovis I, of whom rather lot has been written; among historians who have written about him are Laurent

[119] For example, Viennot 2006.
[120] For example, Margadant 1999.
[121] Graceffa 2009a; Graceffa 2008b.
[122] There are also some works about imagining Franks in French historiography, such as Wood 2013, Venayre 2013; Berger 2015, 1-140.
[123] Graceffa 2009b, 68.

Theis and Christian Amalvi, both of them French.[124] Especially the latter has published several useful studies about the nineteenth-century historical imagination and French historians.[125] In addition, Ian Wood and Bonnie Effros, both medievalists, have published useful studies about the representations of the Merovingians and Franks in nineteenth century historiography, arts, and archeology.[126]

Although there are studies concerning the most famous early nineteenth-century historians there is very little information or research about other historians of the period.[127] This lack of information about many historians creates practical and theoretical problems. In some cases only their work remains and their social and political backgrounds remain obscure, preventing thorough research on their possible motivation. However, Amalvi has published a collection of short biographies of "vulgarisateurs", including historians such as Laure Boen de Saint-Ouen, Amable Tastu, Caroline Falaize, Nicolas Loriquet[128] (1767–1845), Théodose Burette[129] (1804–1847), and Henri Martin[130] (1810–1883) who wrote about the Merovingian queens and produced popular histories for the wider public.[131] Amalvi's work has provided a lot of information about lesser known or forgotten authors.

Nineteenth-century French historiography has indeniably been a very popular topic among late twentieth and early twenty-first-century historians and as a result there is a lot of research about the most famous historians of the period such as François Guizot, Jules Michelet, Augustin Thierry and François-René de Chateaubriand[132] (1768-1848). Their most famous works have been studied

[124] Especially Theis 1996.
[125] Works of Amalvi include *Le Baptême de Clovis: Heurs et Malheurs d'un Mythe Fondateur de la France contemporaine, 1814-1914* (1996); *Les Héros des Français* (2011); *Dictionnaire biographique des historiens français et francophones* (2004); *Répertoire des auteurs des manuels scolaires et de livres de vulgarisation historique de langue française* (2001). See also Boutry, *Clovis Romantique* (1997).
[126] Especially Wood *The Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages* (2013) and Effros *Uncovering the Germanic Past. Merovingian Archaeology in France, 1830-1914* (2012).
[127] There are quite a number of studies on early nineteenth-century historiography that focus only on the most famous historians. See Crossley 1993; Wood 2013; Avezou 2013b; Leterrier 1997.
[128] Apparently, Loriquet was a fervent royalist in the 1820s and his works represent this worldview. This pedagogic work was his best known work. See Amalvi 2001, 179.
[129] A historian and a professor of history in the Collège Stanislas in Paris, a Catholic private educational institution. According to Christian Amalvi, he published several popular historiographical works. See Amalvi 2001, 54.
[130] According to Christian Amalvi, Martin was a well known leftist historian and a politician, and his *Histoire de France* (1834-1836) was anclerical and democratic. Martin was especially popular historian during the Third Republic but today he is almost completely forgotten. Martin promoted, according to Amalvi, the idea of the Gauls as the incarnation of the Third Estate and that the French society is based on a struggle between the two races, Gauls and the Franks who the aristocrats saw as their ancestors. Amalvi 2001, 191.
[131] These historians Amalvi himself defined as "vulgarisateurs".
[132] Chateaubriand was a well-known Catholic and royalist, one of the best known French authors of the nineteenth century. He is said to have founded the Romanticism in France but he was also a historian and a politician. For example, during the Restoration he was an ambassor in Berlin, Rome, and in London. His political views ranged from royalism to liberalism and to ideal republicanism. Yet, his political career ended with the July Revolution. His works include *Essai historique, politique et moral sur las révolutions anciennes et modernes* (London, 1797); *Atala* (Paris,

thoroughly by subsequent historians. Classical research on French historiography includes the large collections edited by Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire* starting from 1986. The nineteenth-century has an especially important role in the section on historiography in its second part. Furthermore, the works on French historiography by Stefan Berger (2015), Pim Den Boer (1998) and Sylvain Venayre (2013) have been very useful to me. Especially Den Boer's work *History as a Profession: The Study of History in France, 1818-1914*, which focuses on the professionalisation of the historian's role in France has offered me very useful theoretical and statistical tools. Statistics are also at the centre of Martyn Lyons' study *Reading Culture and Writing Practices in Nineteenth-century France* (2008), in which he identifies the books that were read in France. It is very interesting to see that the works now considered most famous were not necessarily the most read ones in the nineteenth century.

The study of the Merovingian queens in early nineteenth-century French historiography is obviously related to studies of medievalism in general. The nineteenth century is famous for a growing and variable interest in the Middle Ages.[133] There has been a lot of valuable research written on French nineteenth-century medievalism, notably the gigantic *La Fabrique du Moyen Âge au XIXe siècle. Représentations du Moyen Âge dans la culture et la littérature françaises du XIXe siècle* (2006),[134] which features excellent articles related to the representations of early medieval history and its figures in nineteenth-century France, and on its historiography, arts, and literature.

1801), *Le génie du Christianisme (*Paris,1802, 5 vols., 8vo); *René* (1807), *Les martyrs* (Paris, 1809), *Etudes, ou discours historiques* (Paris, 1831, 4 vols.).

[133] Medievalism flourished in literature, music, painting, architecture, and so on. Hamnett 2011, 104.

[134] There is, for example, an article about Fredegonde in French nineteenth-century arts and historiography: see Brunet 2006.

2. Ideal Queenship in Historiography

"Divine protection was thus upon our princes; the first queen of France was a saint!"[135]

"Truly barbarian manners, which did not exclude the serenity of Christian manners, were blended in Clotilde with the passions of her savage nature."[136]

In this chapter I will examine the way the representations of the saint Merovingian queens were used by historians and authors to construct the image of an ideal queenship in early nineteenth-century France. Three of the most visible saint Merovingian queens in the early nineteenth-century French historiography were Saint Clotilde, Saint Radegonde, and Saint Bathilde. The first queen was perhaps the most visible in historiography because according to Christian Amalvi (2011), the nineteenth-century Catholics celebrated her for persuading her husband Clovis to convert to Christianity. The Catholics saw this event as leading eventually to the conversion of the entire nation. Amalvi has stated that Clotilde was the "atemporal model of Christian wives and mothers" in the nineteenth century.[137] In addition, he has argued that in the nineteenth century many readers received their knowledge of the Middle Ages mostly from saints' biographies, like those written about Clotilde, Radegonde, and Bathilde throughout the century.[138] Indeed, the saints' lives were the most popular genre in the nineteenth century and saints' histories taught medieval history to many readers deprived of further education.[139] These devotional works, also in the form of collective biographies, are examined closely because in devotional biographies Clotilde and her contemporary saints were presented as ideal queens, mothers and wives. Nevertheless, especially the image of Clotilde as a good and exemplary queen was not shared by all authors. Jules Dubern[140] (1800-1880), who in 1837 published a collective biography of French queens and regents, wrote that Clotilde was one of the worst queens in French history because she desired power and she was vindictive: "[t]he Church could award Clotilde a place among the saints but history must place her

[135] Langerack 1847, 126. "La protection divine était donc à nos princes; la première reine de France fut une sainte!"
[136] Chateaubriand 1861, 2. "Véritables moeurs barbares, qui n'excluent pas la mansuétude des moeurs chrétiennes mêlées dans Khlothilde aux passions de sa nature sauvage."
[137] Amalvi 2011, 28. "[…] modèle intemporel des épouses et mères chrétiennes."
[138] Amalvi 2006, 57-59.
[139] Smith Allen 1991, 48.
[140] He was educated in law and functioned as a judge. He was also a member of *Institut historique* (he later changed his name to Du Bern de Boislandry). He was critical of women's use of supreme royal power and seemed to favour the constitutional monarchy. For example, in 1867 he published another work entitled *Influence des femmes sur les destinées de la France.*

among the worst queens."[141] Dubern's negative view of Clotilde was one aspect of his negative interpretation of the whole history of French monarchy, and his criticism was aimed at the whole monarchy. I will focus on Clotilde more than on Radegonde and Bathilde because she was the most visible of the three and her representations offer the most material to analyze.

I begin by making general remarks about French queenship in the nineteenth century. Thereafter I move on to examine the representations of Queen Clotilde in the context of the French queenship and also how French queenship was modified after the French Revolution. I explore how Clotilde and Clovis were represented together in nineteenth-century French historiography and especially in the text books. What kind of representations were created of this royal couple in the first decades of the nineteenth century and what meanings were given to them, especially in historical writing aimed for young readers? In addition, I analyse the ways in which Clotilde's figure was used in collective biographies and in historical fiction written in the Restoration and July Monarchy period. Of all the Merovingian themes, the strongest focus of historical novels and collective biographies was on saint queens, so the representation of Queen Clotilde in these two very popular genres of historiography is given special attention.

2.1. Discussing Merovingian Queenship's Place and Sources

The nineteenth century has often been viewed as a century of Great Historical Men because its historiography focused so intensively on the actions of great individuals. These individuals were almost invariably male, and queens and other royal women were often the only women selected alongside them. This tendency to highlight individuals in history was especially visible in the great number of biographies written in the nineteenth century.

Queenship changed considerably during the centuries from the Merovingian period to the end of the Old Regime. Images and memories, the requirements, demands, rituals and rights involved in the queen's role have been constantly transformed, as Fanny Cosandey and the French historian Eliane Viennot (2006) have shown in their large studies of French queenship. Cosandey, for example, has demonstrated that not all French queens went through the official coronation ritual of *Sacre*. It must be noted that even kings did not undergo the ritual of anointing and coronation until the Carolingian

[141] Dubern 1837 (I), 9 and 4-8. "L'Eglise a pu placer Clotilde parmi les Saints ; mais l'histoire doit la mettre au rang des plus mauvaises reines." See also, for example, on the way the clergy dictated what Clotilde should say to Clovis, Fauriel 1836 (II), 37.

period. [142] The coronation of queens ended in the seventeenth century and Marie Antoinette never went through the ritual.[143] At the beginning of the nineteenth century some historians still thought of Clovis as the first officially anointed and crowned king, one reason that they believed the French monarchy had originated in the Merovingian period, the fifth and sixth centuries.[144]

The revolution of 1789 is the key to understanding the image of the king and the different interpretations of the history of France constructed in its early nineteenth-century historiography. According to Alain Boureau (2001), Louis XVIII, who reigned from 1814 to 1824, continued through legislation[145] and the restoration itself the development of "an age-old, persistent, yet pale image of the kings of France."[146] Furthermore, Boureau argues that in constitutional law the king's image remained feeble in the first years after the revolution. Consequently, Charles X (1824–1830) tried to strengthen the image of the king of France by having himself crowned in Reims like the kings of the Old Regime. Boureau rightly adds that the image of the king had different meanings in different contexts and for different persons. The image of the king became more and more simplified in this period, and later even oversimplified. Kings were often categorised according to the Revolution, which divided the history of France into a "before" and an "after" and which related the kings to the image of the Old Regime. When writing their history the royalists[147] saw the Revolution as harmful, disrupting their preferred interpretation of the king, whereas the republicans had their views realized and formed by the Revolution.[148] In other words, the Revolution, both its events and its aftermath, affected the historians and their representations of the queens explicitly or implicitly. All of them saw history in the light of the Revolution. Moreover, in and after 1830 yet another revolution affected the representations of the queens.

Boureau states that French kings were, and still are, an essential part of the collective identity of France, because they reflected the issues and preoccupations of their times. Furthermore, the kings "[…] offer romantic images that blend private passions with the stakes of power, biographical details with the essence of politics."[149] This way of seeing the kings led, as has been argued in the introduction, to categorisation of monarchs which depended on the opinion current at the time of

[142] Cosandey 2000, 127-132 & annex 1.
[143] Margadant 2008b, 300.
[144] See, for example, Saint-Ouen 1822, 50-51 and Serieys 1819, 13-14.
[145] For example, through the Charter of June 4, 1814.
[146] Boureau 2001, 180.
[147] Many (noble) royalists after 1814/1815 were eager to restore the alliance between "throne and altar" and they simultaneously embraced the Catholic religion after years of dismissing it. Ronsin 1990, 235.
[148] Boureau 2001, 180-182. Boureau uses the term "image" of the republican and royalist view of the king, but I think it is rather equivalent to "concept" in this context.
[149] Boureau 2001, 190.

writing.[150] Boureau's statement about the romantic images of the kings applied also to queens. Most nineteenth-century narratives about queens presented only biographical details and private lives, or what would have been categorised as private life in nineteenth-century France - motherhood and wifehood (and religious education). Earlier, however, thse roles were not perceived as "private" in the modern sense, because no such separation between the private and public spheres existed. The roles of mother and wife have always been essential parts of queenship.

The changes in defining public and intimate spheres were visible in the way the early medieval sources and the Merovingian royals were interpreted in early nineteenth-century historiography. According to Simonde de Sismondi[151] (1773–1842), "[t]he domestic events of Clothar I's sons' [Chilperic and Sigebert] family are the most detailed memories that have been conserved of their time. At the same time national history only presents us with confused, obscure or sad and disgraceful events."[152] Sismondi could mean that the focus on "domestic" issues was due to Bishop Gregory of Tours, the most important source for the families of Chilperic and Sigebert. Sismondi wrote of Gregory of Tours that "[h]e was copied by all old writers and commented on by all modern ones."[153] Sismondi made a distinction between public, which was equivalent to national, and private, which was was equivalent to domestic familial, and he criticised Gregory for not understanding that he should value the public, or the national, over the domestic. [154] The most logical reason for this confusing of domestic and national questions was that the two historians, one living in the sixth century and the other in the nineteenth century, did not have the same conception of what constituted domestic and political histories. However, the "domestic" events or "private life" of the royals interested readers very much in Sismondi's own time, despite his criticism. For example, according to Robert Darnton, in the eighteenth century the works that described the royals' private lives were among the most popular, even though they were often officially forbidden.[155]

[150] Boureau 2001, 191.
[151] He was a Swiss historian and economist. During the Revolution he moved to Italy with his family after he had earlier moved to France. As a historian he became famous with his *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen age* (1809–1818), but in the early 1820s he also published a large work on the history of France. His economic theories also influenced economists such as Karl Marx. He was one of the so-called 1820s generation's historians who influenced the new way of writing history. See also http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy.utu.fi:2048/EBchecked/topic/545250/J-C-L-Simonde-de-Sismondi, visited April 30, 2016.
[152] Sismondi 1821 (I), 315. "Les événements domestiques de la famille des fils de Clothaire Ier sont les souvenir le plus détaillé qui nous ait été conservé de leur règne. Pendant le même temps, l'histoire nationale ne nous présente que des événements confus, obscurs, ou dont le souvenir est à la fois triste et honteux."
[153] Sismondi 1821(I), 177. "Il a été copié par tous les anciens écrivains, et commenté par tous les modernes."
[154] Sismondi also criticized those contemporary historians who took for granted the passages included in the later versions of Gregory of Tours' and Fredegar's chronicles. Sismondi wrote that the additional parts, concerning, for example, Clotilde's marriage with Clovis, were seen as tradition which he disclaimed as false. Sismondi 1821 (I), 182.
[155] Darnton 1996, 77 & 138.

What Sismondi interpreted as a domestic issue, in this case the marriage between King Chilperic and Queen Fredegonde, could indeed be of the utmost importance for Gregory of Tours. Sismondi's views reflected the change in the way marriage and monarchy were considered in French society. Both institutions were affected by the slow reshaping of public and domestic spheres during the decades of the Restoration and the July Monarchy.[156] The reshaping that occurred in these decades had already started in the eighteenth century, but the idea of *separate* public and domestic spheres (often referred to as "private") evolved only following the Revolution.[157] However, the changes did not become immediately visible in historiography. [158] The social changes in (perceived) boundaries (or the creation of boundaries) between domestic and public spheres influenced, among other things, the way in which history was perceived and written in the early nineteenth-century. [159]

In his article "Women, the Public Sphere, and the Persistence of Salons" the historian Steven D. Kale calls the early nineteenth century "an era of rising domesticity and increasing antifeminism"[160]. Interestingly, however, he argues that the reduction of women's political rights then was not much more dramatic than in the eighteenth century and prior to the Revolution. His main idea is that women's exclusion from the public sphere did not occur only during the Revolution, and that the exclusion was not related to the culture of *salons* or to its disappearance, as other historians have argued. On the contrary, he argues that salons continued to exist in the nineteenth century and that their existence or non-existence had no correlation with the state of women's rights or with their access to the public sphere.[161]

[156] See, for example, an English case of changing spheres between public and private in Hunt & Hall 1990, 50. The definitions, or borders, between private (or domestic) and public evolve and change constantly and are more fluid than fixed. See Gal 2004, 262.
[157] Foley 2004, 2 and also 5-7.
[158] Joan B. Landes has pointed out, however, that the separation of private/ public that was reshaped in France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not absolute and some "publics" were accepted for women such as commerce, consumption, publishing and post-revolutionary salons. See Landes 2003, 5.
[159] This is visible for example in the differences between Louis Pierre Anquetil's (1723-1806) *Histoire de France* (originally from 1805), where the author focused heavily on the marital questions of the early monarchs, and Sismondi's work from 1821. Napoleon originally commissioned Anquetil's work. Avezou 2013b, 325. Anquetil's work was judged severely by historians such as Augustin Thierry and Henri Martin (born in 1810), who was elected a member of the French Academy in 1878. See Martin 1834, 3-4. Anquetil was a *Génovéfain*, a canon regular from the Congregation of France. He resigned his ecclesiastical positions in 1793 and in 1795 he was elected to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. I have chosen to include Anquetil's work in my corpus because it was one of the most often reprinted historiographical works in the early nineteenth century and it will be discussed at length later in my research.
[160] Kale 2002, 147. Kale's article focuses especially on *salons* and how they changed, or did not change, the possibility for women to access the public sphere both in the eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries.
[161] Kale 2002, 115-148 passim. On the salons in nineteenth-century France, see also Marchal 2005, 321-330.

The question of women's possibility to access the public social sphere is closely linked to the question of French queenship.[162] According to the historian Susan K. Foley, in the revolutionary imagination the queen was conceived as an "archetypal political woman". If the object was to eliminate such a dangerous archetype, Marie-Antoinette's execution in 1793 was not surprising.[163] A queen had a public role, but the trend in the early nineteenth century was to draw women *away* from public roles and into the privacy of homes. According to Lynn Hunt in her well known study *The Family Romance of the Revolution* (1992), "Promiscuity, incest, poisoning of the heir to the throne, plots to replace the heir with a pliable substitute - all of these charges reflect a fundamental anxiety about queenship as the most extreme form of the invasion of the public sphere by women."[164] Thus the late eighteenth-century authors and politicians considered that queenship needed to be transferred from the public sphere to the intimate sphere to maintain a functional society.[165] I argue that this contradiction between the queen's public role and emphasis on women's domestic roles was very visible in all historiography of the early nineteenth-century. The disctinction is visible, for example, in the way historiographical genres intended for women focused on Clotilde's "intimate" role as a mother, wife and saint, whereas in genres aimed for masculine readership Clotilde was represented only as a consort to her husband Clovis. These roles will be examined more closely below.

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The early nineteenth-century historians judged earlier historians, starting from Gregory of Tours, from the historiographical expectations of their own culture and society. A progressive or evolving vision of history was a generally accepted view of history and the historian's own time was seen as the most civilised period in all history both geographically (France relative to other countries and areas) and temporally (the nineteenth century relative to earlier periods). These historians considered that earlier historians had thought in the same way as they did, and yet these same early

[162] According to Rebecca Rogers, there was a lot of educational literature for women by women authors in the early nineteenth century that emphasised the role of women in the "private sphere" of society, especially after the "decadent" years of the late eighteenth century. Rogers 2007, 43.
[163] Foley 2004, 16.
[164] Hunt 1992, 113-114, 116& 121.
[165] French historian Hélène Becquet has argued that the princesses of the Restoration monarchy still belonged to the public sphere as a consequence of their role in transmitting the royal blood to their children. She thinks that the princesses had a legitimate access to power because of their attachment to the Bourbon dynasty. Becquet does concede that these princesses were seen in a quite negative light by the public, especially because of their role in power. Becquet 2009, 152. Rebecca Rogers has argued that in the early nineteenth century there was a tendency to blame Marie Antoinette and the women of the court for the decadence and downfall of the Old Regime, which reinforced the idea that women should not have public influence. Rogers 2007, 33.

nineteenth-century historians perceived queenship from the point of view of their own time and the current state of the institution of queenship. [166]

As noted, especially Queen Clotilde could be interpreted as a temporal model for Catholic women in the nineteenth century, as "the mother of French nation", as Édouard de Fleury called her in 1843.[167] However, very little is known about her life. Gregory of Tours, from the late sixth century, is the most important near-contemporary author who wrote about her, even though she died before he started writing his chronicles in the latter half of the sixth century.[168] Later, a major turning point in Clotilde's posthumous history was in the tenth century when she came to be venerated as a saint in the Catholic Church.[169] Clotilde was canonized because she was seen as having converted her husband Clovis to Christianity. [170] Yet there were conflicts in her history, such as one related to the death of her grandsons, and these conflicts affected the way her saintly image was constructed in consequent historiography, because the negative aspects of her history could be used against her, againts Clovis, against all Merovingians and against the French monarchy. Even as a saint she was not a black and white character, but had human flaws just as others had.

The *Vita Chrothildis* and its later copies greatly affected the representations of Clotilde and added Carolingian ideals of a saint queen to the image of the Merovingian queen.[171] The *Vita* was accessible in the early nineteenth century because it had been edited by the Bollandists in the collection of *Acta Sanctorum*, which was begun in the first half of the seventeenth century.[172] The *Vita* written about her in the tenth century transmitted for future historians the Carolingian

[166] The most famous example is Augustin Thierry, who perceived Gregory of Tours as seeing history in the same way as he himself did. See Thierry 1842a (I), 363-460.
[167] Fleury 1843, X. Fleury used this expression for both Clotilde and Radegonde. Fleury's real name was Édouard Husson (1815-1883), and he was a historian, archaeologist and journalist.
[168] She was the daughter of a Burgundian king and she married the Frankish king Clovis in the last decade of the fifth century. Her husband also converted to Christianity just before the turn of the sixth century. Together with Clovis she founded a church where she was buried when she died in 545. About sources for Clotilde, see Scheibelreiter 1997, 349. On Clotilde's background, see also McNamara & al 1992, 37-40; Aali 2014b, 113-114. There are also reference(s) to Clotilde and Radegonde in Bathilde's *Vita*. See McNamara & al 1992, 277. These two queens were well known in the late seventh century when Bathilde's *Vita* was written.
[169] Folz 1975, 1. McNamara & al 1992, 38-50. According to Robert Folz (1992), the chronicles of Gregory of Tours were not enough to conceive the saintly image of Clotilde, and therefore she was not officially venerated as a saint before the writing of the *Vita*, which was motivated by the political situation in the Carolingian empire. Folz 1992, 10.
[170] See Scheibelreiter 1997, 367. There were already conflicting interpretations of her in the early medieval sources. The main conflict was between her Christian saintly nature and her violent and passionate nature, attested in the sources that narrate the events surrounding the death of her grandsons. Clotilde took care of her three grandsons after their father Clodomir died. After certain events, she was made to choose between tonsure or death for the young boys and she chose death. See Gregory of Tours, Book III, ch. 18. 1974, 180-182.
[171] Thiellet 1997, 148 & passim.
[172] Guizot referred to this collection in his *Histoire de la civilisation en France*. Guizot 1840 (II), 30-31. Clotilde's *Vita* is in Société des Bollandistes' *Acta sanctorum junii : ex latinis et graecis, aliarumque gentium monumentis, servata primigenia veterum scriptorum phrasi.* (1695, I).

"collective memory" of the Merovingian period and affected how she was consequently perceived. The perception of her role in Clovis' conversion survived for centuries with only small modifications and was reinforced in the nineteenth century when the French monarchy was restored after the Revolutionary years and Napoleon's reign. Following the Restoration Clovis became hugely popular again after the revolutionary period, when all royals had been made a part of the negative image of the French monarchy.

The nineteenth century saw an increase in the value of historical sources in shaping views on the past. An important year when early medieval sources were made accessible to many historians was 1823, which saw the birth of a large source collection, *Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*. This work comprised 30 volumes and was published between 1823 and 1835. It carries François Guizot's name, but was in fact composed by his colleagues, students and family. Its three first parts cover the Merovingian period and are thus noteworthy regarding the early medieval queens. The first part is a general history of medieval France until the thirteenth century.[173]

The *Collection*'s main function was to gather, edit and translate sources from the early medieval period. In chronological order after the general history, the first translations of the *Collection* were Gregory of Tours' *Ten Books of Histories* and Fredegar's[174] chronicles together with King Dagobert's[175] (d.638) *Vita*. These translations were vital to the study of the Merovingian queens as they were the most important sources from the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries and they were now made accessible to a large number of readers. Before this date, the chronicles had been easily accessible only to a small number of authors due to their language and limited access to them.

Even though there were several existing versions and translations of the *Ten Books of Histories*, Guizot's translation seems to have been the most popular one. Other translations or editions were used, for example, by Antoine Bailly[176] (1780-1848). Bailly wrote about financial history and he

[173] It was published only in 1834 because of problems involving the *intended* author Auguste Trognon (1795-1873), who was Guizot's colleague in the Faculty of Letters in Paris. He later wrote a work entitled *Histoire de France* (1863-65). Confusingly, the general history was written by a historian called Bourdon de Sigrais, who died in 1791. However, nowhere is it stated that the work was written 50 years before the publishing of the *Collection* and the introduction written by the editor, J. L. Brière, gave the impression that the author was still alive and co-operating with Guizot (Brière 1834, x). On Sigrais see: Le Bas 1841(III), 229.

[174] This is a name given to an anonymous historian/s who wrote the Chronicles in the seventh century. Nothing is known about the author/s.

[175] Dagobert was Queen Fredegonde's grandson and was never canonized, despite the *Vita* and his popular saintly status. Dagobert became well-known in the eighteenth century with a song entitled "Le bon roi Dabogert", which mocked French kings and the monarchy. The song had no historical bearing. About the song, see Avezou 2013a, 29.

[176] Very little is known about Bailly except that he was an *inspecteur général des finances*, as he named himself at the beginning of his work, *Histoire financière de la France* (1830). According to Bibliothèque nationale de France, in 1837

mentioned in his work a translation of Gregory of Tours' *Ten Books of Histories* made by Edme Louis Billardon de Sauvigny (1736/1738 - 1812) in 1786.[177] Bailly referred in his work to only two of the Merovingian queens, Fredegonde and Brunehilde, because he saw these two as having had a role in introducing taxes in the Frankish kingdoms. There was a passage about Fredegonde's upbringing in Bailly's work but it was short and did not differ in any way from other contemporary interpretations, even though Bailly's sources were all from the eighteenth century, when France was still perceived to have existed as early as the Merovingian period.[178] Other translations existed too, but they were very rarely used in the early nineteenth century. Those historians who used a Latin version of Gregory's *Ten Books* most often used the version included in the eighteenth-century collection *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France.* The edition was made by Thierry Ruinart in the late seventeenth century.[179] Maurist Thierry Ruinart, who was a French Benedictine scholar, was, according to the German historian Martin Heinzelmann (2001), one of the first scholars to present Gregory's work as "the earliest history of the 'kingdom of France'".[180] His edition of the *Ten Books* was by far the best known before Guizot's *Collection*.

It was Gregory of Tours who had first pictured Clotilde as an ideal queen and as a saintly figure. [181] The picture Gregory of Tours painted of Clotilde explains why many nineteenth-century biographers chose to concentrate on Clotilde, since Gregory offered beautiful words about her chastity and virtue, and depicted "earthly" queenship as less valuable than "saintly" queenship. The hierarchy was most obvious in the devotional works written about Clotilde, where the descriptions followed Gregory's almost word for word. "Earthly" possessions and power (*autorité*) were seen as secondary and especially biographers pictured these as less worthy than "heavenly grace". This message, that a saintly nature was more valuable than earthly possessions, was aimed at young girls

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he published another work *Exposé de l'administration générale et locale des finances du Royaume-Uni de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande*. His political affiliations are not known.

[177] It is not certain, but Bailly most likely referred to a work entitled *Essais historiques sur les moeurs des Français, ou Traduction abrégée des chroniques ou autres ouvrages des auteurs contemporains depuis Clovis jusqu'à Saint Louis* and its continuation in 1787 *Recueil de lettres écrites sous la première race de nos rois par des personnages considérables, rois, reines, grands de l'Etat, papes, évêques, etc*. The history and origin of the translations are unknown in the sense that it is not certain which versions Sauvigny used or even whether he translated the chronicles himself.

[178] Bailly 1830 (I), 13-18.

[179] On use of Gregory of Tours in the nineteenth century, see also Aali 2014a, 17-31.

[180] Heinzelmann 2001, 3.

[181] "Queen Clotilde earned the respect of all by her bearing. She gave alms to the poor and spent her nights in prayer. In chastity and virtue she lived out her blameless life. She endowed churches, monasteries and other holy places with the lands necessary for their upkeep; her giving was so generous and so eager that already in her lifetime she was looked upon not as a Queen but as the handmaiden of God whom she served with such zeal. Neither the royal status of her sons nor her worldly goods nor earthly ambition could bring her to disrepute. In all humility she moved forward to heavenly grace." Gregory of Tours, Book III, ch. 18. 1974, 182. Perhaps the references to Clotilde's beauty were added to her history later because, according to Michael R. Evans (2014), queens were often called beautiful in medieval chronicles where the royals were portrayed more as types and not as individuals. Evans 2014, 149-150.

in particular in order to keep them "pure".[182] Women were seen as the guardians of moral values in the nineteenth century, and their reading matter was often restricted so that they would not receive immoral influence from the "wrong" kinds of books.[183]

Gregory of Tours' impact on consequent historiography was enormous, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century he was already perceived as a major French "national" chronicler.[184] Even though Gregory's words about the Merovingian royals were rarely doubted, his narrative of the early royals was sometimes criticised and indeed, it was far from an impartial one. Among other things, his Vulgar Latin, an expression invented in the nineteenth century to designate Latin's transformation from its classical form to Medieval Latin, was harshly criticised.[185] Guizot wrote about Gregory in the introduction of the 1823 translation:

> He has been criticised for the confusion of his history, for the absurd fables he planted, for his partiality for the orthodox kings whatever their crimes might be, and all these reproaches are justified; but among his contemporaries there is no-one who would not have merited these reproaches, or who would have behaved with more uprightness, studied with more care, and given, in his life and writings, as much proof of good sense, of justice and of humanity.[186]

Guizot thus saw that even though Gregory's *Ten Books* was full of flaws, it was the best historiographical source from the period. The orthodox kings mentioned in the quote are kings such as Clovis I, of whom Gregory wrote very positively. Interestingly, Guizot's criticism of the historian was not generally reflected in nineteenth-century historians' use of Gregory's chronicle. No historian criticised Gregory's writings about the queens as "fables".

Only authors like Louis Marie Prudhomme and Paulin Paris[187] (1800-1881) brought up the biased nature of Gregory of Tours' writings and questioned, for example, the way Fredegonde was pictured there, as well as in other medieval sources. In *Histoire de France, par les écrivains*

[182] Bellaigue 2013, 5 & passim.
[183] Smith Allen 1991, 216.
[184] Avezou 2013b, 35.
[185] About Vulgar Latin, see Banniard 2006, 191.
[186] Guizot 1823b, xv-xvi."On lui a reproché la confusion de son histoire, les fables absurdes dont elle est semée, sa partialité pour les rois orthodoxes, quels que soient leurs forfaits, et tous ces reproches sont légitimes; mais il n'est aucun de ses contemporains qui ne les mérite encore davantage, aucun qui, á tout prendre, ait agi avec autant de droiture, étudié avec autant de soin, et donné, dans ses écrits et sa vie, autant de preuves de bon sens, de justice et d'humanité." On Gregory of Tours, see also Guizot 1840 (II), 62.
[187] Paris was a well known specialist on medieval history and literature. In the 1820s he worked in the department of manuscripts in the Bibliothèque royale. In 1837 he was admitted to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres. In 1853 he got the newly created chair of medieval French literature in Collège de France, which he held until 1872. He published largely commentaries and editions on medieval literature and especially on poems.

contemporains[188], Paris concluded that Gregory was not completely trustworthy as a historian, especially when it came to the family of Clovis, because Gregory worshipped him, or to the family of Clovis' grandson Chilperic, whom he clearly did not worship.[189] Paris also mentioned Fredegar's chronicles and pointed out that this text was not trustworthy when it came to the history of Brunehilde, as the author clearly disliked her very much, whereas she had been an ally of Gregory of Tours.[190]

An important group of sources, for the history of both Clotilde and Merovingian queens in general, were the various *Vitae* from the medieval period that contributed to the image of an ideal queen.[191] *Vitae* were not only used as sources about the saints, but more generally about the early medieval period. Not all historians, however, approved of this use as historiographical sources: for example, Simonde de Sismondi criticised it.[192] Clotilde's *Vita*, written in the tenth century, in the Carolingian era, was not used very frequently by the early nineteenth-century historians. The reasons for this lack of use could be the distrust described by Sismondi, but also that it was only available in Latin, which meant that a number of authors and historians could not read it. But Sismondi's concern about the value of *Vitae* as sources, because they could be biased in their religious sentiments, did not reflect on Clotilde as a saint in general. Sismondi saw that Clotilde had an important role in French history. He interpreted Clovis' marriage to her as the starting point for France's path towards civilisation, when *her* religion began to conquer the hearts of the barbarians.[193]

From the 1820s onward, Gregory of Tours was always visible on the textual level in historiography, even if there is no certainty that the historians actually read his chronicles. Guizot's translation made it possible to read Gregory of Tours in French, which made the whole chronicle accessible to larger audiences. One should remember, however, that the early nineteenth-century historians were trained in classical languages and earlier historians had often been theologians or jurists. On the other hand, not all authors/historians had a formal training, and in some cases their education level is unknown.[194] One has to remember that even if Gregory of Tours was not mentioned as a source for the Merovingian period in every early nineteenth-century work, his *Ten Books* still affected the

[188] "History of France, by Contemporary Historians". This work Paulin Paris published together with Édouard Mennechet (1794-1845), who was an author and a translator. Mennechet was "lecteur de Louis XVIII et Charles X" according to the French national library.
[189] Paris 1836, XXXI.
[190] Paris 1836, XXXIII-XXXIV.
[191] See, for example, McNamara& al1992, 38-50.
[192] *Vita*s were used most by religious historians, but also by historians such as Augustin Thierry in his *Récits des temps mérovingiens*. Thierry 1851b (II), 143. François Guizot, however, saw the *Vitas* in a positive light. Guizot 1840 (II), 39.
[193] Sismondi 1821 (I), 399.
[194] Smith 1998, 74, 19.

interpretations. For example, in the work of Louis Pierre Anquetil, *Histoire de France,*[195] first published in 1805, Gregory of Tours was never mentioned, yet the work's structure concerning the fifth century followed the same chronological pattern as the subsequent histories.[196] Anquetil's sources were historians such as François Eudes de Mézeray (d. 1683)[197], Paul François Velly (d. 1759)[198], Gabriel Daniel (d. 1728)[199] and Scipion Dupleix (d. 1661)[200] and indirectly, through these historians, Gregory of Tours' narrative.[201]

Guizot's introduction to the translation of Gregory's work reveals how he perceived the history of the Merovingian period. According to Guizot, that history was constructed only by the clergy and by the Franks, referring to what he thought of as the ruling elite. He argues that only these two groups, which included few women, took part in political events and therefore only they could have a history. All others lived and died miserably, passively and ignored.[202] In other words, only those for whom there were extant written sources were worth a history. Moreover, in the dictionary of the French Academy (1835), history was defined as "[a]ccounts of actions, events, and things worth remembering"[203] which makes it clear that the historian's duty was to select those actions that needed commemorating. The selection was done not only by individual historians but could be enforced by the whole political culture of contemporary French society.[204] It is not that the masses

[195] Anquetil's work was a bestseller in early nineteenth-century France, despite the criticism it received. Lyons 2008, 20-27. Anquetil's work was already criticised in 1810, for example, for its focus on things irrelevant in history, for being ignorant, and for disregarding important aspects of history. Leterrier 1997, 78.
[196] According to the French historian Sylvain Venayre, for example, Anquetil's and Sismondi's 1821 works were not as different as Sismondi wished to suggest in the 1820s. Venayre 2013, 43.
[197] François Eudes de Mézeray (1610-1683), a member of Académie Francaise since 1647, wrote a massive Histoire de France in 1643-1651. Later he published an *Abrégé de l'histoire de France* (1668, several times reprinted) which offered an interpretation of history that, according to Larousse, "did not please the king". See "François Eudes de Mézeray" http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/litterature/M%C3%A9zeray/175313 accessed July 20 2015.
[198] Abbé Paul François Velly (1690-1759) was a Jesuit and a historian. His most important work was called *Histoire de France*. It was probably published in 1755. Velly did not complete the work, but it was continued by Villaret and later by (abbé) Jean Jacques Garnier. See "Paul-François Velly": http://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb145590610 accessed July 20 2015.
[199] Gabriel Daniel (1649-1728) was a Jesuit and a historian. He was a professor in a college in Rouen and later a librarian in the Jesuit Professed House in Paris. There he later became the Superior. His most famous work was *Histoire de France depuis l'établissement de la monarchie française* (…) published for the first time in 1713 and reprinted several times. See "Gabriel Daniel": http://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb11995296b accessed July 20 2015.
[200] Scipion Dupleix (1569-1661) was a philosopher, historian and a Conseiller d'état. His works include *Mémoires des Gaules depuis le déluge jusqu'à l'établissement de la monarchie française* (1632, 3. éd.)and *Histoire générale de France avec l'estat de l'Église et de l'Empire* (1648-1654). According to Larousse, his most important work was *La logique ou Art de discourir ou raisonner* (1600). He was also a linguist. See "Scipion Dupleix": http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/personnage/Dupleix/117404 accessed July 20 2015.
[201] Sources, see Anquetil 1825 (I), xxx.
[202] Guizot 1823b, VII.
[203] "Récit d'actions, d'événements, de choses dignes de mémoire". "Histoire" in Dictionnaire de l'Académie francaise 1835, 892.
[204] On the culture of silence in Restoration France, see also Lok 2014, 5, 6 and passim. Lok suggests that "the interest and almost obsession with the remote (medieval and early modern) past can be seen within the framework of the desperate attempt in the Restoration era to forget the violent and problematic recent past". Lok, however, did not look at

were not studied because there were no sources at all, but because of the lack of obvious sources they were not perceived as worth remembering. Individual actors, and especially Great Men such as Clovis and Charlemagne, were worth remembering because there were sources about them.[205] The queens were seen to be important individuals because there were extant sources about them, even if the sources were partial and concentrated only on certain aspects of the person's career or character, and offered conflicting interpretations.

2.2. Early Nineteenth-Century Perceptions of (Ideal) Queenship

Early nineteenth-century historiography was strongly affected by the changes in French monarchy and therefore Queen Marie Amelie, or the representations of her, had an influence on the period's historiography as well. Marie Amelie was the last queen (consort) in France and the wife of Louis Philippe, king of the French in the July Monarchy. Marie Amelie was born in 1782, daughter of King Ferdinand IV & III of Naples and Sicily. In 1809 she married Louis Philippe of Orléans, with whom she had eight children. They returned to France after Napoleon was defeated, and in 1830 she became the last queen to rule in France, following the July Revolution. In 1848 she was exiled with her family to England where she died in 1866, outliving her husband by almost sixteen years. Marie Amelie had a reputation as a very religious woman and one twentieth-century historian has even described her as a bigot.[206]

It is vital to analyse the way the representations of the queens, so different yet so superficially similar, were moulded either to confirm or to reject the French monarchy. I approach the question of the early nineteenth-century perceptions of queenship by dividing them into three features that constructed French queenship in historiography. These features, which I have extracted from the early nineteenth-century historiography, are: exclusion from direct power, marriage with a king, and

historiographical works of the 1820s and therefore his article leads to a different conclusion than, for example, Stefan Berger, who argues that "[t]he French Revolution as a theme dominated both highbrow and popular histories across Europe after 1800." Berger 2015, 96.

[205] In the nineteenth century there was also a lot of discussion as to what a Great Man is and what conditions are needed for a Great Man to evolve. See, for example, the 1828 lectures of the famous philosopher Victor Cousin: Cousin 1828, 5-8.

[206] Francis Ronsin, who has studied divorce in the history of France, called her a bigot. Ronsin 1992, 61-62. According to Ronsin, immediately after the 1830 revolution there was a lot of discussion about legalizing divorce and it even seemed probable, but Marie Amelie was fiercely against it. Some blamed the queen herself for the failure to pass the law, but Ronsin argues that the queen did not have sufficient influence in politics. Florence Vidal, who has also written a biography of Marie Amelie (2010), portrayed her as very religious and caring only for her own family, ignoring all the social and economic problems that rocked France in the 1830s and 1840s. Vidal 2010, 9, 253, 254, 258, 276, 284, 295, 298.

motherhood (producing a male heir). I examine these features one by one to demonstrate why and how they constructed French queenship in historiography, starting with women's exclusion from the royal executive power and from the throne.

Exclusion and Queens' Political Power

Women's exclusion from the throne did not exist as such in the Merovingian period, even though some early nineteenth-century historians[207] considered that women were, at least on a certain level, excluded from inheriting lands, and consequently from the throne in the Merovingian period. Not all these historians, however, saw the exclusion as being a result of the early medieval Salic law. Women's exclusion from the throne did not become official until the late Middle Ages, the Hundred Year's War and the famous yet false interpretation of the early medieval Salic law.[208] The exclusion was re-enforced during the Restoration and the July Monarchy, first in the Charter of 1814 and again in 1830.[209] Women's exclusion from the throne and/or public power was one thing that neither revolution nor any other event in France changed until the cataclysms of the Second World War. Not only were political activities (such as voting and political offices) of queens and women in general prohibited by law in France in the nineteenth century, but their negative aspects were emphasised constantly in literature and historiography. Politically motivated historians in particular manipulated public opinion by discrediting queens' political skills and their abilities to govern.[210]

Philippe Antoine Merlin[211] (1754–1838) examined in detail in his dictionary of jurisprudence the queen's role as distinct from a wife's role. In fact, even though he did not state it explicitly, he examined the *institution* of queenship in France, because he not only related the lives of individual queens but examined the power, role, tasks, duties, privileges and rituals related to the French queens.[212] Merlin wrote the dictionary while exiled from France after the Restoration – he had voted

[207] See, for example, Amiable Tastu, Laure Boen de Saint-Ouen, Henri Martin, Chrysanthe Ovide Des Michels and Abel Hugo. Tastu 1836, 24; Saint-Ouen 1830, 18; Martin 1834, 171; Des Michels 1835 (I), 200; Hugo 1837 (II), 18.
[208] About the exclusion and Salic law, see Hanley 2003, 2-16.
[209] Margadant 1999, 1468.
[210] A good example of such a historian is Édouard Laboulaye and his *Recherches sur la condition civile et politique des femmes, depuis les Romains jusqu'à nos jours* from 1843.
[211] He was a jurist and an active politician during the Revolutionary Years and Napoleon's reign. He was a deputy at the National Convention and he voted for the death of the King Louis XVI in 1793. He was named the President of the National Convention in August 1794. Merlin had significant political positions during the Directory (1795-1799) but after 1799 he had to retire from the active political scene. He had minor positions during the Napoleon's reign. He was forced into exile in 1815 when the monarchy was restored and the guillotined Louis XVI's brother acceded to the French throne. Merlin was able to return to France in 1830 when the July Revolution brought to the French throne constitutional monarchist Louis Philippe, the son of Philippe Égalite who had also voted for the death of the king in 1793. About the life of Merlin, see Leuwers, Hervé, 'Chronologie de la vie de Merlin de Douai (1754-1838)',http://irhis.recherche.univ-lille3.fr/dossierPDF/Leuwers/ChronologieMerlin.pdf, accessed 12 January 2016.
[212] Merlin studied, for example, "privileges attached to the title of Queen", see Merlin & Guyot 1828, 407. "[…] des privilèges qui sont attachés au titre de Reine."

for the death of Louis XVI, the brother of Louis XVIII. [213] Merlin claimed in his work that in the "first times of monarchy", in Charlemagne's reign, the queen had had many responsibilities.[214] Her central duty was to manage *la chambre du roi,* which Merlin described as the place for the king's furniture, treasures, jewellery and royal ornaments. He added that the queens also took care of and supervised the king's domains, and managed (the king's) financial matters.[215] Merlin was not sure, however, when the queens had stopped undertaking these duties, but by Charles V's (d.1380) reign queens no longer had these roles. According to Merlin:

> The queens renounced one section of administration which was becoming more and more complicated and saw assignments multiplying endlessly, [and] which could have scared the young princesses, future queens. Nevertheless, the queens never ceased to take care of people's wellbeing. [216]

Merlin argued that because government became more and more complex in the High Middle Ages, the queens could no longer manage their previous duties. They gave them up in order to protect the young princesses' (who were to become queens) feelings. Merlin's view of women's limited capabilities both supported and was supported by the contemporary nineteenth-century view that women were unable to carry out the responsibilities of governing.

Édouard Laboulaye shared the opinion of women's limited intellectual capabilities. He explored in his *Recherche sur la condition civile et politique des femmes, depuis les Romains jusqu'à nos jours*[217] (1843) women's legal status and political capabilities throughout history. The idea of the work was to create an "authentic" picture of women's position in different times by studying inheritance laws. The writer was more interested in the spirit of the law than the practice. Whereas Merlin was rather neutral towards the possibility of a queen partly sharing her husband's power, Laboulaye, who was born after the Revolution, had a categorically critical view of all political activity by women and female rulers.[218] Laboulaye's point of view differed from Merlin's because he appears to have aimed to prove that a queen was a mere wife and that her legal position was no different from that of other wives, even though her husband was a king. Laboulaye did not

[213] A very interesting fact is that not only was Merlin in the National Constituent Assembly that approved the legalisation of divorce in 1792, but that he voted for the legalisation. Ronsin 1990, 150.
[214] "The first times" could also in some passages refer to the Merovingian times. See Merlin & Guyot 1828, 390-410.
[215] Merlin & Guyot 1828, 402. It is clear that in the early Middle Ages *la chambre du roi* did not signify the same as in the early modern period (1600-1700).
[216] Merlin & Guyot 1828, 402. "En renoncant à une branche d'administration dont les objets se multipliaient à l'infini, dont les formes devenaient de jour en jour plus compliquées, qui, par conséquent, pouvaient effrayer une jeune princesse, les Reines n'ont cependant pas cessé de s'occuper du bonheur des peuples."
[217] "A Study of Women's Civil and Political Position from Roman Times to Our Days"
[218] According to James Smith Allen, the generational differences in opinions were both real and perceived in early nineteenth-century France. Smith Allen 1991, 214.

explicitly refer to Queen Marie Amelie but one can speculate that he must have seen her as a "good" queen as she was never pictured, at least openly, as meddling in politics.[219]

Laboulaye cited at length Jean Bodin, the French sixteenth-century scholar and political theorist, to prove why a kingdom led by a woman would not work. The point of the argument was that a woman's and a queen's primary task was to reproduce and for this she needed a husband. However, it would be against nature for a husband to be subordinate to his wife, which would be the case if she were a queen regnant. But, if a queen regnant did not marry, she would not fulfil her duties towards her people by producing heirs. In other words, a woman should never reign.[220] Laboulaye was thus strengthening the already existing presupposition of exclusion in the concept of *queenship* by stressing the position of a queen as similar to that of a wife. It seems that, based on his arguments, Laboulaye aimed to prove that kingdoms where a woman could reign were politically more unstable and that these kingdoms saw constant power struggles. In this way he underlined the superiority of the French custom of excluding women.

Laboulaye also brought up in his work the famous eighteenth-century political thinker Montesquieu and his *Esprit des lois*, where the philosopher made, unlike Laboulaye, positive remarks on women using royal power. Laboulaye was sure that the only reason Montesquieu wrote the lines where he accepted the idea of women ruling a kingdom was to flatter Empress Elisabeth of Russia and the memory of Queen Anne. He refuted the examples that Montesquieu gave of women successfully ruling in India and Africa as examples inferior to Bodin's reasoning when he ridiculed the idea of "Gynécocratie".[221] Whereas Montesquieu used foreign monarchies to prove women were in some instances capable of ruling, Laboulaye refuted these examples and only used examples that proved women incapable of ruling, especially in France. To prove his point, Laboulaye equated the two philosophers, Bodin and Montesquieu, one living in the sixteenth century and one in the eighteenth century, without taking into consideration the different contexts of their writings. Laboulaye's thinking on women by no means the exception - quite the contrary. His work won an award from the prestigious institute *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*.[222] Since the competition was organised by one of the French national institutions, re-instituted in 1832 by Francois Guizot, it is no wonder that the winning work emphasised the superiority of French inheritance laws. The award

[219] But Marie Amelie was not entirely uninvolved in her husband's reign: she did take care of the palaces belonging to the royal family, the Crown treasury was under her surveillance, and, for example, she took care of the wages of the king's aide-de-camp. See Trétout 2009, 131.
[220] Laboulaye 1843, 520.
[221] Laboulaye 1843, 521-522.
[222] It is written in the title page of Laboulaye's work that he won the prize in 28th of May 1842.

indicates that many scholars of the July Monarchy shared Laboulaye's views on women's natural incapacity to rule France.

Not only were women seen as being incapable of ruling France, they were regarded as incapable of managing almost any public occupation. According to Joan Scott (2004), in the 1840s women's exclusion from the public sphere was justified with the use of corporeal imagery, by emphasising the sexual differences between men and women and the supposed effects of those differences on capacities. The opponents of women's participation in public life saw women as naturally designated to domestic chores and the male sex only as having the ability to hold public offices.[223] Given the general discussion and arguments used to justify women's exclusion, it is not surprising how negatively many writers perceived women who had ruled France (or an area perceived to have been France). According to Susan K. Foley, the bourgeois monarchy initiated in 1830 assured women's political exclusion, since political rights were based on individual "capacity" to participate in politics, which effectively meant possession of wealth. Even the richest women were not legally responsible for their own property and therefore they were denied basic political rights.[224]

It is nevertheless very interesting that there was for a brief moment in the early 1820s a discussion on whether a woman could indeed inherit the throne of France. In 1820 the Duke of Berry, the third son of the future Charles X and the nephew of Louis XVIII, was assassinated. This was especially devastating to the Bourbon dynasty because he had been the only hope for producing a male heir to the throne. When he died, he had left only a daughter and a pregnant wife. With no legitimate male heir to either Louis XVIII or the future Charles X, some authors proposed that Marie Thérèse of France, the daughter and sole surviving child of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, should inherit the throne. But the Duchess of Berry soon gave birth to a son and this discussion went no further. Still, it is interesting that according to historian Hélène Becquet, already during the Revolution certain royalists had discussed the possibility of the royal princess inheriting the throne. [225] The discussion, however brief, demonstrates that the exclusion was not absolute and might have been revoked in a case of severe political and dynastical necessity. Becquet also concluded that these discussions indicate well the dimension of the changes that the monarchy went through during and after the Revolution: now the thought of letting women succeed to the throne was brought up, even if only in

[223] Scott 2004, 35.
[224] Foley 2004, 110-111.
[225] Becquet 2009, 139.

the case of no male heir.[226] Yet, the discussion was restricted only to the writings of a couple of authors without larger debate being initiated.

The exclusion from basic political rights may be the reason why historians highlighted historical queens' roles as mothers and wives instead of their role as political agents, and why *queenship* was being redefined, following the 1789 revolutions, from the public sphere to the intimate sphere in French society. By emphasising past queens' domestic roles historians wanted to persuade their readers that queens had merely been wives and in this way to manipulate public opinion on how the French monarchy had been and should be constructed. Furthermore, as wives and mothers, women did not need rights similar to those of men because their focus was on the domestic sphere. This emphasis, however, did not apply to all historical queens because, as I show in Chapters III and IV, some historians highlighted the political power of those queens whom they wanted to defame in order to make these queens seem less socially acceptable. While certain historians might have wanted deliberately to manipulate public opinion by presenting the queens in a certain way, I believe other historians genuinely believed what they wrote without considering alternative viewpoints on the capacities of queens or women in general.

Apparently there were many historians and writers who did not ponder or examine the concept of *queenship* and therefore did not discuss the justification for exclusion. Even several female authors avoided the question of queenship, presenting the institution as ahistorical and almost apolitical. By failing to challenge the exclusion this lack of discussion confirmed it. There are several possible reasons for this avoidance. First of all, some authors, such as Gabrielle de Paban[227] (b. 1793) in the early 1820s avoided the question purposefully: as she wrote herself, controversial subjects such as "bad" queens were excluded from the work so that it would be suitable for young (female) readers.[228] Secondly, some historians saw that promoting ideas about women's historical prominence was somehow antidomestic or even antifeminine, as these ideas highlighted women's visibility in history and women's access to power.[229] So, even though many women were eager to write about famous women, queens and heroines, and to promote the knowledge of women in

[226] Becquet 2009, 139.
[227] Almost nothing is known about de Paban besides her works. Her cousin, often known by the name of Collin de Paban, was famous in the field of demonology. See, for example, Collin de Plancy 1819, a work which was published under the name of Gabrielle de Paban. She had a cousin, Collin de Plancy, who was also a writer. Collin de Plancy was a demonologist and an occultist. He wrote some works under the pseudonym of his cousin and this is why Gabrielle was sometimes mentioned as the author of his demonological works. The themes are very different and the existence of two authors seems plausible, even though many early nineteenth-century authors wrote about a wide range of topics. See Quérard 1834, 540; Guiley 2009, 43.
[228] See Paban 1820 (I), introduction.
[229] Smith 1984, 717 & passim.

history, they were not willing to promote women's access to the public sphere. Male historians who wrote general studies about the history of France may have perceived queenship as secondary to other historical topics, such as kings and wars.

Historians such as Gabrielle de Paban and Augustine Gottis, who wrote especially about French queens, did not trouble themselves with defining the character/role of queenship and neither did Louis Marie Prudhomme. Henri Martin, the famous François René de Chateaubriand, Jules Pétigny[230] (1801–1858), Edme Théodore Bourg's (Saint-Edme)[231] *Répertoire général* (1785–1852) and Alexandrine Bonaparte[232] (1778–1855) all dealt with the early medieval queens from different perspectives, but none of them defined or pondered the theme of queenship in their works. For them, the concept seemed to be ahistorical. However, this failure to comment on the evolution or historical background of queenship may not been an intentional choice *not* to study it. Perhaps, indeed, these historians thought that they were studying French queenship when they wrote about the individual queens. There was thus a paradox in the handling of exclusion from the French throne as a theme in early nineteenth-century France. On the one hand the exclusion was not explicitly discussed in historiography, even though the question of a woman's right to inherit the throne emerged in political discussions from time to time, but on the other hand the exclusion was implicitly confirmed by presenting the queens as always having been excluded from the throne.

Marriage

Only through marriage could women become queens and therefore marriage is the second feature that defines French queenship.[233] Royal marriages were never simple but they became especially complicated when kings were polygamous, as many of the Merovingian kings were.[234] Jo Burr Margadant has argued that in early nineteenth-century France a queen had become both in law and in symbolic representations no more than the wife of the king and the mother of his children.[235] Do

[230] Jules de Pétigny was a historian and an archeologist; he studied in the école des chartes where he started in 1822. In 1826 he became a *conseiller de préfecture* in Loir-et-Cher. His academic career really started after 1830, after the July Revolution, when he resigned from his previous positions because of his political affiliations. He later received the Prix Gobert, as Thierry did, from the Académie francaise and he was admitted to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1850. It was his *Études sur l'histoire, les lois et les institutions de l'époque mérovingienne* that earned him the Prix Gobert. For more about de Pétigny, see La Saussaye 1859.

[231] Publisher, biographer, and a political writer with republican and bonapartist tendencies.

[232] She was originally Alexandrine de Bleschamp. She was a princess of Canino and the sister-in-law of Napoleon Bonaparte. She lived in Italy with her family even though she was originally French.

[233] On marriage and queenship, see also Cosandey 2000, 55.

[234] Royal marriages could be complicated in other times as well. An example is that arranged by proxy between Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor and Anne of Brittany in 1490. Anne ended up marrying king Charles VIII of France, who was in fact betrothed to Maximilian's daughter, Margaret of Austria. Afterwards Margaret still sometimes referred to herself as queen of France. See Cosandey 2000, 55.

[235] Margadant 2008b, 300.

these same symbolic representations appear in historians' accounts of the Merovingian queens? How did the historians relate contemporary visions of an ideal marriage to the descriptions they gave of the royal Merovingian marriages?

The late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century saw a significant change in the marriage institution because this era witnessed a transition from the model of arranged marriages to the "companionate" model, where love and companionship was sought between the spouses.[236] The two models, however, co-existed for a long time. The French ideal(s) of marriage was full of contradictions. In the eighteenth century, when marriages were mostly arranged between families, in the higher social classes some degree of infidelity was tolerated, but in the nineteenth century fidelity was increasingly expected. According to Patricia Mainardi, in the early nineteenth century the immorality of the ruling class was seen as one reason for the Revolution.[237] Margadant has also argued that the change in the expectations of marriage was visible, for example, in the marriage of the duke and duchess of Berry. Before the Revolution no intimacy was expected between the future spouses but expectations changed during the Restoration and the future couple of Berry corresponded before the marriage, even occasionally addressing each other informally.[238] In historiography the arranged marriage was seen as the only suitable choice for royals, even though the royal Merovingian couples were not so easily defined by consequent historians. Yet especially Clotilde's marriage with Clovis was often pictured as having been similar to later arranged royal marriages, this making it a part of a long royal French tradition.

A wife's position in marriage was far from equal, to the extent that Claire Goldberg Moses has, not without exaggeration, compared nineteenth-century women with slaves in classical times. She has argued that whereas a slave could be freed by the master, a woman could not be freed by her husband because the law forbade it.[239] Mainardi has pointed out that, by contrast with the Old

[236] Davidson 2012, 2-8.
[237] Mainardi 2003, 3.
[238] Margadant 1997, 27. On one occasion they used "tu" instead of "vous".
[239] Moses 1984, 20. Perhaps Moses refers to Sarah Grimke's pamphlet *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* (1837), where the laws governing slaves were compared with laws governing women. See McElroy 2008, 174-177. There was an interesting link between slavery and the Merovingian queens in nineteenth-century historiography: some historians believed that Bathilde had abolished slavery in the seventh century. See, for example, Langerack 1847, 204. Unfortunately Bathilde, who was seen in some works as having been a slave herself, did not end slavery, because it was only abolished in France in 1794, only to be re-introduced by Napoleon in 1802 and eventually abolished again by the Third Republic in 1848. But Bathilde did try to end the trading of Christian slaves in foreign markets. Folz 1975, 371, These points are to be kept in mind when studying the discussion about "freedom". The question of slavery was apparent in many historical treaties and the great majority of historians condemned it - and used early medieval slavery to show how much more civilised their own time was compared with the Merovingian era. And yet, all the works studied here were written when slavery still existed in the French kingdom. The civilization many historians emphasised was indeed a very relative concept.

Regime, in early nineteenth-century France in some cases it was legal for a husband to kill a wife caught in the action of adultery.[240] Yet separations did occur in the nineteenth century, *séparation de corps* and *séparation de biens*, and not all couples were officially married because the ideals often concerned only the bourgeois class.[241] Especially among the urban working classes there were many unmarried couples living together.[242] These unmarried couples were seen as a moral risk to society and therefore young (bourgeois) girls were encouraged not to act in this way.

A woman became a queen by marriage and therefore her role was dependant on the man's role as a king. Furthermore, in the case of polygamous kings like the Merovingians, she needed to be defined as a wife in the first place. The changing situation of kings and the French monarchy inspired historians to study the king's role from a historical perspective and in the front line among these historians was Augustin Thierry[243]. His comprehensive production of historical research includes an essay about the notion of king and how kingship had evolved during the centuries. The essay, originally published in the 1820s, was based on the work called *De la royauté*[244] (1819) by Nicole Robinet de la Serve.[245]

According to Thierry[246], the word "king" was often translated to French from the early Medieval Latin manuscripts without further reflection on the implications of the notion or its changing character in accordance with historical context. He argued that the word "king" did not have the same meaning for a sixth-century historian such as Gregory of Tours as it did to a nineteenth-century reader. Thierry argued that originally the notion of kingship did not refer to absolute or specific power, but to an idea of leadership in general.[247] Thierry explained, following de la Serve's arguments, that studying kingship in its original meaning was to study leadership or power

[240] Mainardi 2003, 17. George Sand, an early nineteenth-century author, made in one of her novels, "Indiana", the heroine compare herself to a slave in her relations with her husband as her master. Mainardi 2003, 175.
[241] On divorce and separation in nineteenth-century France, see McBride 1992, 747-768, especially p. 751. Divorce became legal during the Revolution but it was made illegal again during the Restoration and it stayed that way until the 1880s. On separation, see also Mainardi 2003, 19.
[242] Foley 2004, 70. There was a lot of concubinage among urban workers. Smith Allen 1991, 60.
[243] See also about Thierry's, Michelet's and Guizot's theories on class: Huovila 1987, 59 & passim.
[244] "Of Kingship"
[245] Thierry 1851a, 201. Thierry's essay was extensively cited by his contemporary writers. For example, Hugo 1857 (II), 19-20.
[246] Thierry had a passion for historical terminology. For example, he created new names for Germanic persons, including the Merovingians. In his *Lettres sur l'Histoire de France* he added an appendix where he explained his system. For example, Clovis became Hlodo-wig, according to Thierry a "celebrated warrior". There were names only for the men. Thierry 1842b, 471-475.
[247] Thierry had reason to highlight that a king in the Merovingian period was not an absolute ruler, because even in 1848 Caroline Falaize, for example, wrote of Clovis in a biography that "[n]ever has there been more absolute sovereign." Falaize did mention that Clovis was a *koning* as if she had taken some influence from the contemporary liberal historiography. Falaize 1848, 34. "Jamais souverain ne fut plus absolu."

generally ("l'autorité en général"). [248] Thus, Thierry highlighted semantic and historical changes, which he thought should be taken into consideration while writing about the kingship of the early medieval rulers. His specific aim seems to have been to criticise the 1820s royalists for trying to re-install and promote an Old Regime-like kingship. Typical in Thierry's work was the ignoring of queenship. He did not answer the question, if he even considered it, of how the evolving nature of the notion of kingship affected its counterpart, the notion of queenship. And yet the notion of queenship changed just as that of kingship did. Just as many nineteenth-century historians translated the word *roi*, king, directly from the Latin *rex*, they also translated the Latin word *regina* to French *reine*, queen, without paying attention to the word's historical context. [249]

The importance of marriage in making queens could be implicit too, as is the case in Saint Radegonde's history. Both in the original sources and in later historiography her most important act was the foundation of the monastery, not her marriage with a king. The choices of words in the early medieval chronicles influenced the nineteenth-century historiography implicitly and explicitly. Abel Hugo[250] (1798–1855) defined Radegonde more as a saint than as a queen in his work *France historique et monumentale: Histoire générale de France*.[251] In the collective biography of famous women published by Louis-Marie Prudhomme in 1830 the emphasis in Radegonde's history was on her life after the foundation of the monastery in Poitiers (552/553), not her years as a wife of Clothar I, as a secular queen.[252] Yet, marriage with the king was the prerequisite for Radegonde to be able to found the monastery.

Implicitly, however, Thierry's essay did answer our question about queenship. In fact, his essay brought up perfectly the second feature defining French queenship. In order to define a woman as a queen and to relate her to the history of French queenship, her husband had to be first defined as a king. If the early medieval male rulers were not kings in the modern sense of the notion, their wives

[248] Thierry 1851a, 201-206.
[249] In many of the early medieval sources such as the *Ten Books of Histories* by Gregory of Tours and Fredegar's chronicles from the mid-seventh century, Clotilde, Fredegonde, Brunehilde and Bathilde were referred to as *regina*, which was later translated directly to French *reine*. For example, in Gregory of Tours and Fredegar we find the expression "la reine Frédégonde". 1823 (I), 214.
[250] Abel Hugo was the older brother of the famous writer Victor Hugo. He was a soldier, author, historian, and a journalist. He lived and studied in his early life in Spain. He was a monarchist and published, especially in the 1830s, several historiographical works both on the history of France and on Napoleon. He also published on military history. Abel Hugo worked in 1833 for the *Revue des deux mondes*, the same journal where Augustin Thierry originally published his *Récits des temps Mérovingiens*.
[251] Hugo 1857 (II), 70. See, for example Pidoux 1843, Lacépède 1826a (I), Paban (1820), Gottis 1823, Prudhomme 1830 etc. In most of the historiographical works Radegonde was in fact both a queen and a saint.
[252] Prudhomme 1830 (IV), 114. Prudhomme called Clotilde neither a queen nor a saint. He presented the wife of Clovis I in a very negative way. Prudhomme 1830 (II), 178.

could not be queens either, at least, not in the same sense as the later Old Regime queens or Marie Amelie.

Many early nineteenth-century historians clearly had difficulty in understanding early medieval queenship because some of the Frankish kings were polygamous. A woman's position as a wife of a polygamous Merovingian king was ambiguous, which jeopardised the fulfilling of the matrimonial feature of the notion. This is one reason why the nineteenth-century historians were interested in studying closely the matrimonial position of early medieval women, because it allowed them to define who was a queen and who was not, despite Simonde de Sismondi's criticism that certain historians focused too much on the early medieval royals' "private" lives. Queenship was an institution that upheld, and was upheld by, the tradition of women being defined through their husband, through their matrimonial status and through their gender.

The problem with Merovingian kings' polygamy and defining the wives as queens was to a certain degree visible in Clotilde's history, because her husband Clovis had had a wife or a concubine before his marriage with the Burgundian princess. Yet not one early nineteenth-century historian referred to the first wife (or concubine), the mother of Clovis' oldest son Theuderic, as a queen. They all agreed that Clovis did not suddenly become a "king" immediately before marrying Clotilde, nor did he convert to Christianity until after his marriage with Clotilde the Christian princess. In Abel Hugo's work this question of Clovis' first marriage was comprehensively examined. Hugo cited a contemporary writer who brought up the possibility that Theuderic's mother was a "legal" wife even though she was most likely a pagan.[253] Never in the minds of the nineteenth-century historians was she a queen. Possibly the historians half-intentionally forgot her in order not to overshadow Saint-Queen Clotilde, or to avoid calling Clovis' marital fidelity and Catholic faith into question. Clovis was, after all, seen as one of the great kings of the Merovingian dynasty and polygamy was associated with decadence, primitivism, and un-Christian behaviour - something many early nineteenth-century historians, who defined marriage as a monogamous relationship consecrated by God, did not want to associate too much with Clovis, even if it was associated with many other Merovingian kings.

[253] Hugo 1857 (II), 67. Only Christian marriages were seen (in the nineteenth-century) as valid. For example, the Jesuit Nicolas Loriquet stated that queenship was not defined solely by the nature of the marriage but also by the birth of the wife - he continued that Theuderic's mother might very well have been a "legal" wife but from too obscure a background to become a queen. Loriquet 1831, 93. See also about Clovis' first wife, Peyronnet 1835 (I), 103-4.

The above-mentioned part of Hugo's work, where Clovis' first wife was discussed, is originally from an author that Hugo described as "un historien moderne". This modern historian was the ultra-royalist Pierre Denis (Charles Ignace), Count of Peyronnet[254] (1778–1854), whose work *Histoire des Francs* (1835) Hugo cited on several occasions.[255] The passage about Clovis' first wife reveals better Hugo's positive attitudes towards French monarchy and his pro-monarchist ideas than his attitudes towards royalism, even though his source, Peyronnet, was a fervent royalist.[256] The main idea in the citation in Hugo's work was that there is only one thing that could save France from the "inconveniences of division" which followed the partition of lands among all heirs practiced by the Merovingian kings. That was *droit d'aînesse*, primogeniture, which had been abolished when women were given the right to equal inheritance by the Civil Code in 1804.[257]

Primogeniture, the right of the first born male to inherit the family estate, was one of the old norms that were affected by the Revolution and Napoleonic era. The Napoleonic Code (Code Civil) had abolished the first-born's right to inherit all estates. In France this applied especially to male first-borns because females were often excluded from the inheritance of the estates. According to the French historian Jean Carbonnier (1986), the principle of equal division of inherited land and wealth made the Civil Code infamous among later writers such as Honoré de Balzac, who claimed that the principle of equal inheritance led to "d'abâtardissement de la nation", corruption of the nation.[258] Equal inheritance was a feature characteristic of the Merovingian dynasty: after the death

[254] Peyronnet was a Minister of Justice from 1821 to 1828, and a Minister of the Interior in 1830. Peyronnet was a minister during the Restoration but lost his political position after the July Revolution and then became a historian. when the Prime Minister Jean-Baptiste de Villèle left him out of the government because of his unpopularity with the people. Peyronnet was one of the men behind the much criticised laws restricting the freedom of the press in 1826. Peyronnet's father had been executed during the Terror. Peyronnet, who had the education of a jurist like so many other historians of this time, wrote his work while a prisoner in the castle of Ham, in northern France, sent there by the supporters of the July Monarchy in 1830. He was thus one of many politicians who turned historian after their carreer in politics ended. Bitterness at his political defeat was clear in Peyronnet's study, as he stated in the dedication of the work that "[a]fter serving long years the passing generation, it gives me a prison as reward." According to Dutch historian Pim Den Boer, rightwing legitimists and Catholic historiographers "flourished" during the July Monarchy when their time in active politics had ended. Peyronnet 1835 (I), vi. "Après que j'eus servi de longues années la génération qui s'en va, elle me donna une prison pour salaire."; Den Boer 1998, 38.

[255] See Peyronnet 1835 (I), 103-110. Word for word what Hugo later wrote.

[256] Interestingly, Louis Gabriel Michaud's *Biographie Universelle* from 1858 mentioned how the erudites appreciated the *first* part of Hugo's "archaeological" work, which concentrated on the period before Clovis. The biography also emphasised Hugo's good relations with Napoleon Bonaparte's brothers in the 1840s. Furthermore, the biography presented Hugo as a good ally of the Bourbons in the 1820s, and as withdrawing from the political scene after the revolution of 1830 – the same time as Peyronnet, though Hugo was not exiled like the count. Michaud 1858 (XX), 119-123.

[257] Because the citation refuted the idea of Merovingian kingship as elective, and emphasised its hereditary nature. Hugo 1857 (II), 68. In the Merovingian kingdom the lands of the king were distributed equally among his heirs. According to the nineteenth-century historians, only men could inherit, but according to modern research, women also could inherit lands. Even though Napoleon's Code Civil gave women the right to equal inheritance, this did not apply to the throne. On women's equal right to inheritance, see, for example, Mainardi 2003, 16-19.

[258] Carbonnier 1986, 298. The expression "abâtardissement" comes from the word "le bâtard", bastard.

of a king, his lands and inheritance were equally divided between all sons, no matter who the mother was.[259] Many historians might have feared that by bringing back the equal division of inheritance, France would have the same destiny as it did in the Merovingian era: numerous "civil wars" between brothers, uncles and nephews such as that between kings Chilperic and Sigebert in the 560s. On a more general level, there may have been a fear that equal inheritance would lead to the decline of civilisation and to decadence, the fate that was perceived as having been suffered by France under its "first" dynasty.

Interestingly, Peyronnet also defined early medieval queenship. He stated that "[t]he daughters [of the Merovingian kings], even though not competent for the throne, were also called queens, so great was the power of Clovis' blood."[260] It seems that according to Peyronnet the title of queen was an honorary title, given to Merovingian daughters because of their family relation with Clovis. Apparently, Peyronnet saw that a woman did not need to be married to a king in order to become a queen. Yet it was the blood of a man that held the power and the title did not seem to bear any real power.

According to Peyronnet, and Hugo who approvingly cited him, royal background was enough for Merovingian princesses to earn the title of queen. The relationship between queenship and noble background was examined by the Jesuit Jean Nicolas Loriquet, who stated in his *Histoire de France, à l'usage de la Jeunesse*[261] (1831) that only women of noble birth, "la race royal", could be given the title "queen".[262] Whereas Peyronnet argued that all daughters of kings could be referred to as queens, Loriquet thought that noble background alone enabled the women to become queens once married to a king. Loriquet's or Peyronnet's views on queenship do not seem to have been very widely shared in the nineteenth century, as many historians recognised that queenship was not directly attached to the woman's background, even though a noble queen was always preferable to a queen from a lower lineage.[263] Family background was, however, particularly emphasised in Queen Fredegonde's case, as I argue in Chapter IV, because she did *not* come from a noble family. Nevertheless, France did not have a queen of obscure background after queenship was institutionalised and politicised.

[259] See for example Chateaubriand 1853, 11-13.
[260] Peyronnet in Hugo 1857 (II), 68. "Les filles mêmes, quoique inhabiles au trône, étaient nommées reines, tant était grande l'autorité du sang de Chlovis."
[261] "History of France, for the Use of the Youth"
[262] Loriquet 1831, 93.
[263] The biographer Jules Dubern, for example, criticised what he thought was an early medieval practice, that even a peasant girl could become a king's spouse. 1837 (I), ii.

Loriquet, the text book author, was not the only one presenting peculiar interpretations of queenship. Another author, Antoine Serieys[264] (1755–1819), stated in his *Epitome de l'Histoire de France* (1819) that "[t]he Franks had only one wife and they punished adultery severely".[265] In Clovis' case Serieys did not mention any other wife besides Clotilde and she too was mentioned only briefly. There was no mention of Clovis' oldest son, Theuderic, having a mother other than Clotilde. In Serieys' interpretation the Merovingian kings were monogamous and women excluded from the throne, as in the Old Regime monarchy. It is very possible that Serieys did know about Clovis' earlier wife but left her out in order to create a coherent picture of the succession of the dynasties, and consequently of the early medieval queenship.

Simonde de Sismondi stated in his work *Histoire de la Chute de l'Empire Romain et du Déclin de la Civilisation de l'an 250 à l'an 1000* [266] (1835) that the barbarian kings only married women of "royal race", which is very interesting considering that he had also described Clovis as having been married before Clotilde to a woman about whom we know nothing, and later described Fredegonde as "born in obscure circumstances".[267]Sismondi might have wanted to explain why Clovis married Clotilde, namely because of her royal lineage, even though he already had (had) one wife. In Clovis' grandson Chilperic's case, Sismondi was most likely trying to emphasise his "bad" choice of a wife, namely Fredegonde, by stressing the differences in the spouses' social classes and simultaneously consciously comparing Chilperic with his "more glorious" grandfather. The above-mentioned examples of the way Sismondi explained the Merovingian marriage patterns echo the writer's own time – in the nineteenth century it was perceived as degrading, even unimaginable, for a king to marry someone outside his own class, or "race". Perhaps historians like Sismondi wanted to convince the reader unsuitable marriages did not happen in a "civilised" society like that of nineteenth-century France. The king's marriage, like the dauphin's, was still a political question despite the bourgeois ideal of mutual intimacy. It seems that only (foreign) women of royal background or with saintly status, like the sixth-century queens Clotilde, Brunehilde and Galeswinthe, who was Brunehilde's sister, were seen as worthy of the queenship in early nineteenth-century historiography.[268]

[264] Serieys was a deputy-head (*censeur*) in a lycée in Cahors and during the Empire and Restoration he authored several pedagogic works on history for youth.
[265] Serieys 1819, 3.
[266] "History of the Roman Empire's Fall and the Decline of Civilisation from the year 250 to the year 1000"
[267] Sismondi 1835 (I), 265-266, 371. "née dans une condition obscure"
[268] For example, Sismondi, when writing about the marriage of Sigebert with Brunehilde, stated that "his [Sigebert's] habits were, however, more organised, because he had no other wife than the famous Brunehilde, daughter of Athanagilde, king of the Visigoths." Sismondi 1835 (I), 373. "[…] ses moeurs furent cependant plus rangées, car il n'eut

Marriage was thus a precondition for queenship and the historians struggled to define the Merovingian queenship within the framework of the early nineteenth-century institutions of marriage and queenship. Defining queenship was often not enough, but many historians wanted to give a value judgement about the Merovingian marriages. As my study progresses it will become increasingly obvious that early nineteenth-century historians applied contemporary models of marriage to the Merovingian period in order to compare and highlight the differences between the two eras and modes of marriages. Many historians of the nineteenth century valued women's arranged marriages within the same social class higher than marriages that the historians perceived as based on a mutual passion[269].

Motherhood

The third feature related to the French queenship is motherhood. A queen's, and any woman's, most important role was to be a mother, as argued by the sixteenth-century erudite Jean Bodin, cited by Édouard Laboulaye in 1843.[270] A queen's most important task was to bear children as potential heirs to the throne, which is clear from the many nineteenth-century historians' narratives about historical queens: the "good" queens' role as mothers was emphasised, whereas their possible political impact was downplayed.[271]

Margadant has argued in her article "Identities. The Duchesse de Berry and Royalist Political Culture in Postrevolutionary France" (1997) that in a sense the queen, like the king, also had two bodies, even though the pairs of bodies were different in each case.[272] The queen's second body, her first being the physical one, was not sacred like the king's second body, but maternal and communal. According to Margadant, it was the queen giving birth to a possible heir to the throne that made her body communal. Her body belonged to a community, not just to her and to her husband. The idea of the queen's two bodies is a very interesting one because motherhood was one

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d'autre femme que la célèbre Brunehault, fille d'Athanagilde, roi des Visigoths." A French queen was always a foreign queen because the king of France did not marry his subjects. See also Cosandey 2000, 74-75. Cosandey refers with this comment to the Old Regime kings of France, she does not say anything about the marriages of the kings in the early Middle Ages. The interesting question is whether the early nineteenth-century historians considered the Merovingian kings as kings of France.

[269] Passion was also presented in literature as an almost destructive force, even between spouses. See Hamnett 2011, 106.

[270] Laboulaye 1843, 520.

[271] On the queen's role as a mother, see also Cosandey 2000, 70; Becquet 2009, 142.

[272] Margadant 1997, 33. Margadant's reference to the "two bodies" is, of course, an allusion to Kantorowicz's study *The King's Two Bodies* (1957). See also Lynn Hunt on two bodies: 1992, 94. Cosandey also writes about the king's two bodies and women's lack of these two bodies. Cosandey does not reject or accept the validity of the argument of two bodies but rather argues that queens had many rituals similar to those of kings. Cosandey 2000, 9.

of the queen's most important tasks, if not the most important one, and therefore it is no surprise how many nineteenth-century historical narratives about queens focused on their motherhood and on whether they were good or bad mothers. Even Queen Fredegonde, who was otherwise often described as a bad queen, was occasionally given credit for the love of her children. Gregory of Tours pictured Fredegonde lamenting her dying sons and even described her cancelling taxes because of her sorrow, and these stories are something many nineteenth-century historians brought up in their works because they wanted to emphasis that Fredegonde, despite all her negative qualities, was still a good mother.[273]

It is reasonable to argue that the change which took place in the expectations of royal motherhood is also visible in historiography, because historians looked for, and found, poor and good qualities in historical queen-mothers to justify their ideological perceptions of motherhood. Royal motherhood and the expectations for it changed after the revolutionary years and in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Margadant has argued that for the Old Regime Bourbons royal motherhood was essentially birth motherhood and that the birth mother was not the primary caretaker of the child once it was born.[274] So the change that occurred was from birth motherhood to nursing and educating motherhood in the early nineteenth century. It is no accident that in the nineteenth century saint queens such as Clotilde became popular and were often pictured devoting themselves to the care of their children. Even Queen Marie Antoinette received praise for her motherhood and tenderness for her children.[275] Even though the expectations and norms for royal motherhood changed, the importance of the role of motherhood in queens' lives and careers had not changed. As Janet Nelson has shown concerning the Merovingian queens, only bearing a son could assure them their royal place.[276] Sons were almost the only means for French and Frankish queens to acquire power, because they made it possible for their mothers to act as regents.

[273] Gregory of Tours, book V, ch. 34. 1823, 271-272. Langerack also referred to the same event: Langerack, 1847, 185-7. See Heinzelmann on Fredegonde's lamentation: 2001, 143.
[274] Margadant 1997, 34-35.
[275] According to Regina Schulte, for example, Jules Michelet described Marie Antoinette very empathetically - albeit not as a queen but as a mother and wife. Schulte 2002, 276.
[276] Nelson 1986, 5. Radegonde was the only well known Merovingian queen who did not have a child, a son, and who still managed to have a "career". Her monastery in Poitiers made her famous because in a sense it was her child and legacy. Through her monastery she came to be seen as a mother. Creating her "motherhood" through the nunnery was perhaps Radegonde's intention: see McNamara et al 1992, 60-65.

The change in expectations of marriage occurred simultaneously with the change in the view of ideal motherhood.[277] In her article "French Noblewomen and New Domesticity 1750–1850" (1979), Margaret H. Darrow has studied the influence of the Revolution on the lives of the noble women. Darrow argues that whereas in the eighteenth century noble women had lived a public life, in the early nineteenth century these women used their influence within the privacy of their homes. The Old Regime had made a public life possible for aristocratic women, but with the Revolution these possibilities ended.[278] As we have seen, Steven D. Kale has argued in his article that even before the Revolution women were being pushed away from the public sphere, but Darrow makes a strong case for a long-term change in ideal marriage and the aristocratic woman's position in France. In the Old Regime aristocratic pattern motherhood had played only a small role, but in the bourgeois model the maternal-centred family became the basis of a stable society, simultaneously justifying women's "dedication" to the domestic sphere and excluding them from "public" political life.[279]

Motherhood and producing heirs was indeed a queen's and any other royal woman's most important task. If the couple did not manage to produce an heir, the woman was almost always blamed and infertility was by far the most common reason for the separation of royal couples. Interestingly, this did not apply to Marie Thérèse of France who was the daughter and last surviving child of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. She married the oldest son of the future Charles X but they did not produce any heirs. This heir might eventually have become a king of France. Yet Marie Thérèse was not blamed, according Hélène Becquet (2012), for the infertility. She was protected by her position as a king's daughter and as the last legitimate child of the executed king.[280] I find this exception very interesting because it demonstrates that in certain circumstances the "royal blood" was more important than gender roles and the expectations associated with them.

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Marie Amelie seemed to be the exact opposite of Marie Antoinette when she became the queen of the French in 1830; she had numerous children and a good reputation. However, Marie Amelie's position as a queen was very different and perhaps in some ways more difficult than Marie Antoinette's, because her husband Louis Philippe did not have the same sacred position in France as the kings of the Old Regime. In 1830 the king definitely lost his position as the "father to his

[277] Rebecca Rogers has argued that motherhood became especially valued and advocated for bourgeois women after 1830. The new thing about the reverence for motherhood is its visibility in a great number of educational and popular works of literature aimed for women. Rogers 2007, 113.
[278] Darrow 1979, 41 & passim.
[279] Foley 2004, 45.
[280] Becquet 2009, 147.

people" or the "husband of France", as the earlier Bourbons had sought to represent themselves.[281] Nevertheless, King Louis Philippe was proud of being a father for his family if not for the nation. He, together with Marie Amelie, wanted to present his own family as a loving model family, a role model for the whole nation.[282] The king's sacred position was the basis for the queen's position and as it disappeared and became more "profane"; the queen's role also had to change. The Bourbon Restoration, which began in 1814 and lasted almost without interruptions until 1830, was a constitutional monarchy in which the power of the king was limited by the constitution. The birth of the July Monarchy in 1830 reinforced the constitutional monarchists' position, reduced the kingship to a secular position, and diminished the official role of the Catholic Church in France.[283]

Interestingly, at the same time when bourgeois values become visible in all levels of society, historians such as Augustin Thierry and Simonde de Sismondi began to use the metaphor of family in their studies about the history of France. Sylvain Venayre (2013) has discussed this change in how French history was perceived at a metaphorical level. It seems, however, that in this "family" there were more fathers than just the king, and the queen was not *the* mother of the nation. According to Thierry, "our fathers (= ancestors) were the nation".[284] Venayre did not mention how the queens fitted into this metaphorical family, but since Thierry was writing about the "famille française" in the Restoration years, perhaps the queens were again excluded from the family, as they had been in the revolutionary years.

The metaphorical family was already in use in the eighteenth century, as Lynn Hunt has demonstrated in her study *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (1992). She argued that "[…] most Europeans in the eighteenth century thought of their rulers as fathers and of their nations as families writ large."[285] Thierry had started to study, according to Venayre, "la famille nationale" which many historians equated with civilization, and the imagery was the same. Hunt argues, however, that in the Old Regime, French queens were perceived in a very negative manner and "never seemed to qualify as mothers of the people."[286] They were foreigners. Following the changes in regime, France never again saw a queen who could have qualified as a mother of the nation because by the time Marie Amelie became a queen, the position of queens had changed alongside

[281] Margadant 1999, 1468.
[282] Foley 2004, 47.
[283] The Catholic Church lost its official position as the state religion in 1830.
[284] Venayre 2013, 42.
[285] Hunt 1992, XIV.
[286] Hunt 1992, 89.

that of the kings. Kings could be fathers of the nation but women could only be mothers to less valuable entities such as humans.

According to German historian Regina Schulte, after the 1848 revolution Jules Michelet described Marie Antoinette as a good mother above all and transformed her image to that of a member of a middle-class family.[287] In the late eighteenth-century revolutionary imagery, however, La Nation, Paris and Revolution were perceived as good mothers instead of her. This image of a good mother in the revolutionary years was in an unfeminine form, almost a masculine (or neutral) mother, and it lacked all negative qualities associated with women and with Marie Antoinette especially.[288] The public role of a queen made her a bad mother (among other things) because motherhood, along with educating the children, was perceived as the most important role for all women in the 1790s.[289] Indeed, the idea of motherhood as a woman's most important role and the negation of all her public roles continued from the Revolution into the nineteenth century, but what changed was the way motherhood and publicity were associated with the queenship – the queen's role was no longer perceived as public, but as that of the wife of a king. The general expectation of bearing children did not change, even if the concept of motherhood was redefined.

As for Marie Amelie, the loss of the queen's former sacred position meant committing to the bourgeois code and acting like a bourgeois lady.[290] Along with other noble women she turned towards the privacy of the home. In a biography of her from 1868 by Auguste Philibert Chaalons d'Argé, she was described first of all as a mother and a wife. Several times the work referred to her as "la sainte femme" and not once was she described as meddling directly in the politics of the kingdom.[291] It is striking how the two queens, Clotilde and Marie Amelie, were made to resemble each other in their virtues and how they were described with the same words in different works. For example, in Joséphine Amory de Langerack's collective biography of the French queens from 1847 and in Caroline Falaize's biography of Clotilde from 1848 Clotilde was described in the same way

[287] Schulte 2002, 276. Schulte refers to Michelet's 1847-1853 published works *Histoire de la Révolution française*. The text book author Laure de Saint-Ouen, in a book published in 1838, also described Marie Antoinette as having "dignity and courage" and called her an "unfortunate princess". Saint-Ouen 1838, 54.
[288] Hunt 1992, 99.
[289] Hunt 1992, 123.
[290] Margadant 1999, 1467-1469 & passim. For further discussion about the French bourgeois in the nineteenth century, see Margadant 2008a, 93-117 and Maza 2007, 21-37. Especially Maza discusses whether such a construction as bourgeoisie ever existed, or whether it is a negative image liberal historians have held of the middle class. Maza sees bourgeoisie as always having been a negative label used to define someone else: no one ever defined themselves as bourgeois.
[291] Chaalons d'Argé 1868, 2, 12-13, 16, 17, 40, 88, 100. This image of Marie Amalie as a saint had perhaps been an aim for the queen and royal family already during their reign, as the royal family had identified themselves with national saints in the stained glass windows they had constructed in the Royal Chapel Dreux. Franconie 2009,107-108.

as Marie Amelie in her biography.[292] These similarities in describing two very different queens provide a good example of how the concept of queenship was redefined and at the same time consolidated using history to justify the new alterations.

I have presented the three features that best describe French queenship in the early nineteenth century: exclusion from power, marriage and motherhood. Especially the last two features went through changes in the early nineteenth century together with the monarchy and the whole of French society. The Merovingian queens were judged by the same criteria as nineteenth-century women, despite their different era and position. In order to visualise the changes and the way they affected the representations of the Merovingian queens, I next examine more closely the nineteenth-century representations of Clotilde together with her husband King Clovis. Having examined the ideal queenship, it is time to consider the ideal royal couple.

2.3. Clovis and Clotilde: an Ideal Royal Couple

Exclusion from power, a feature defining French queenship, is visible in the way the individual queens were almost invariably given less space in historiographical works than the kings. Queens could not, at least directly, lead troops, win wars or conquer lands, so the nineteenth-century historians did not see them as essential to French history as they saw the kings. Almost all events that made Clotilde famous in the history of France were related to her husband Clovis. Her memory was in many ways dependant on his reputation among historians. As argued on many occasions, the early nineteenth-century ideal of gender relations highlighted women's dependence on men and this dependence, in an implicit way, was visible in Clotilde's queenship, which was often pictured as subordinate to Clovis' kingship. Even so-called famous women were frequently introduced and defined through famous men.[293]

Clovis I has been an important figure in historiography ever since the turn of the sixth century and Gregory of Tours' chronicles ensured his lasting renown.[294] He was a founding hero and a king, almost a mythical figure in French history. As French historian Colette Beaune has argued in her *Naissance de la nation France* (1985), the stories related to Clovis' history were filled with various

[292] Langerack 1847 and Falaize 1848.
[293] In collective biographies of famous women this was very typical. Booth 2004, 43.
[294] However, the sources, Gregory's *Ten Books* and others contemporary with Clovis were not unanimous in the way they interpreted his reign. See Wood 1994, 42.

and different legends in the Middle Ages, depending on who wrote the manuscript and where. Towards the late Middle Ages the number of legends related to Clovis only grew. What is really interesting is that at the end of the Middle Ages, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Clovis became more and more often venerated as a saint, together with Clotilde.[295] In the fifteenth century the title "très chrétien" appeared in historiography and it was in use up until the end of the eighteenth century to designate not only Clovis but all kings of France. Before he became venerated as a saint king, Clovis was usually perceived as a heroic warrior, a perception that still existed in the nineteenth-century descriptions of him.[296] The title "très chrétien", however, seems to have disappeared from the historiographical descriptions of Clovis in the 1820s.[297] This disappearance was due to the changes in the French monarchy which no longer had a sacred position in France after the revolutionary years, despite the royalist attempts to restore the union between the throne and the altar.

Through all the legends, myths and nationalistic narratives, it is difficult to access the early Middle Ages and to find out what kind of king Clovis really was. Yet, this is something Patrick J. Geary has encouraged readers to do, and has aimed to do himself in his work *The Myth of Nations: the Medieval Origins of Europe* (2002). Clovis is one of many historical figures transformed into mythical heroes.[298] In many early nineteenth-century historiographical works Clotilde had only an instrumental value as Clovis' wife.[299] However, Clovis also had only an instrumental value for many historians who, as Christian Amalvi has noted, "expressed political conflicts in historical terms".[300] Expressing political conflicts in historical terms was not an invention of the nineteenth century, as already in the eighteenth century some political conflicts, i.e. about monarchy and government, found their way into historiography.[301] In other words, the early nineteenth-century politically engaged historians tried to legitimise the Restoration by seeking support from history for their political arguments. In fact, taking into consideration why history was studied in the early

[295] I find it very interesting that, as Ian Wood has remarked, there is very little information about the tombs of Clovis and Clotilde, and up until the eighteenth century they were almost completely lost despite the veneration of these two in France. Wood 2009, 95-6.
[296] Beaune 1985, 55-74.
[297] I have not found any references to this title in the early nineteenth-century historiographical works.
[298] According to Geary, Clovis did conquer several neighbouring kingdoms and did convert to Christianity (orthodox Christianity, not Arianism) but none of these acts was so dramatic as later historians, starting from Gregory of Tours and ending up to the early twentieth century, have led us to assume. Clovis was already allied with the local bishops before his conversion and his kingdom was not *the* Frankish kingdom but *a* Frankish kingdom. He succeeded his father Childeric in 486 and died in 511, but the exact year of his baptism is still under debate. Geary 2002, 36, 116-117, 136.
[299] This is still often visible in modern historiography, in which there is far more research about Clovis than Clotilde: see, for example, the large study entitled *Clovis: histoire & mémoire* edited by Michel Rouche (1997).
[300] Amalvi 1996, 244. Good examples of expressing political conflicts in historical terms are the works of Catholic royalist Mathieu Richard Auguste Henrion (1837) and the liberal Thierry.
[301] Morrissey 2001, 140.

nineteenth century, it is possible to argue that all historical figures, including Clovis and Clotilde, had only instrumental value for historians and authors.

Not all historians, however, saw Clotilde as having a special role in converting Clovis to orthodox Christianity. Louis Pierre Anquetil did not see Clotilde as a "saint mother of the nation".[302] Instead, she had a "caractère vindicatif".[303] But Anquetil was almost the last historian to name Clovis as "très chrétien", as he had been named since the fourteenth century.[304] Clotilde's negative nature and Clovis as "très chrétien" demonstrate that Merovingian figures were often seen simultaneously in a negative light as barbarians and as admirable forefathers of the French monarchy. Their representations had multiple layers and conflicting images.

The heyday of the cult of Clovis was the Restoration period, but other Merovingians had been used to give legitimacy to earlier reigns. Napoleon I had three hundred bees sewn into his coronation robe to remind people of the long continuity of power in France. The bees referred to the Merovingian king Childeric, Clovis' father, and the form of the bees, characteristic fleur de lys form, was reminiscent of the Capetian dynasty. The bees were found in the 1650s in the grave of Childeric I in Tournai.[305] Napoleon used the bees to create a symbol for his reign. In the historical imagination of the revolutionary years Clovis had not been a popular figure, which is clear in a work entitled *Les crimes des rois de France, depuis Clovis jusqu'à Louis XVI* (1792).[306] After the restoration of the French monarchy in 1814, Clovis was in a sense re-discovered as the first king and founder of the French monarchy and Clotilde's history as a saint was used to support the role that was given to her husband. A well-known example comes from the consecration of Charles X (1825), who was a fervent admirer of the Old Regime. The ceremony of Charles' consecration took place in the cathedral of Reims where the kings had been crowned (*le sacre*) before the Revolution of 1789. Charles X wanted to be crowned "[t]here, kneeling down in front of the same altar where Clovis had received the holy anointing […]"[307]Alongside Clovis' "restoration" as the founder of the French monarchy and the first Christian king, views of Clotilde generally became more positive and more "saintly", thus reinforcing the assessment of her husband.

[302] Anquetil was not alone: in an earlier posthumous work of the historian Henri de Boulainvilliers (1658-1722), *Histoire de l'ancien gouvernement de la France,* Clotilde was not mentioned at all in connection with the conversion of Clovis. Boulainvilliers 1727, 19-24.
[303] Anquetil 1825 (I), 282.
[304] Anquetil 1825 (I), 288.
[305] Tulard 1997, 635.
[306] Louis Lavicomterie de Saint-Samson 1792. "The Crimes of the Kings of France, from Clovis to Louis XVI"
[307] Amalvi 1996, 242; Theis 1996, 180. On Charles X's *sacre*, see also Boureau 2001, 182.

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There is one branch of historiography that influenced greatly the way Clovis and Clotilde were perceived in nineteenth-century France: text books used in schools. According to Bonnie Effros, school books could re-shape the historical imagination of thousands of children in public and private schools. The manuals strongly reflected the political opinions of their authors, whether of liberal or religious affiliation. Especially from the 1830s onwards, the history of France often started with the history of Clovis.[308] The history of France presented in these books often leaned on eighteenth-century interpretations of the early Middle Ages and did not follow the most advanced theories of history created in the 1820s and 1830s. This will be demonstrated in the case of several early nineteenth-century text books. One should, however, make a distinction between text books and other educational[309] literature. The latter genre includes many different kinds of historiographical works, such as the devotional biographies of Clotilde published in the 1840s and the collective biography written by Langerack. The difference between educational literature and text books derived from their audience and their function: text books were for schools and pupils whereas educational literature was (mostly) for young girls reading at home, because maternal education was still very common in the first half of the nineteenth century.[310] The educational literature will be examined in the following chapters. Even if quantitatively text books constitute only a small proportion of my sources, as a distinctive group they present excellent case studies on the representations of the ideal royal couple. They are examined here separately because this makes it possible to see the differences in representation within one well defined genre.

History was not perceived as having an absolute value, but it was studied and written about to instruct the reader of the contemporary society and to find answers to current social and political issues and problems. [311] Girls' education was regarded as very important, but mostly for functional purposes, intended to make girls good wives and mothers, and above all good citizens.[312] Higher

[308] Effros 2012, 337.
[309] There is a difference between the French terms *education* and *instruction*, the first referring to learning, for example, moral behaviour, and the second to a more formal formation. See Mayeur 1979, 8. Indeed, the biographies of the Merovingian saints clearly were for *education*, teaching morality and purity of nature.
[310] On girls' education and instruction, see also Rogers 1995, 153-181.
[311] Mayeur 1979, 9. Of course this did not signify that everybody had access to education in France. The period of 1815-1848 saw many school and educational reforms, the most famous being the school reform of 1833 organised by historian François Guizot, who was the head of the department of public education from 1832. The school reform established primary education in France, albeit only for boys. Nevertheless, the school reform showed the general will to improve educational possibilities for the lower classes as well. Girls from the middle and upper classes were not educated in the same institutions as girls from the lower classes, and institutions were similarly separated according to gender.
[312] See, for example, abbé Felicité de La Mennais 1825, 88-90. He made fun of politicians who hoped for similar reading for girls and boys - he clearly though a restricted education was enough for girls, as their primary role was to be mothers and wives.

education, formal *instruction*, was not possible for girls in the first half of the nineteenth century, even though the number of lay boarding schools grew rapidly up until the middle of the century.[313] Most of the educational literature written for young girls was written by Catholic historians or historians emphasizing the Catholic faith in the history of France.[314]

Antoine Serieys' *Epitome de l'Histoire de France*[315] was a "book accepted for teaching in lycées, secondary schools and in boarding schools for both sexes".[316] These were all schools of secondary degree but when Serieys wrote his work, only the boarding schools were open for girls. Not all young men went to school or even knew how to read and write - only privileged and wealthy families could send their boys to lycées or their daughters to boarding schools. Both lycées and boarding schools had their roots at the turn of the century, both before and after Napoleon's rise to power.[317] Serieys himself wrote extensively on various topics: politics, history, song, drama and so on.[318] In 1793 he wrote a hymn to celebrate the republicans who, according to the song, "rose against the tyranny of the kings and monarchy".[319] It is clear that text books like those mentioned in his chapters were influential, even though the number of pupils was not very large. It is, however, plausible that the text books were read outside class rooms and used in home education too.

Serieys's colleague was the famous pedagogue (abbé) Aloïsius Édouard Camille Gaultier[320] (1746–1818), a priest who made peculiar pedagogical innovations in the latter part of the eighteenth century. His method was to make children learn while having fun and he preferred different games to help in memorising and using simple mnemonic devices to help learning. Gaultier's works were re-printed and modified after his death, and, for example, in 1832 his work *Leçons d'histoire* was

[313] Rogers 1995, 160-1.
[314] Most school books and studies concerning education were not about girls' education. Mayeur 1979, 9. She states that general pedagogical works were always for boys and about boys. Again we see how the male gender was constructed to be "universal". See, for example, Charles Cottu's *Guide Politique de la Jeunesse ou Traité de l'Ordre Social à l'usage des jeunes gens* (1838). "Political Guide of Youth, or Treatise on Social Order for the use of Young People". There were exceptions as well. Amable Tastu declared that she wrote for both boys and girls in her *Cours d'Histoire de France* (1836, introduction).
[315] "Epitome of History of France"
[316] "Ouvrage adopté pour l'Enseignement des Lycées, des Ecoles secondaires, et des Pensionnats des deux sexes."
[317] See Mayeur 1979, 84-86; Marchand 2006, 75-117 passim.
[318] See Quérard 1838 (IX), 70-75.
[319] See Anon 1793, 1-12. See also Amalvi 2001a, 254.
[320] Gaultier was educated by the Jesuits and was ordained in Rome. He opened his own school in Paris but had to be exiled during the Revolution, after which he returned to France to continue his pedagogic work which, for example, emphasised a teaching method that gathered together both advanced and weaker students. His famous text book on history, *Leçons d'histoire*, was first published in 1788 but re-published several times in the early nineteenth century. On Gaultier, see Mayeur 1979, 100; Amalvi 2001a, 121. Gaultier most likely had monarchist sympathies. I have only two versions of the book, from 1827 and 1832. Gaultier's most famous work, entitled *Leçons d'histoire, appartenant à un Cours d'études élémentaires destinés à instruire les enfans en les amusant par le moyen de plusieurs jeux*, was published in 1788. It was revised several times in the nineteenth century by Gaultier's students after the author himself had died. See also Amalvi 2001a, 121.

reprinted. There the monarchist tendencies are very obvious since the Revolution of 1830 was explicitly blamed on the counsellors of Charles X who were "incompetent".[321] Equally interesting is that at the beginning of the work there is a short chronological table that summarises the most important events in the history of France and which includes only four women: Fredegonde, Brunehilde, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Joan of Arc.[322] It seems that Gaultier, exiled from France, and Serieys, a fierce Republican, were diametrically opposed in their perceptions of the Revolutionary Years and their political ideologies.

Serieys is unlikely to have done any research in archives for his text books and he probably copied from many previous writers (who in their turn had probably copied from still earlier writers). Gaultier too was clearly more interested in teaching young French people than in interpreting the lives of Merovingian queens. Christian Amalvi calls Serieys and Gaultier "vulgarisateurs", as they were not "academic" historians, but they reached large audiences with their books and they wrote popular history. It is important to keep in mind that Serieys, like Gaultier, most probably did not write just as a hobby but to earn money. Therefore, they had to make their books sell.

Clotilde was hardly mentioned at all in the republican Serieys' work, where she played almost no part in Clovis' conversion in the late fifth century. The whole conversion was pictured in a very secular manner. According to Serieys, the conversion was not a result of a newly found Christian conviction, but was done for political reasons as it assisted Clovis' conquests.[323] According to Amalvi, this kind of interpretation strongly divided the secular and religious text book authors - the former saw the conversion as a political and even cynical act whereas the latter group saw it as a proof of God's protection over France.[324] This division lasted until the First World War.[325] Serieys thus seemed to belong to the group of secular text book authors, which is no surprise to anyone who reads the words of his 1793 hymn: "[…] Stand up, Republicans, let's go all together // Let's go to exterminate to the last one the kings// […]."[326] It would have been surprising if the sentiments expressed in these earlier writings had not affected his later productions, even if only implicitly. It was not only a question of dimishing the connection between the throne and the altar, between the

[321] Gaultier 1832, 233.
[322] Gaultier 1832, XI-XXII. There was a separate list of all kings and queens.
[323] Serieys 1819, 13.
[324] According to Bonnie Effros, in the late nineteenth-century some Catholic text book authors directly blamed Brunehilde and Fredegonde, and more generally women, of the troubles in the Merovingian kingdoms. Effros 2012, 344.
[325] Amalvi 2001b, 65.
[326] Anon 1793, 3. "[…] Debout, Républicains, allons tous à-la-fois // Allons (*bis*) exterminer jusqu'au dernier des rois// […]."

monarchy and the Catholic Church, but to diminish the role women had in the conversion and to highlight the masculine decision-making in Clovis' conversion.

The exiled Gaultier's work was organised as a chronological narrative with questions and answers. Here Clotilde was the reason why Clovis converted to Christianity, not political expediency. Gaultier could be categorised, following the definitions of Christian Amalvi, as a religious text book writer, but interestingly he wrote nothing about Clotilde other than this: "*Who was the principal author of Clovis' conversion to Christianity?* His wife Clotilde, a pious princess from the house of the kings of Burgundy, who often spoke to him about the happiness of serving the Christian God."[327] Gaultier, albeit only briefly, emphasised Clotilde's influence in the conversion. Possibly the event was presented very shortly due to the legacy of the enlightenment, which led authors to diminish the religious aspect of the conversion. Indeed, the authors of the Enlightenment did not in general value the medieval queens and one reason for this disregard was that they saw the queens as potential representatives of the clerical past.[328]

According to Serieys, the most powerful Merovingian queen was Fredegonde and not the woman who was involved in Christianising France. Fredegonde became, after the death of her husband, a regent, which in Serieys' historical interpretation signified a power equal to that of a king. [329] It is not known how his ideas changed in the years between his expressed hatred for kings and the publication of his text book. None of the groups, religious or secular authors, republicans or royalists, were homogeneous, as we can see from the differing representations of events by Gaultier and Anquetil, who had been a priest before the revolutionary years. Both text books, Gaultier's and Serieys', were, however, organised in a chronological manner, presenting one king at a time - hence presenting the succession of Merovingian kings as identical to that of later French dynasties. This was done to tie their history in with French history.

Just as education was perceived as important for the new French "nation", history was sometimes perceived in the terms of the human life cycle and educational stages. The close ties between civilisation, education and the human life cycle were presented in a symbolic manner in many works. Simonde de Sismondi stated of the Merovingian period that "[t]he same period was equivalent to the infancy and the first education of a person who is destined at an older age to

[327] Gaultier 1827, 6. "*Quel fut le principal auteur de la conversion de Clovis à la religion chrétienne?* Sa femme Clotilde, princesse pieuse, de la maison des rois de Bourgogne, qui lui parloit souvent du bonheur de servir le Dieu des Chrétiens." Italics by Gaultier.
[328] Evans 2014, 46.
[329] Serieys 1819, 21.

change the face of the universe."[330] This metaphor of the Merovingian period was quite common and can also be found in the works of Sismondi's contemporaries, because it highlighted the inferiority of the Merovingian period compared with the "maturity" of the nineteenth century.[331] This interpretation was also suitable because it supported the progressive civilisation theory and the hierarchical perception of history, both popular in the nineteenth century.[332]

Eliane Gubin, a historian who specialises in gender and cultural history, has argued (2007) that women often highlighted and emphasised their own lesser intellectual and moral capacities. [333] However, one of the most famous text book authors did not belittle herself. Laure Boen de Saint-Ouen did not refer to her gender in any way in her text books, which had an immense influence on the nineteenth-century historical imagination. The most important of these were *Tableaux mnémoniques de l'histoire de France, composés de médaillons chronologiques contenant le portrait de chaque Roi et les principaux évènemens de son règne* (1822) and *Histoire de France, depuis l'établissement de la monarchie jusqu'à nos jours*[334] (first edition in 1827). The earlier work, in English "Mnemonic pictures of the history of France, composed of chronological medallions containing the portraits of each king and the principal events of their reigns", includes pictures of each king to help the reader, most likely a young male pupil, to remember the kings. The works, as I will show, illustrate splendidly the change in the way Clotilde's role in Clovis' conversion was depicted in the 1820s.

Clotilde is very briefly mentioned in both of Saint-Ouen's works, as the Christian princess that Clovis married. In the earlier work, from 1822, Clovis' conversion was "inspired" by her example and advice.[335] In the later work from 1827, the conversion had more to do with his victory in the Battle of Tolbiac at the turn of the sixth century because, according to Saint-Ouen, Clovis had invoked "Clotilde's God" beforehand.[336] The reasons for the conversion thus changed slightly in the text books, signifying a larger change in the way the conversion was justified: in the 1820s;

[330] Sismondi 1835 (I), 353. "Cette même période répondait à l'enfance et à la première éducation d'un personnage destine dans son âge mûr à changer la face de l'univers."
[331] For example, Guizot saw the early Middle Ages as "l'enfance de la civilisation", 1836, 69. Also Eugène-Amédée Balland wrote that "[…] when he [the writer] tries to make his readers understand what a nation was in its childhood, it was ignorance into which the same nation had plunged […]." Balland 1821, 5. "[…] lorsqu'il s'efforce de faire comprendre à ses lecteurs, quel était un peuple dans son enfance, c'est l'ignorance dans laquelle ce même peuple était plongé […]."
[332] On the concept of civilization, especially as it was used by François Guizot, see, for example, Weintraub 1966,75-114.
[333] Gubin 2007, 15-18.
[334] "History of France, from the Establishment of the Monarchy to Our Days"
[335] Saint-Ouen 1822, 49-50. About Saint-Ouen, see also Havelange 2007, 49-50; Boulay de la Merthe 1839, III-VII.
[336] Saint-Ouen 1830, 17-18.

Clotilde's advice became less important than victory in a war. According to Martyn Lyons, in her history of France, Saint-Ouen highlighted the financial history and the monarchs' love of peace. Lyons continues by saying that these were also the values emphasised by Louis Philippe's regime and this is why her works were so popular, especially during the July Monarchy.[337] The motivation for conversion was not the only thing that changed from one edition to the next. In 1822 the consequence of Clovis' reign was the birth of France and a people called the French, but in 1827 the reign of Clovis was followed by "temps de barbarie", barbarian times.[338] Clearly, within only a few years Clovis had became more barbarian, less sacred, and Clotilde's role had almost disappeared from these text books. One obvious reason for this could be the publications of the historians of the 1820s generation, which began to represent Clovis as a Germanic leader rather than as a French king. France no longer existed in these representations of the early Middle Ages. In general the descriptions that Saint-Ouen's, Serieys' and Gaultier's text books gave of Clotilde were meagre. The books were shorter than many other contemporary works, but the author's gender or political affiliations appear not to have affected the representations of Clotilde.

Clotilde was not the only queen Saint-Ouen presented only briefly. As a rule, she presented all the queens in this way (there were only circa 170 pages in the whole work), so Clotilde's importance is suggested by the fact that she was mentioned at all. In the 1827 version Saint-Ouen mentioned only six women by name from the Merovingian period (Clotilde, Fredegonde, Audovera, Galeswinthe, Brunehilde, and Bathilde) and none from the Carolingian period. From the period between c.980 and 1824 she mentioned 22 women by name. It is interesting that even though the Merovingian period is not as well known as the Carolingian period regarding sources and attention from the historians, the Merovingian queens seem to have been better known than the Carolingian queens in the early nineteenth-century text books. In the Gaultier text book reprint from 1832 there is a list of the important persons of the first two "races". For the Merovingians, the list featured five women (Saint Geneviève, Clotilde, Fredegonde, Brunehilde, and Bathilde), whereas the list for the Carolingian period featured not one woman.[339] Unlike Saint-Ouen's, in Gaultier's work several Carolingian queens were brought up in the text, but apparently they were not considered important enough to be included in the list of important people. Possibly the Merovingian queens were simply seen as more important political figures than the Carolingian ones, but it is also possible that the reason for including so many queens from the Merovingian era was to highlight the influence of the

[337] Lyons 2008, 37.
[338] Saint-Ouen 1830, 18; Saint-Ouen 1822, 51.
[339] Gaultier 1832, 42, 70. The list between the years of 1003 and 1325 featured no women either. Gaultier 1832, 110.

feminine on the period, thus emphasising that it had a weaker "character" than the subsequent Carolingian period.

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After examining the text books and the way Clotilde and Clovis were presented there, I shall focus on the emerging historical research in the 1820s. François Guizot saw Clovis simultaneously as the "veritable founder" of the Frankish monarchy and as an exceptional personage in history, while the period and the people were depicted as ignorant, brutal and cruel.[340] Amalvi (2011) has stated that the baptism of Clovis was an essential part of national identity in France from the Restoration period to the Second World War.[341] Clovis was undoubtedly one of the "ancestors" of the first half of the nineteenth century, sometimes even the first ancestor.

Few historians were as critical of Clovis as Jacques Antoine Dulaure[342] (1755-1835). His *Histoire physique, civile et morale de Paris*[343] was originally published in the early 1820s. Dulaure did not even mention Clovis' conversion but focused only on his conquests and described him as a having a "thirst for wealth".[344] In addition, Dulaure saw as "regrettable" the union between the throne and the altar which was born, according to him, in Clovis' reign, even though he did not detail the reasons for this judgement or for the alleged union.[345] Clovis was thus connected to one of the collective of French kings who shared the responsibility for all (imagined or not) crimes committed by the monarchy.

Dulaure wrote many pages about the "crimes" of Clovis without writing much about Clotilde, besides the killing of her grandsons.[346] Dulaure was very critical of the narratives of Gregory of Tours, especially those about events that had occurred before the bishop's own time.[347] Dulaure, however, did not ask *why* Gregory had considered it important to write about the deaths of Clotilde's grandsons. He made arbitrary deductions about the killings, such as that Clotilde, when deciding to have her grandsons put to death, demonstrated the "pride of a Barbarian woman who

[340] Clovis, see Guizot 1836, 59; the period otherwise, see for example Guizot 1840 (I), 280.
[341] Amalvi 2011, 22.
[342] He was a specialist in the history and archaeology of Paris. He was politically active during the Revolution, a representative in the Convention and, for example, in the Council of Five Hundred. He was also a journalist during the 1790s. He lost his source of income in 1814 and started to write and publish on various topics of history in order to survive.
[343] "Physical, Civil and Moral History of Paris"
[344] Dulaure 1829 (I), 157, also 287.
[345] Dulaure 1829, 159.
[346] Dulaure 1829 (I), 298-303. According to Gregory of Tours and his continuators, Clotilde's son Clothar had his brother Clodomir's children killed when they were in the care of Clotilde. Clothar made her mother choose between scissors and a sword; between monastery and death. Clotilde chose death for her grandsons. See Gregory of Tours, Book III, ch. 18. 1974, 180-181.
[347] Dulaure 1829 (I), 175.

was ready to sacrifice all her natural affections".[348] According to *Nouvelle Biographie générale*, Dulaure had already disliked the Old Regime before the outbreak of the revolution in 1789 and this hatred was the main reason why he pictured the royals so negatively during the restoration in the 1820s. Dulaure's work is an excellent example of the negative view of the Merovingian royals in the 1820s, but according to the *Nouvelle Biographie*, he did also receive a lot of criticism for his history of Paris from the supporters of the Old Regime and the Bourbon dynasty.[349] This did not stop him, however, from publishing new editions of the work, which went through at least seven editions in the 1820s and 1830s. Despite the criticism, or perhaps because of it, the work did attract readers.

Dulaure, who was equally critical of almost all royals, defined Clovis as a barbarian and highlighted this by describing in detail all the murders he had committed.[350] He argued that barbarism could cause humans to degenerate into bestiality.[351] Dulaure's dislike of the French monarchy was obvious in his negative representation of the early monarchs, for instance in his claim that the Franks, which he associated with all early medieval rulers, had oppressed the Gauls: "[t]he barbarism of the Franks in Gaul caused the disregard of arts, ignorance, feudalism […]".[352] In addition to making it clear that the meanings related to "barbarism" were not neutral, it seems that even the most fervent anti-monarchists adopted aspects of the new historiographical tradition, presumably because in this way they could discuss issues with the younger generation of historians, not because they accepted the Restoration.

The 1820s also saw one of the first studies dedicated entirely to the early Middle Ages, a work that had a rather different approach to Clotilde's role in the history of Clovis' conversion than Dulaure's.[353] In fact, Jean Marie Félicité Frantin's[354] *Annales du Moyen Âge, comprenant l'histoire des temps qui se sont écoulés depuis la décadence de l'Empire romain jusqu'à la mort de Charlemagne*[355] (1825) was the largest and most comprehensive work on the topic when it was published. *Annales* comprised eight volumes, of which four covered the period from the fifth to the

[348] Dulaure 1829 (I), 301. "[...] l'orgueil et fierté d'une femme barbare, disposée à leur sacrifier tous les devoirs sociaux, toutes les affections de la nature."
[349] *Nouvelle Biographie* 1852, 122-124.
[350] Dulaure 1837 (I), 138-9, 235, 240; Also Sismondi (1835 (I), 266) called Clovis a Barbarian but was not as critical as Dulaure.
[351] Dulaure 1829 (I), 380.
[352] Dulaure 1829 (I), 380." La barbarie des Francs amena dans la Gaule le mépris des lettres, l'ignorance, la féodalité […]"
[353] Jean-Baptiste Dubos' *Histoire critique de l'établissement de la monarchie françoise dans les Gaules*, first published in 1734, also focused on the early Middle Ages.
[354]Very little is known about Frantin. Frantin was Printer of the King in Dijon so he was a royalist and according to Agnès Graceffa, also presented a pro-royalist thesis in his work. See more about Frantin, Graceffa 2009b, 61.
[355] "Annals of the Middle Ages, Including History of the Times that Have Passed Since the Decadence of Roman Empire to the Death of Charlemagne"

eighth centuries. Even the lesser known Merovingian queens were acknowledged there, although many contemporary historians left them out of their narratives about the Merovingian era as we have seen in the case of the text books.

The following passage from Frantin's comprehensive work illustrates well how he saw Clotilde's role in French history: "It was not without the secret design of Providence that the barbaric conqueror [Clovis] had spared her. The princess had the destiny to bring Faith to the house of Clovis and to the kingdom of the Franks."[356] Frantin's devotional image of Clovis correlates well with the religious tendencies of the 1820s when royal family had in its best interest to strengthen the tie between the Catholicism and monarchy. As has been noted, to represent the conversion of Clovis in religious terms was also to give the monarchy a religious legitimacy. Interestingly Bernard Germain Étienne de Laville-sur-Illon, count of Lacépède's[357] (d. 1825) interpretation of the same event in his *Histoire générale, physique et civile de l'Europe* (1826) gave a different view. [358] Lacépède, a retired zoologist and a politician, was a count, a peer of France during the Restoration and a member of several learned societies both in France and abroad. Clotilde did all she could to make her husband a Christian, but eventually:

> [T]he politics he believed he was obliged to conduct otherwise favoured the decision rather than the reverse; his submission to Christianity gave him important influence, not only in French Gaul but also in Mediterranean Gaul and Italy, which helped him to execute his plans. His baptism would increase his power just as baptism had increased Emperor Constantine's power.[359]

Frantin's and Lacépède's works articulate the two models of interpretation, which often overlapped in early nineteenth-century works, on the baptism of Clovis presented by Amalvi, the first emphasising the religious aspects of the conversion and the second highlighting the political aspects. Both Lacépède and Frantin seemed to support the Restoration. The distinction between the two historians cannot be traced solely to political questions raised during the 1820s. The difference

[356] Frantin 1825 (II), 361. "Ce n'étoit pas sans un dessein secret de la Providence que le barbare vainqueur l'avoit épargnée. Cette princesse étoit réservée à porter la Foi dans la maison de Clovis et dans le royaume des Francs." The barbaric conqueror was her uncle Gondebaud who, according to Frantin, had slaughtered Clotilde's family.

[357] On Lacépède, see the eulogy at the beginning of the *Histoire générale* (1826) by M. G. T. Villenave, secretary of the *société philotechnique*, of which Lacépède was also a member. Of course, eulogies are rarely wholly truthful, and Villenave would hardly have written about Lacépède's antipathy to the monarchy (if such there were) in the 1820s. Lacépède was made a peer of France several times, lastly in 1819. The short eulogy of Lacépède, despite its high praise of him, also gives a lot of information about his life. Philotechnique is defined as "qui aime les arts". Lacépède was a politician, a peer of France and according to the title page of his posthumously published work, a member of all the learned societies in Europe. This was Lacépède's only historiographical work, and he is better known as a naturalist. In addition to publishing several treatises on natural sciences, he also wrote two operas. He seems to have been a friend of the Comte de Buffon, the famous eighteenth-century mathematician and naturalist.

[358] "General, Physic and Civil History of Europe"

[359] Lacépède 1826b (I), 241. "La politique qu'il croyait devoir suivre favorisait d'ailleurs cette résolution, bien loin de la contrarier ; et sa soumission au christianisme devait lui donner, non seulement dans la Gaule française, mais dans les Gaules méridionales et en Italies, une influence bien important pour l'exécution de ses projets. Son baptême devait accroître sa puissance, comme celui de Constantin avait ajouté au pouvoir de cet empereur."

was also that of a generation. Lacépède represented the eighteenth-century erudition more than Frantin, who published, according to the French national library catalogue, his first work in the same year that Lacépède died.[360] Visible in these two works are the different, yet frequently intermingling, approaches to the Catholic religion and the Church: the eighteenth-century contesting of religion and the nineteenth-century embracing of faith.

Yet interpretations were not always so straightforward and Lacépède is a good example of this. According to Lacépède, Clotilde wanted to avenge herself on her uncle Gondebaud, king of Burgundy, who had murdered her parents. She drove her husband Clovis to avenge these killings. Unlike Fredegonde, who was defined by Lacépède as a bloodthirsty barbarian, Clotilde's motive for revenge was "filial tenderness", love for her parents.[361] Whereas Fredegonde's vindictiveness was seen as uncivilised, Clotilde's vindictiveness was often perceived as justified. But historians did find the question of revenge in Clotilde's history difficult to reconcile with her status as a saint and a central figure in the Christianisation of France.

Clovis was not the only ambiguous figure from the early Middle Ages who was included among the Great Men in the history of France. He was the most famous figure from the "first race", the Merovingians, but the "second race", the Carolingians, had such a figure as well, Charlemagne. He was no more French than Clovis, but was similarly idolised in nineteenth-century France. According to Robert Morrissey (2001), Charlemagne has been included in the group of Great Men since the early Middle Ages and his image reflected constantly the needs of the current society and political imagination. Charlemagne was, like Childeric (Clovis' father), used by Napoleon to highlight the continuity of power from the earliest days to the nineteenth century.[362] These kings were made to represent the beginning of the *French* monarchy and history even though they were originally Germanic rulers. The representation of Charlemagne, like that of the Merovingian figures, showed that even well known historians such as François Guizot and Jules Michelet[363] had different visions of the ancestry of the Great Men in French history. Whereas Guizot saw Charlemagne as an inspirational leader, Michelet saw him as more Germanic than French, far from either a "founding father" or a "heroic innovator" according to the historian Robert Morrissey.[364]

[360] Between Lacépède and Frantin there was the same difference in generation as between Merlin and Laboulaye the younger historian presenting more exclusive views on the history of the French monarchy and queenship.
[361] Lacépède 1826a (I), 206-7, 308. Gabrielle de Paban also mentioned her vengeful nature, but not in a positive way: 1820, 218. "la tendresse filiale".
[362] Morrissey 2001, 133, 146-7, 155, 169 & passim.
[363] Michelet also argued that the title of king, for example, was originally meaningless to the Barbarians. See Michelet 1833 (I), 198.
[364] Morrissey 2001, 157-9.

Indeed, many twentieth-century historians have pointed out the selective nature of previous historians' use of sources and their selective use of facts and characteristics such as ethnicity that are open to interpretation. The early nineteenth-century historians' choice of interpretations and justifications for their arguments is especially striking.[365] Historical figures were not treated equally and whether their nature was declared "Germanic", associated with the Franks and barbarism in early nineteenth-century historiography, was a highly arbitrary choice. I consider the representations of Clotilde, who was a Burgundian princess, reminiscent of those of Charlemagne in that neither of them was seen in France as categorically Germanic, despite the fact that their origins were arguably in Frankish/Germanic tribes. The French national hero Charlemagne was originally a very "German" or Frankish *Karl der Grosse*.[366] A historical figure's ethnic origins were always transformed according to the needs of the society or the historian - in Germany, Charlemagne has Germanic ancestry and in France he has French ancestry. In Gabriel Bonnot de Mably's (1709–1785) work *Observations sur l'histoire de France* (1765)[367] Clovis was a Frenchman, but a hundred years later he had become a Frankish king.

However, not all questions related to the early Middle Ages divided the opinions of Guizot and Michelet. Guizot saw Clovis and all the other great barbarian leaders as attempting but failing to succeed the Roman emperors.[368] Michelet did not bring this question up but he did agree with Guizot regarding the Frankish invasion of (the Roman provinces of) Gaul, or rather that there was an invasion.[369] He presented Clovis in a rather neutral light. Clovis' conversion was most of all an alliance with the bishops.[370] Clovis was clearly not as important as Charlemagne to these historians, as neither of them praised him.

I argue that the historians constructed a coherent Merovingian history by using Clotilde's Burgundian background and the murder of her parents as a tool to legitimise Clovis' and his sons' conquests in neighbouring areas. Furthermore, Clotilde's Burgundian origins and the fate of her parents were used in early nineteenth-century historiography to justify the propagation of the

[365] About the selection of facts, see Arcangeli 2012, 27.
[366] For Charlemagne's position in French "national" history, see Morrissey 2001, 133.
[367] See, for example, Mably 1765, 59-61.
[368] Guizot 1840 (II), 148. According to Karl J. Weintraub, Guizot perceived the barbarian to be, together with "Roman remnants" and Christian religion, the constitutive elements of the early ages of European civilization. Weintraub 1966, 108-109.
[369] Michelet 1833 (I), 201-207.
[370] Michelet 1833 (I), 199.

Christian (Catholic) faith.[371] One of Clovis' sons' conquests was the kingdom of Thuringia, where Clothar I, after killing the Thuringian king, received as war booty the king's young daughter Radegonde, who was later venerated as a saint.[372] In order to construct a coherent narrative of the events of the Merovingian period, historians used items from Clotilde's history to explain her husband's actions. Simultaneously the Merovingian period was simplified and given an artificial coherence to make it understandable. It is difficult to estimate how the perceptions of the 1820s liberal historians and text book authors such as Laure de Saint-Ouen fit together, or if they used the same kinds of sources. Frantin also represents the Catholic revival during the Restoration, which is best known in the writings of Frédéric Ozanam[373] (1813-1853) during the July Revolution. Ozanam was a well known Catholic historian and at the end of the 1840s he published works on the religion in the Frankish kingdoms such as *La civilisation chrétienne chez les Francs*[374] and *La civilisation au cinquième siècle*[375]. Clotilde is mentioned only briefly in the first work and only in relation to Clovis' conversion. Ozanam saw one reason for Clovis' conversion as his discussions with Clotilde but he did not present Clotilde as providing the main impetus for the event. He also denied that political calculation was the sole motive for the conversion, writing that Clovis was "drawn by the lights of the Christian civilization."[376] Thus Clotilde did not have a big role in this representation of the conversion and the main motives were those of from Clovis himself. In fact, this correlates with the period's other academic historiography, in which Clotilde has only a small role in these late fifth-century events.

The idea of civilisation penetrated all these genres by the end of the 1820s, with the result that there were similarities in their perceptions of history. There is no doubt that Clovis was perceived as a more central figure in the history of France than his wife, even though Clotilde's significance grew in those branches of historiography that were aimed at a female audience, as I will demonstrate in the next section. Clovis' importance is especially visible in works written by men for other men, because often, but not exclusively, the masculine perception of the royal couple was that Clotilde was an instrument for a greater (masculine) achievement. However, whereas Clovis lost his role as "très chrétien", Clotilde assumed the role at least partially in her capacity as a saint, Clovis becoming more of a politician and conqueror. Clotilde, as a woman and as a queen, was not

[371] See, for example, Lavallée 1838 (I), 115.
[372] See Gregory of Tours, Book III, ch. 7. 1974,168.
[373] French scholar, lawyer, and a historian. He was a professor of foreign literature in Sorbonne after Claude Fauriel. He was a fervent Catholic and one of the founders of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, a Catholic voluntary organisation. He published a lot about Italian history, about Dante, and also about religion in the early Middle Ages.
[374] "Christian Civilization among the Franks"
[375] "Civilization in the Fifth Century"
[376] Ozanam 1872,69. "[…] attiré par les lumières de la civilisation chrétienne."

imagined as having affected the French kingdom directly, but always through her husband. This was also the role offered to women in the whole of French society, where women's role was defined by the family and marital status. There was no direct change compared to earlier French society but rather lack of change in the opportunities women were given. Whereas men were given more and more opportunities in French society, women were often offered representations of women dependent on their husbands.

2.4. Saint Queens of France in Biographies

In the ideal bourgeois family women were seen as responsible for the family's religious purity.[377] The queen had the same role as both a wife and a mother of her family, but she could also be seen responsible for the religious purity of the whole nation. The queen's sanctity thus had multiple dimensions and significations, from protecting the nation's religiousness and purity to educating the future rulers of the nation. The historical saint queens were used to inspire (future) mothers to take care of their family's religious upbringing. In the nineteenth century Queen Clotilde was the best known saint queen from the early medieval Frankish kingdoms and therefore in certain genres of historiography she was presented as the role model for an ideal mother, wife and queen.[378]

Clotilde's sanctity was also related to the Orléans family, because the royal family used national saint figures from French history to legitimise their own position as role models for the French nation. Among these national saints were Geneviève, Clotilde, Radegonde and Bathilde from the Merovingian era. The royal family, king, queen, princes and princesses, wanted to be associated with the saints because sanctity implied worthy role models of righteous behaviour and the family wanted to be seen as role models. This kind of desired association between the Orléans family and the national saints highlighted the family's wish to present themselves as following a providential mission designated to them. According to Grégoire Franconie (2009), the Orléans family pictured

[377] According to Susanne Hillman, Germaine de Staël saw that women were the "virtuous bearers of moral values". Hillman 2011, 24.

[378] There were more saint queens in the Merovingian period than after it. Later, for example, Joan of France (1464-1505) achieved sainthood even though she was canonised only in the 1950s. She founded a religious Order after her marriage with Louis XII was annulled. There were significant differences between the Merovingian saint queens. Clotilde was (officially) made a saint centuries after her death, whereas the actions to sanctify Radegonde and Bathilde started immediately after their deaths. Contemporaries of Radegonde and Bathilde wrote their *Vitas,* whereas Clotilde's *Vita* was written much later. See Folz 1992, 10, 12-13, 19, 32. These differences, however, were not visible in early nineteenth-century historiography. Even though no Merovingian king was officially canonised, some kings such as Guntram were sometimes referred to as saints in early nineteenth-century historiography. There have always been more popular saints than official saints in the Catholic Church.

themselves as saints in a transept they ordered. In addition to the Merovingian saints, there were also, for example, Saint Philip, Saint Amélie, Saint Remigius, Saint Denis and Princess Isabelle.[379] Clotilde's sanctity was thus important not only in historiography but in the way the royal family constructed its public image. The Orléans' family's wish to affiliate itself with the Catholic saints is interesting given that the 1830 revolution marked a rupture between the French monarchy and the Catholic church. The new constitution of 1830 removed Catholicism as the state religion and the revolution was applauded in the liberal press because the old Bourbon king Charles X had been seen as controlled by the Jesuits. The old king was ridiculed in the press for trying to unify the monarchy and the Catholic Church.[380] Yet, the 1830 rupture between the state and the Catholic Church did not signify a decrease in religiousness in France as we have seen in the case of Frédéric Ozanam and as we will see in this section.

I focus here on biographies and ask how Clotilde and other Saint Merovingian queens were presented there as role models, and how these works were used as didactic tools. What special features did biographies, and especially collective biographies, have in the early nineteenth century? I have chosen the biographies because they were a highly popular genre in the early nineteenth century and many of them focused more than other genres on the Merovingian saint queens. The religious aspect of the (French) queenship was strongly present in many collective biographies. Reading was perceived to influence strongly women especially, so they were encouraged to read only "morally" righteous books such as devotional literature.[381] Yet, biographies were especially popular among female readers.

The relationship between (collective) biographies and historiography can be problematic, as the historian Alison Booth has argued in her study *How to Make it as a Woman?* (2004). According to Booth, many collective biographies were more historiographical than individual biographies, although the collective ones were also often partial and unreliable. The collective biographies both aimed to improve reader's character and to give the reader further knowledge about history. The problem of collective biographies was that they relied heavily on secondary sources.[382] Booth has argued that biographical history of women was more unreliable than that of men. She has examined mostly collective biographies written in English from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and I argue that in the early nineteenth-century French collective biographies there were no major quality

[379] Franconie 2009, 107-108.
[380] Chacón 1988-1990, 2,4.
[381] See, for example, Mainardi 2003, 154 on how dangerous reading of novels was perceived to be for a nineteenth-century woman.
[382] Booth 2004, 10.

differences between histories written about men and those about women, especially the former. According to Booth, in her material most biographers writing collective treatises were men, but in my material approximately half of the biographers were women.[383] Besides text books, the collective biographies were the closest to "academic" historiography that women were permitted to write in the nineteenth century.[384]

I use as a representative example of collective biographies a work that was published in 1847, entitled *Galerie des Femmes celebres, depuis le Ier siècle de l'ère chrétienne jusqu'au XVIe siècle.*[385] Joséphine Amory de Langerack was the author of this comprehensive collection of famous women's lives.[386] The history of famous women was popular and perceived as suitable topic for female historians along with educational themes, so it is quite difficult to say whether the themes were Langerack's choice or whether she was obliged to concentrate on them if she wished to publish. Nothing about her besides her age is known. The only source seems to be the writer of the introduction of *Galerie*, Pierre-Michel-François Chevalier (1812-1863), who was also a historian and a writer. Langerack was quite a popular author in her time, as there are over 40 entries in her name in the collections of the French national library.

Biography, individual and collective, was the branch of historiography in which Clotilde was still perceived as a "queen of France" in the early nineteenth century.[387] Gabrielle de Paban, for example, was the author of one such work where Clotilde was named a queen of France. Her work was called *Année des Dames*[388] (1820). De Paban's work is in the form of an almanac, which might seem surprising to a twenty-first-century reader, but in the nineteenth century almanacs were among

[383] Booth 2004, 55.
[384] In collective biographies female biographers could examine serious topics such as religion and history. Booth 2004, 28.
[385] "Galery of Famous Women, from the First Century of the Christian Era to the the Sixteenth Century"
[386] The biographies did not appear only during the Restoration, as one biography of Clotilde by Sophie de Renneville (1772-1822) was published in 1809. It was entitled *Vie de Sainte Clotilde, reine de France, femme du grand Clovis* ("Life of Saint Clotilde, Queen of France, Wife of the Great Clovis"). This work about Saint Clotilde was written in a similar style to the later works published in the 1840s. The work of Sophie de Renneville was not, strictly speaking, a historiographical work, but was written as moral instruction for young people. The book presented features which separated it from later works, such as naming the early medieval people "French" instead of Franks. Renneville 1809, 13. The work started with the author's declaration that Clotilde converted her husband Clovis to Christianity. This work seems to have been highly popular as it was, according to the French national library, reprinted almost 20 times in the nineteenth century. Did it also function as a model for later "Vies"? Louis Marie Prudhomme, who published a collective biography of famous women in 1830, mentioned this work in Clotilde's biography. Prudhomme 1830 (II), 178.
[387] There were also collective biographies where Clotilde was not seen as a "queen of France" and these works will be examined in the following chapters.
[388] "Ladies' Year"

the most popular literary genres.[389] Another collective biography using similar rhetoric about Clotilde was published in 1830 by Louis-Marie Prudhomme, who had already published various works during the Revolution.[390] The author, or authors, of *Biographie universelle et historique des femmes célèbres mortes ou vivantes*[391] are unknown.[392] It was exceptional in that only the publisher was named, but Prudhomme, on the other hand, seems to have been famous in his field. He was politically active in the 1790s, and he wrote several articles favouring the Revolution when it began. After the Restoration he returned to his profession of bookseller.[393] Despite his own activity during the years of the Revolution and mentioning heroic revolutionary actions in *Biographie*, he did not show excessive criticism of past queens. He seemed, however, to value the French heroines of the Revolution higher than the French queens, who appeared as foreigners and who had received bad influences from their kingdoms of origin, according to his *Biographie*.[394] The French heroines knew how to act and behave, whereas the queens in France did not always know the French way of how women should behave.

It is noteworthy that Langerack's biographies were more detailed than the biographies in de Paban's and Prudhomme's works. Each biography in Langerack's work was almost 20 pages long, which made them significantly longer than those in many other collective biographies.[395] Langerack arranged the women differently than de Paban or Prudhomme. In the earliest work women were ordered according to the calendar date on which they died, while in the second they were in alphabetical order and in Langerack's work they appeared in chronological order of reign.

Langerack and Prudhomme chose to present a variety of women in their collective biographies, not just exemplary women. Chevalier wrote in the introduction to Langerack's work that the women were not chosen for their reputation, but the work included "[…] a selection of biographies of all kinds of women".[396] In other words, the writer included all sorts of women without trying to "soften" their image.[397] She was thus less discriminating than de Paban had been 27 years earlier in choosing which women to present. In contrast to Langerack, De Paban had only chosen to include

[389] Smith Allen 1991, 48. Almanacs were popular, but not those containing short biographies of famous women. In English speaking areas lives of famous women in almanacs were rather rare as well. Booth 2004, 41.
[390] For example, in 1791 he published Louise Félicité Guinément de Keralio Robert's work *Les crimes des reines de France, depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie-Antoinette.*
[391] "Universal and Historical Biography of Famous Women, both Dead and Living"
[392] The writers are named as *Une société de gens de Lettres, auteurs du dictionnaire universel*. Is it possible that Prudhomme was in fact the writer?
[393] "Louis-Marie Prudhomme": http://data.bnf.fr/12239382/louis-marie_prudhomme/ accessed July 22 2015.
[394] See, for example, the biography of Queen Marie Antoinette. Prudhomme 1830, 408.
[395] In Prudhomme's work the biographies were less than two pages long and in Paban's work less than a page.
[396] Chevalier 1847, XV. "un choix de biographies des femmes de toute nature."
[397] According to Ernot, this feature distinguished Langerack from her contemporary female writers. Ernot 2006, 78-9.

"exemplary" women. In 1847 Chevalier highlighted the national value of biographies in "immortalising the great men"[398] but more than twenty years earlier the national aspect was more implicit than evident in de Paban's work.

The gender historian Bonnie G. Smith has argued (1984) that the cult of great men inspired women in the early nineteenth century to write about famous queens, heroines and saints, following the model of Boccaccio's (d. 1375) *De claris mulieribus*.[399] Christine de Pizan (d. 1430) was one of the most important medieval authors of women's lives and she was widely read in France. Gabrielle de Paban's motives in writing the biographies was mentioned at the beginning of the work *Année des dames*. [400] According to her, no similar work had yet been written about women, even though there were several about famous men.[401] Smith's argument is thus exemplified by de Paban, although she did not mention Boccaccio, instead referring to works such as to *Vies des Saints, Éphémérides des Braves* and *Annuaire des grands Hommes*.[402] Prudhomme seemed to have the same motivation even though he did not mention de Paban or her works.

The early nineteenth century thus witnessed the blossoming of collective biographies about famous women. For example, already in 1804 Fortunée Briquet (1782–1815) published *Dictionnaire historique, littéraire et bibliographique des Françaises et des étrangères naturalisées en France*[403], which is a dictionary focusing on accomplished French women, excluding women such as the early medieval queens. Of course there had been female authors well before the nineteenth century. After Christine de Pizan, in the seventeenth century, for example, Madeleine de Scudéry published on famous women.[404] The blossoming of the collective biographies in the nineteenth century did not last very long, as the French historian Isabelle Ernot (2002) has remarked. According to Ernot, the genre of women's collective biographies almost completely disappeared in the 1860s. There were several reasons for the loss of popularity; as noted, biographies were mainly based on secondary sources and the new historiographical discourse of the 1850s discredited this method, emphasising the use of primary sources. Both the number of biographies on famous women and women's

[398] Chevalier 1847, XI. "[…] s'immortalisent par les grands hommes […]."
[399] Smith 1984, 714. Boccaccio took his model from Antiquity, from the works of Plutarch, see Booth 2004, 2.
[400] Paban also published another almanac similar to the earlier one in 1823, so the first presumably achieved some popularity. The later almanac, however, did not mention the Merovingian queens. Paban 1823.
[401] Paban 1820 (I), avertissement.
[402] Paban, 1820 (I), avertissement. Paban did not give any further information about these works, which were probably also almanac-type works concentrating on famous men. "Vies des Saints" may refer to *Acta Sanctorum*. David Bell has listed in his *Cult of Nation in France, Inventing Nationalism* 1680-1800 some of the best known collective biographies of famous men written in the eighteenth century, but none of them matches with those listed by Paban. Bell 2001, 113.
[403] "Historical, Biographic, and Literary Dictionary of the French and Naturalised French Women"
[404] Booth 2004, 26. Scudéry's work *Les femmes illustres ou les harangues héroïques* (1642) was also translated into English and according to Booth, the English collective biographies took the French ones as their role models.

political opportunities diminished in the later nineteenth century despite the ideas of equality promoted in 1848.[405] Yet again a revolution had created an opportunity to improve women's access to the political sphere and yet again such increases in equality as there were applied only to men.

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Clotilde was identified in Langerack's work as "Sainte Clotilde, Reine de France".[406] The devotional tone of the work is highlighted by the first biography in the work, that of Virgin Mary. The writer set Clotilde in "Gaul" even though she was presented as "queen of France". Clotilde was the only one of the Merovingian queens who was not "in France". According to Langerack, France already existed by Radegonde's time as she lived there.[407] A possible explanation for this controversial presentation was the writer's desire to emphasise the place of Christianity in French history. Langerack wrote that "[d]ivine protection was thus upon our princes; the first queen of France was a saint!"[408] So Clotilde's sainthood guaranteed divine protection for "our princes". Clotilde's position as the first queen and a saint was highlighted by positioning her in "Gaul", which implied paganism in Langerack's historical imagination. Christianity, according to Langerack, can thus be interpreted as the single most important factor in transforming "Gaul" into the kingdom of France; when Clotilde Christianised Gaul, she created France.[409] In this work Clotilde was given a role for the readers to follow and this religious role coincides with the general Catholic revival of the 1840s.

The concept of "queen of France" was more multi-dimensional for Langerack than it had been for de Paban or Prudhomme, who also used this title for Clotilde. Langerack did not emphasise Clotilde as a king's wife but as a religious, Catholic agent and as the initiator of French Christian culture and history. The writer discarded all negative features of Clotilde's character and the vindictiveness mentioned by both de Paban and Prudhomme had no place in this history. Clotilde had lost all her human foibles and had become a mythical saint, a prototype for queenship.

Besides Clotilde, other queens of France from the Merovingian period in Langerack's work were Radegonde, Fredegonde and Bathilde. Especially in Radegonde's biography it is clear that queenship was imagined as an ahistorical institution.[410] Langerack depicted Clothar I, Radegonde's

[405] Ernot 2006, 83-84.
[406] Langerack 1847, 109. Clotilde's biography p. 109-126.
[407] Langerack 1847, 139.
[408] Langerack 1847, 126. "La protection divine était donc à nos princes; la première reine de France fut une sainte !"
[409] Langerack stated that paganism did not start to disappear before the sixth century. Langerack 1847, 109.
[410] Langerack 1847, 139-152.

husband, as a victorious "monarch" who wanted to "share his throne" with Radegonde.[411] Langerack's basic idea can be summarised as one king, one queen, one kingdom, one God. By defining Radegonde as a queen of France the author did not write history but created it to suit her (or her readers' and publishers') religious and moral views. Unlike in de Paban's or Prudhomme's work, here sainthood was the first factor that defined Clotilde, Radegonde and Bathilde. Sainthood complemented "earthly" queenship and made it more worthy. Determinism[412] played an important role in the history of France for Langerack, because according to her, it was no coincidence that the "first queen of France", Clotilde, was a saint. This was predestined by (the Catholic) God, who was in Langerack's works an active agent in history. According to the French historian Jean Leduc (2010), French historiography was long marked by providentialism, a belief that God guided the direction of historical events. Even though Leduc refers to Old Regime historiography in his article, I argue that the providentialism was visible in Langerack's work, and in many of her contemporary historians' works such as in Frantin's *Annales de moyen âge* (1825), because she clearly saw God as guiding Clotilde. [413] Both of these works further highlight that the religiousness did not disappear after the 1820s despite the changes in formal relationship between the monarchy and the Catholic Church.

Clotilde was a queen of France because she was a Christian. She was made a role model for future queens, both in her own time, as Langerack presented her, and in the nineteenth century. Langerack's interpretation of Clotilde did not differ very much from a later interpretation made of Marie Amelie, queen of the French during the July Monarchy. As noted, in a biography written in the 1860s Marie Amelie was depicted as very similar to the saint queen, as a devoted mother and most of all, as completely uninterested in politics.[414] There was no direct connection between these two biographies, but the similarities suggest that the bourgeois ideal of women bound to the intimate sphere of society applied both to women living in the nineteenth-century and to the historical queens as represented in contemporary historiography. The ideal of the apolitical queen was also promoted by Jules Dubern, who wrote a collective biography on French queens (1837).[415]

By applying the expression "queen of France" to the Merovingian period, authors such as Langerack apparently wanted to convince their readers that France as a coherent kingdom had already existed in the early Middle Ages. To use the expression in this context was to take sides in

[411] Langerack 1847, 140.
[412] On the concept of determinism in historiography, see Ritter 1986, 104.
[413] Leduc 2010, 716.
[414] Chaalons d'Argé 1868, 1 & passim.
[415] Dubern 1837 (I), 6.

the debate about when France and the French monarchy were born. By naming the early medieval queens "queens of France", Langerack created a firmer link between the French monarchy and Catholicism. Not everyone followed this line, of course: for example, to Prudhomme Clovis' Christian faith did not define the French monarchy in the same way as it did in many other collective biographies. [416] Langerack's collective biography indicates the strong connection between the Catholic Church and the French queens, among them, in their historical imagination, the Merovingian queens.

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In 1848 Caroline Falaize published an interesting biography of Clotilde.[417] Falaize's work was clearly a religious, almost a hagiographical biography, as the name *Clotilde, ou le Triomphe du christianisme chez les Francs* indicates. Falaize's and Langerack's works represent the same genre of devotional literature, and they were published in successive years. However, the authors represent different generations, as Falaize was born almost 40 years before Langerack. The difference in generations between Falaize and Langerack does not appear in their interpretations of history in the same way that it was reflected in the works of Philippe Antoine Merlin and Édouard Laboulaye, who both wrote about the queen's role and power in the French monarchy. Despite the difference in age, Langerack and Falaize had more in common than Falaize had in common with Adélaïde Celliez[418] (1801-1890), who was from the same generation as her and published a collective biography on French queens at approximately the same time as Langerack. Both Falaize and Celliez presented a very positive image of Clotilde in their collective biographies. Moreover, Celliez made historiographical inquiries about the queens and did not just create stories and narratives. The establishing of academic historiography had clearly influenced her way of writing her collective biography on famous women. As noted, historians born before or during the Revolution often had more tolerant and secular ideas about historical female rulers. However, this did not apply directly to the above-mentioned biographers. It is important to remember that liberal historiography was not the only way of writing history in France from the 1820s to the 1840s, as a more conservative Catholic interpretation of the history of France also existed. A possible gender

[416] Prudhomme 1830 (II), 177-8.
[417] About Falaize, see also Larousse 1872 (VIII), 61.
418 Celliez 1851. Celliez was and is a little known writer, even though she published many biographies of French, Spanish and Portuguese queens. She is not to be confused with Adélaïde Hélène Joséphine Charlotte Celliez, comtesse de Rossi (1778-1822) who was a teacher and an author of *Les Anciens et les Français, ou Véritables Beautés de l'histoire de France et des Bourbons* (1822). The younger Celliez was also a historiena and pedagogue, and she published works such as *Histoire du Paraguay* (1841), *Les Reines d'Espagne, suivies des reines de Portugal* (1856), and *Du Suicide, mémoire couronné par l'Académie des sciences, belles-lettres et arts de Besançon* (1838).

division can be identified here as well, as the liberal historiography appears to have been largely intended for a male audience and the Catholic interpretation largely for a female audience.

Both the *historiennes* and the women these female authors wrote about were somewhat exceptional individuals. As Smith has detailed in another study (1998), the extraordinary women who were chosen to star in the historical novels or religious biographies could be called "the women worthy", "whose histories offered more identities and demonstrated unparalleled superiority."[419] Clotilde was such a woman who offered more identities than women in nuclear families. A good example of a woman who was *not* regarded as a woman worthy is Queen Fredegonde. Not one author chose her as the central character of a historical novel or wrote a book or even an essay about her besides Augustin Thierry who made her one of the main characters in his *Récits des temps mérovingiens*. Brunehilde was not really considered a "woman worthy" either, because there is only one novel where she had a role, and a minor role at that. In Thierry's *Récits* she had also a visible role because the whole work rested heavily on Gregory of Tours' *Ten Books*, which described the actions of Brunehilde and Fredegonde in some detail. Most often all three Merovingian queens, Clotilde, Brunehilde, and Fredegonde were included in larger biographical collections, but entire books were published only about the saint queens, with the exception of Thierry's above mentioned work. This was because Thierry was not looking for role models as many female historians were, but sought an authentic image and colours of the Merovingian period.

Falaize used both the attributes "queen of France" and "queen of the Franks" of Clotilde. These attributes were not necessarily contradictory and they were used together in order to emphasise Clotilde's meaning and role in French history. "Queen of France"[420] did not refer to her role as a king's wife but to her role in the Christianisation of France, as in Langerack's work. Falaize constantly emphasised how Clotilde converted the Franks, not the French, to Christianity. Calling Clotilde later in the work "queen of the Franks" was related to this interpretation of conversion, where Clotilde was the active agent and initiator of the Christianisation. In the timeline of the biography, she was called "queen of the Franks" only after Clovis died in 511, when all the Franks had (supposedly) been converted to Christianity along with their king.[421] Clotilde then started to rule over the *Christian* Franks. The writer did not describe Clotilde as ruling in the sense of making

[419] Smith 1998, 51.
[420] Falaize 1848, 19. In her devotional biography, *Vie de sainte Bathilde, reine de France*, published in 1847, Elisabeth Brun gave a similar picture of Bathilde as Falaize did of Clotilde.
[421] The idea of "mass" conversion was Falaize's own. According to modern historians, there were no unitary "mass" conversions in early medieval Europe, but this kind of conversion suited Falaize's historical narrative.

decisions about taxes or war, but ruling morally as a good (nineteenth-century) queen should do. So according to Falaize, by converting the Franks to Christianity, Clotilde became their queen.

The representations of Clotilde, and all the other women who appeared in leading roles in the devotional biographies, offered several lessons to the bourgeois and upper class girls for whom most of the devotional and moral biographies were intended. Clotilde was a figure with whom the young readers could, and should, identify themselves. Especially towards the middle of the century and after, Clotilde was used to inspire women to play the same role as she had done with her husband: to guide the "unfaithful" husband towards the arms of the Catholic Church.[422] Already Gabrielle de Paban had emphasised the Catholic interpretation of the first Christian king Clovis' conversion in her biography of his wife Clotilde by writing that "Clotilde converted him with her virtues, spirit and prayers."[423] Here the author offered agency to female readers by representing Clotilde as a religious agent. This is interesting, because historian Rebecca Rogers has argued that in the 1820s some educational books for girls emphasised women's role especially as "agents of civilisation" in educating their family and children. It seems that this is the role given to Clotilde as well in many biographies. [424] Falaize chose Clotilde most likely because she was a saint, a queen, and could be represented as an ideal woman. The rise in the importance of the bourgeois class in nineteenth-century France saw a change in how women were imagined and idealised. Following the Romantic Movement, women became the ideal "good", highlighted in various literature works. An adjunct of this ideal was the sharp separation of genders, which signified that (upper class) women lost even that bit of equality they might have had with men in the Old Regime.[425] The ideal of a submissive, apolitical, asexual, religious, civilised, and devoted mother and wife was very visible in the images of the early medieval saint queens in biographical works.[426] Indeed, as Édouard Laboulaye wanted to emphasise in his work about women's history (1843), this was the image of an ideal queen since, following his arguments, a queen was a mere wife of a king, not an active public person.

[422] Amalvi 2011, 29.
[423] Paban 1820 (I), 218. "Clotilde le convertit par ses vertus, son esprit et ses prières."
[424] Rogers 2005, 51.
[425] Moses 1984, 17-18.
[426] "Prayers, tenderness, laments, caresses" were the instructions for a Catholic woman in the nineteenth century on how to influence public life (de Giorgio 1993, 168) and these were also the "weapons" that Clotilde was said to have used. But even the idea of a "love marriage" could be a threat to young girls' chastity and if the literary work even resembled a novel, it could be banned as "corruptive". De Giorgio 1993, 179-182. According to de Giorgio, in the nineteenth century a woman was considered to function best as a wife and as a mother, submissive and in self denial, just like Clotilde in many descriptions. De Giorgio 1993, 172-3.

Women were not considered to need a higher education (formal *instruction*), as their intellectual skills were perceived as inferior to men's. In other words, women were not educated and when compared with well educated men, they were perceived as less intellectual.[427] The biographies included no political history or complex issues, only "morally" righteous interpretations. To return to Queens Fredegonde and Bathilde, two women whom many nineteenth-century historians perceived to be from ambiguous social background; it is possible to see a difference.[428] Bathilde was perceived as civilised because she was pictured as behaving, even without formal instruction, as a good mother and a devoted wife, thus fulfilling the criteria for female education. Many biographies, individual and collective, implied that she had the highly valued capacities in her, *naturally* one could say, whereas Fredegonde only had a lack of positive capabilities. Yet the perceived *natural* capabilities were very contradictory. According to Eliane Gubin (2007), in the nineteenth century the *natural* capabilities needed to be taught and highlighted on every page of a work, even though they were seen as uniting women from different classes.[429]

It is worth repeating that girls' education was intended to make them good wives because marriage was the destiny for most women in France in the nineteenth century.[430] The importance of marriage for girls was reinforced in historiography and especially in its biographical branch. Yet marriage, as well as education, varied depending on social class. The lawyer and journalist Jules Duval (1813–1870), one of the founders of the learned society *The Society of Aveyron for Letters, Sciences and Arts*[431] argued in a review that couples from lower social classes living together and having children without official matrimonial ties formed a major social and moral problem in the July Monarchy.[432] Perceived as moral decadence, the girls from the bourgeois classes were strongly discouraged from having such a union in religious and moral biographies, including the biographies of the early medieval queens. The concubines or wives of early medieval (polygamous)

[427] See Gubin 2007, 15-18. Also Mayeur 1979, 15-47 passim.
[428] Among the early nineteenth-century authors there was no unanimity about the background of Bathilde. Some authors such as Langerack saw her as of royal background and some authors such as Celliez and Frantin either did not mention anything of her being of a royal background or openly doubted the story of her royal background. See Langerack 1847, 199; Frantin 1825 (V), 194; Celliez 1851, 132.
[429] Gubin 2007, 15.
[430] According to Suzanne Hillman, the famous author Germaine de Staël saw that happiness in marriage was the greatest bliss a woman could achieve and a woman's life could not be complete without a marriage. However, De Staël did not see the statement as also applying to herself, only to other women. Hillman 2011, 12. In the nineteenth century, most girls got their education either at home or in a religious institution, even though more and more secular schools for girls opened. Mayeur 1979, 84-85.
[431] *Société des lettres, sciences et arts de l'Aveyron*
[432] Duval 1840, 265-324, especially 296. The review was entitled "Du progrès social au profit des classes populaires non indigentes; Par M. de Lafarelle, ancien magistrat, avocat de la cour royale de Nîmes". He especially opposed Saint-Simonianism, which he saw as wholly immoral. On marriage in France during the nineteenth century, see also Moses 1984, 23-4 & passim.

kings were not ignored – quite the opposite - they were highlighted to stress the period's decadent nature and to emphasise the saintliness of queens such as Clotilde and Radegonde. [433] For many bourgeois or upper class girls the common law marriages of the poor workers were not an option, even if they knew about such things.

Even though marriage and motherhood were the preferred goals for girls in any social class, the ideal image of a woman's life neglected the fact that a number of women never married, for various reasons, and that these women were most often the poorest and they struggled to survive.[434] This reality only rarely found its way into biographies, although they did reflect the importance of marriage in French nineteenth-century society. Many biographers granted Clotilde the role of a religious agent in their works. These works were often written, explicitly or implicitly, for the education of young girls. Authors used saint women like Clotilde as role models that promoted the bourgeois ideal of a woman whose primary functions were focused on her family and religion.

The tumultuous era of the July Monarchy started with the separation of the state and the Catholic Church which officially marked the end of the era of a monarchy trying to imitate the Old Regime. But as we have seen, the religious aspect in history of France continued to blossom in biographies aimed for female readers. Clotilde and other Merovingian Saints were especially popular in works coinciding with the Catholic revival. Yet, the Restoration period was not devoid of works of the saint queens, as we will see next.

2.5. Saint Queens in Historical Fiction

The historical novel started to evolve into its modern form in the early decades of the nineteenth century, following the success of the Scottish author Walter Scott's (1771–1832) novels.[435] In France this was a genre popular among all readers, women and men, even though novels were often perceived as more dangerous, more corruptive and immoral reading than (collective) biographies.[436] However, the historical novel provided a possibility for the reading public to understand and learn

[433] No doubt nineteenth-century (upper class) men also had mistresses, but these women were hidden behind the facade of ideal families.
[434] Moses 1984, 20-39 & passim.
[435] For a discussion about Walter Scott and the historical novel, see also Evans 2014, 125-126, 129.
[436] Often (collective) biographies were perceived as more educational than novels, which were perceived to be for entertainment only. Booth 2004, 50.

about history before it was widely taught in schools.[437] The historical novel as a genre changed considerably following the publication of Scott's novels, such as Waverley (1814), Rob Roy (1817), Ivanhoe (1819) and Quentin Durward (1823). The first two novels are located in the eighteenth century, whereas Ivanhoe takes place in the late twelfth century and Quentin Durward in the late fifteenth century. Scott's works were translated into many languages, including French, Rob Roy and Ivanhoe almost within a year of their first publication.[438]

Along with devotional biographies, the historical novel was a genre where saint queens such as Clotilde, Radegonde and Bathilde were in the spotlight. I have found five historical novels that depict the Merovingian saint queens (and some other Merovingian queens as well).[439] All these works were published in the Restoration period, before the July Revolution of 1830. I have not found any historical novels focusing on the Merovingian period published between 1830 and 1848.[440] Obviously there were novels about other French queens as well, but here I shall focus solely on novels about the Merovingian queens. The five historical novels are by Julie Candeille (1814), Alexandrine Bonaparte (1820), Augustine Gottis (1823), Emil André (1828) and Amable Tastu (1829). The blossoming of the historical novels in the 1820s is due to the popularity of Walter Scott's novels, but I have not identified any clear reason why, with the exception of Augustin Thierry's, there were no more historical novels about the Merovingian queens during the July Monarchy.

In 1814 Julie Candeille (1767-1834), who was a well known composer, singer, actress and author, and who had published a highly popular opera *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*[441] in 1792, published a novel entitled *Bathilde, reine des Francs, roman historique*.[442] Candeille mostly produced plays and operas for the stage, but *Bathilde* seems to be a novel, although it is possible that the work was originally meant for the stage.[443] Candeille's work had features from the emerging historical research and this demonstrates well the way the genres of novel and historical research were not yet

[437] Hamnett 2011, 5.
[438] Rob Roy in 1818 and Ivanhoe in 1820, both translated by Auguste Jean Baptiste Defauconpret.
[439] In addition to these works, there are, for example, the plays of Népomucène Lemercier (1771-1840), *Brunehaut, or les successeurs de Clovis* (1811) and *Clovis* (1820). Simonde de Sismondi also published a historical novel in 1822, entitled *Julia Severa, ou l'An quatre cent quatre vingt douze* (Julia Severa, or the year four hundred and ninety-two).
[440] Augustin Thierry's *Récits des temps mérovingiens* (1840) could be included in the group of historical novels as well, but I have decided to examine it in other chapters of my thesis because contemporaries did not regard it fully as a historical novel.
[441] "Catherine, or the Beautiful Farmer"
[442] "Bathilde, Queen of the Francs, Historical Novel"
[443] Candeille wrote several plays. It is of course possible that Candeille chose to write a novel instead of a play, but it is clear that the novel focuses more on people than on the milieu, which signifies that it was not a so-called new historical novel. Candeille appears not to have written so-called serious historiography about the Merovingian period, or any period.

separated. History was still perceived as a form of literature, as it had been in the eighteenth century. There were a lot of sources and notes in Candeille's work, which was not uncommon in historical novels of this period.[444] The sources were there to give a historical appearance to the text, rather than to convince the reader of the accuracy of the content. In addition to the footnotes, subtexts such as chronicles or historical studies[445] gave references to actual historical events, so that the reader could identify them. [446]

In the novel Julie Candeille described not only Bathilde's good works and saintly nature but tragedy involving "forbidden passions", "carnal desires" and "sinful actions". Candeille pictured Saint Léger, the seventh-century bishop of Autun, as desperately in love with Bathilde, whose husband Clovis II was mentally ill, while she was having a forbidden love affair with the mayor of the palace, Erchinoald (in the book, Archambault). The result of this affair was Thierry, a future Merovingian king. Candeille thus implied very explicitly that Thierry was not a Merovingian but an ancestor of the Carolingian rulers, as the mayors of the palace were the forefathers of the future Carolingian kings. It is, however, impossible to know whether this was a political statement of a sort, or whether it was simply a twist in the plot. The focus in Candeille's work was on the persons rather than on the *milieu* or the period. Bathilde is pictured in this works as an ideal woman which is, according to Candeille, humble and willing to learn but not too smart.[447]

At this point it is important to discuss the historical novel in more depth. Although the historical novel had been popular before the nineteenth century, it was not until the early years of that century that the so called modern historical novel was born and became highly popular among large numbers of readers all around Europe. For example, in 1775 a historical novel entitled *Frédégonde et Brunehaut, roman historique* by Jacques Marie Boutet de Monvel was published. [448] Though the author made some references to historical sources such as Gregory of Tours' *Ten Books*, the plot did not follow actual historical events and the historical context was only mentioned briefly as background. It is, however, interesting that this novel was about Brunehilde and Fredegonde, as no novel was written about these two queens in the first half of the nineteenth century. This may not be significant, but it is still remarkable.

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[444] For example, in the novels of Walter Scott there were a lot of notes; in *Ivanhoe* there were ten pages of endnotes.
[445] Candeille referred to Velly, to Adrien Baillet's *Vie de Saint Denis*, *Mémoires de l'Académie*, *Histoire de la vie privée des français* (Legrand d'Aussy), to Henri Sauval (1623-1676), to David Hume, to Michel Félibien's (1666-1719) *Histoire de Ville de Paris* etc.
[446] Ullgren 2001. See also Ihonen 1986, 157. The historical novel itself is the "second texts" in Ihonen's article.
[447] Candeille 1814(I), 89-90.
[448] Footnotes in novels were by no means a new invention, and there were also footnotes in Boutet de Monvel's historical novel.

The early nineteenth century marked a new era in the genre of the historical novel because the authors began to focus more on the context and milieu and show more historical insight. The plot was no longer the only important aspect of the novels, which began to show an awareness of historical epoch in their descriptions. The interaction between the historical novel and the emerging academic history was undeniably visible in the novels describing the saint Merovingian queens. Indeed, it is not always clear how to distinguish historical fiction from historical research in the period prior to the 1840s, even though it is clear that many male historians were trained in classical languages and often in law. The definition of a historical novel is still, in the twenty-first century, under debate among researchers. According to the British historian Brian Hamnett, the biggest difference between a novelist and a historian is that the novelist invents. In a historical novel historical characters are placed in fictional settings with fictional characters. The line between fiction and history has many gradations and shades.[449] The American literature theorist Dorrit Cohn has stated that "knowing" a historical person's, or anyone's, thoughts without documentation is one feature peculiar to fiction.[450] The argument is very interesting as it was quite common in early nineteenth-century academic historiography to "know" what the Merovingian queens thought, even if there was no contemporary documentation of it whatsoever.[451]

This last point shows how much the idea of what can be known, or how knowledge is defined, has changed since the early nineteenth century. In the past impossible things could be imagined as a part of history, and written as a part of history, where they could affect how possibility and impossibility would be defined.[452] According to another perspective, historical novels focus on an individual character's point of view of history more than historical research, in which the communal perspective and larger structural explanations are more widespread.[453] Early nineteenth-century historical novels and historical research both focused heavily on individuals and their actions in history, whereas not many works concentrated on the large structures of history.

In Candeille's case the definition as a historical novel is easy, because she gave her works that name herself in the subtitle.[454] Regarding the historical novel and historical fiction theory it would,

[449] Hamnett 2011, 3, 34-5. About the definition of historical novel, see also Ihonen 1986, 156.
[450] Cohn (1999) 2006, 179.
[451] For example, regarding Clotilde's feelings when Clovis wanted to marry her, see how Hugo described the event in 1837, (II), 41. According to Hugo, Clotilde was "surprised and happy", "étonnée et joyeuse".
[452] Salmi 2001, 180.
[453] Salmi 2004, 160.
[454] In works such in Louis Antoine François de Marchangy's (d. 1826) *Gaule poétique* the definition is more problematic because of the lack of clear fictional items.

however, be possible to argue that in Candeille's work there are no real historical persons but only their fictive representations. Or as in Dorrit Cohn's study, historical figures are "immigrants" from the fictive world (taken from the real world) and "counterparts of the real world".[455] As all the representations are fictive in the historical novel, because of the intentions of the authors, there is no point in trying to evaluate the historical accuracy of the representations.[456] Even though many "serious" historians "invented", for example, Clotilde's thoughts their works are rarely classified as historical fiction.

It is generally accepted that today's distinction between fiction and what is perceived as truthful in historiography did not exist in the eighteenth century or earlier. Did it exist by the time Candeille wrote her books? The eighteenth century model died hard in historiography. The distinction between fiction and truth was created by readers whether they perceived the genres as fiction or not. In Candeille's work there were elements that contemporary readers probably did not consider truthful, for example, a passionate love between two saints.[457] The question is not black and white - works perceived as factual could include fictive elements (fictive in the eyes of contemporary readers) and fictive works always included factual elements.

Classifying early nineteenth-century works as different literary genres is not simple because the works often had features from various genres. This was the case with the works published by *mesdames* Bonaparte and Gottis. Alexandrine Bonaparte's work was entitled *Batilde, Reine des Francs, poëme en dix chants, avec des notes*[458] (1820). Lack of information about an author of their period is common, and there are several historians and authors in the early nineteenth century of whom almost nothing is known, Josephine Amory de Langerack being one of them. Nevertheless, her works demonstrate that she was an educated woman who had access to various types of literature and sources.

It appears that the work, *Batilde, Reine des Francs, poëme en dix chants, avec des notes*, was Alexandrine Bonaparte's only published historiographical work.[459] It has two parts, a poem and very

[455] Terence Parsons and Ruth Rone in Cohn (1999) 2006, 176.
[456] Ullgren 2001.
[457] Saint Bathilde and Saint Léger. Candeille 1814 (II), 5. Interestingly, the two volumes of Candeille's works are very different; the first one presents a very chaste and humble Bathilde, and the second one an adulterous and impure Bathilde, who had affairs with several men after her husband went insane.
[458] "Bathilde, Queen of the Francs, Poem in Ten Songs"
[459] According to the BNF, she only published one other work entitled *Appel à la justice des contemporains de feu Lucien Bonaparte, en réfutation des assertions de M. Thiers, dans son "Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire"* (An appeal to judgement of the contemporaries of the late Lucien Bonaparte, a refutation of the statement of M. Thiers, in

detailed notes of the period when Bathilde lived. Each note could be up to a page long. The poetic part can be classified under the genre of a historical novel, like the work of Julie Candeille. It seems that the notes are not there only to give credibility to the poems, as in most works of historical fiction, but to discuss the history of France. Through saints' lives, even if in a historical novel, readers learned about history, and in a period when historical imagination was constructed through famous individuals, the saints were the "Great Men" the readers knew from the history of France. In these works the wish to "please the reader" and the desire to instruct him or her co-existed.[460]

The notes in Bonaparte's work prove that she had an interest in the historical research of the Merovingian period and in French history.[461] She referred to many well known historians such as Mézeray, Etienne Pasquier[462], Anquetil and Gregory of Tours.[463] Louis Antoine François de Marchangy's[464] (1782 - 1826) *La Gaule poétique* is also mentioned, as she wrote that she strongly appreciated Marchangy's "nationalistic" tone.[465] Knowing the works of Anquetil, who was still in the early 1820s an authority in French historiography, and Marchangy shows that Bonaparte was well acquainted with contemporary historiography. It is possible that she read about Gregory of Tours and his writings in the histories of Mézeray, Anquetil, or others. There is no proof that she read the *Ten Books* herself and I doubt that this would have been expected of her. She proved, however, to have read Anquetil's work thoroughly, as she wrote that Anquetil seems to have wanted to rehabilitate the "rois fainéants", the "weak kings".[466] Bonaparte stated that she did not see these kings as weak or degenerate, but victims of circumstances: most of them died before the age of

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his 'History of the Consulate and the Empire'.) (1845). Bonaparte mentioned (1820, 249) that she had started another poem as well in 1813, but it is not clear if it was ever published. *Batilde* was dedicated to Cardinal Della Sommaglia, who seems to have been Bonaparte's friend and protector during the tumultuous years of the Restoration. The dedication indicated well for whom the work was intended, and gives a valuable clue to the chosen point of view regarding French history.

[460] The American historian Michael R. Evans has described certain eighteenth-century novels with these words, but I feel that the description applies to these 1820s novels as well. Evans 2014, 127.

[461] The use of notes and references was quite common in the 1820s to bring respectability to historical novels. See Evans 2014, 130-131.

[462] Etienne Pasquier (1529-1615) was a French advocate who concentrated most of his effort on one work, *Les Recherches de la France*, whose first part appeared in 1560. Pasquier's desire was to use various sources and source criticism to prove the "French genie's" superiority over that of other contemporary countries. The work was published several times during the following centuries. Amalvi 2004, 248-9.

[463] Bonaparte 1820, 275, 304, 221, 134.

[464] Marchangy was quite a typical historian-politician of the period: he was a lawyer and a deputy, a supporter of Napoleon who subsequently allied with the ultra Royalists in the 1820s. According to the *Biographie nouvelle des contemporains* from 1823, his work *La Gaule poétique* was well received by the press in 1813 but the audience never truly took to it. It was said in the *Biographie* that Marchangy was a better politician than an author. Arnault & al. 1823 (XII), 403. "New Biography of Contemporaries".

[465] Bonaparte 1820, 43.

[466] This was a name given to the Merovingian kings who lived in the late seventh century, starting from Bathilde's husband Clovis II. The name refers to their domination by the mayors of the palace, ancestors of the future Carolingian rulers. All these kings died very young, which was partly the reason they were seen as "weak" kings.

twenty-five and thus had no time to become strong rulers.[467] This is interesting because in the early nineteenth-century historiography the last Merovingian kings, from the mid-seventh century onwards, were generally seen as weak and degenerate kings who were not worth the historians' time.

Bonaparte mentioned Gregory of Tours briefly. This seems odd at first, because Gregory died (in 594) well before Bathilde was born (in circa 626), but Bonaparte also mentioned Gregory's *Ten Books* in the context of writing about the murderous actions of Fredegonde.[468] The late sixth-century queens Fredegonde and Brunehilde were not mentioned in the poetic part, yet their lives were described in detail in the notes, where there was more information about Fredegonde and Brunehilde than about the other saint queens of the period, Clotilde and Radegonde. Indeed, it seems that Bonaparte did not consider the other saint queens as important as Fredegonde and Brunehilde for Merovingian history, but placed Bathilde in a league of her own, which was highlighted by the parallels drawn between Bathilde and the biblical Ester.[469] Bonaparte did not explain this lack of emphasis on other saint queens of the period.

Augustine Gottis' work *L'abbaye de Saint-Croix, ou Radegonde, reine de France*[470] was published in 1823. As the title indicates, it was a historical novel concentrating on the life of Radegonde, who died in 587. She thus lived almost a hundred years before Bathilde. The work was immense, comprising five volumes, each of which contained more than 200 pages.[471] Gottis referred in her work to *La Gaule poétique* by Marchangy and *Mémoires historiques, critiques et anecdotes des reines et régentes de France*[472] written by Jean-François Dreux du Radier (1714-1780).[473] Gottis made a seeming distinction between fiction and facts by marking historical points with footnotes that read "historique".[474] Either she wanted to show that the story had a historical foundation, or

[467] Bonaparte 1820, 304.
[468] Bonaparte told of the death in a very detailed manner when she wanted to describe Fredegonde's nature, because she ordered the murder of Praetextat, an ally of Brunehilde. "[t]he death of Bishop Prétextat was reported by most of our ancient historians, especially by Saint Gregory of Tours." Bonaparte 1820, 275. "La mort de l'évêque Prétextat est rapportée par la plupart de nos anciens historiens, en particulier par saint Grégoire de Tours." The death of Praetextat as a sign of Fredegonde's cruel nature was later made infamous by Augustin Thierry and several painters. See Effros 2009, 72 & 78.
[469] Bonaparte 1820, 16. For example, Marchangy named Clotilde as the biblical Ester.
[470] "Abbey of Saint Croix, or Radegonde, Queen of France"
[471] One reason why the work was so immense may be that this produced more incomes. According to James Smith Allen, in the early nineteenth century, during the Restoration and July Monarchy, there were cheap lending libraries in Paris that commissioned a lot of multivolume works because they made the most money, as the works were rented one volume at a time. Smith Allen 1991, 45. Perhaps Gottis sold her works to libraries such as these.
[472] "Historical and Critical Memories and Anecdotes of Queens and Regents of France"
[473] Dreux du Radier in Gottis 1823 (V), 18; Marchangy in Gottis 1823 (V), 203-4, 12, 121, 122. Dreux du Radier was an erudite on law and literature. He wrote a lot about kings of France, as well as various dictionaries and pamphlets.
[474] In the fifth tome she had seven footnotes like this. Gottis 1823 (V), 29, 33, 34, 69, 119, 133, 200.

she wanted to separate facts from complete fiction. She might have wanted the reader to know that she *knew* the difference between imagined actions and historiographical facts. The earlier mentioned difference of opinion between Bonaparte and Anquetil on *rois fainéants* shows that authors of historical novels also presented opinions on historiographical questions even though the works of their genre were not generally seen as equally "educational".

There are several fictional characters in Gottis' novel, such as Radegonde's beloved "Raoul". Radegonde was pictured as very virtuous and saintly, just as she was pictured in many other contemporary works. Yet she and other historical characters were very much "immigrants" in the fictional world, because characters like "Raoul" were not based on early nineteenth-century (or any) historical knowledge of the sixth century. The historical "immigrants", such as Radegonde and Clothar I, were very black and white– none of the characters developed in the course of the action, so that they might be better called "archetypes" than characters.

Apart from Radegonde, other Merovingian queens were not mentioned in *L'abbaye de Saint-Crox*, with one exception, the curious "immigrant", Nantilde. Nantilde (d. 642) was one of Dagobert I's (Fredegonde's grandson's) wives and the mother of Clovis II, Bathilde's husband. Radegonde, who died in 587, was not, therefore, her strict contemporary. Nantilde was rarely mentioned in nineteenth-century historiography as very little was (and is) known about her. Often when she was mentioned, she was depicted as a positive figure, but not in Gottis' work. There she appears as a scheming mistress of Clothar I, ambitious and promiscuous.[475] She was the opposite of the morally pure Radegonde. Whereas Radegonde was pictured as sexually abstinent, Nantilde had "fallen" to Clothar's carnal charms. Nantilde was thus the negative mirror for Radegonde's goodness and a moral warning about extramarital love affairs. The black and white vision of moral values suggests that the work's readership was mostly female and that the central figure was chosen to be a venerated saint in the Catholic Church. She was a good example of the victory of virtue in an otherwise "degenerate" era. As seen in Anquetil's interpretation of Clovis and Clotilde, the juxtaposition of "high" and "low" was often set in the Merovingian period – the venerated birth of a Christian monarchy was pictured as co-existing with the much criticised weak kings and ambitious (= negative) queens. Radegonde represented the "high" and Nantilde the "low" element in the story created by Gottis.

[475] See, for example, Gottis (III), 223.

The emphasis on strict moral codes was not unique to some historical novels. The historian Patricia Mainardi has studied the "marital literature" of the 1820s and according to her, lack of trust in readers' deductive capabilities is very apparent there. This feature is also evident in many devotional biographies and in some historical novels that I have studied. However, marital literature can be divided into two categories, one directed to women and one to men. Mainardi has written that "[I]n general, the literature directed to women was didactic, moralizing, and utterly humorless, while that directed to men was cynical, sardonic, witty, and amoral."[476] Mainardi gave as an example of women's "marital literature" Madame Pariset's *Manuel de la maîtresse de maison, ou Lettres sur l'économie domestique*[477] (1821) which included, for example, recipes.[478] Whereas in the large histories of France the author "only gives the facts" to (male) readers, in other genres the reader is not trusted to make her(/his) own deductions or interpretations of history so the lessons are clearly pointed out.

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I now analyse two slightly different types of novels from the late 1820s. In 1828 Émile André's (1795-1828) historical novel *Le chef du mont ou Les contemporains de Brunehault, Roman historique du sixième siècle* was published [479]. The leading character of the novel is the *chef du mont*, who is a castellan living in the sixth-century Frankish kingdom. The novel comprises four volumes and hundreds of minor characters, some of whom are historical "immigrants" and some purely fictional. The plot includes endless twists, with forbidden love affairs, power intrigues, clashes between different religious ideas, and actions of greed and virtue. The main characters are fictive but there are several very interesting "immigrants" such as Brunehilde and Radegonde.[480] Despite the name of the novel, Brunehilde is only a minor character.[481] The novel differs from others examined in this section in its lack of devotional tone. Even though it focused greatly on the collision between Christianity and pagan Germanic beliefs, it gives no significant role to the saints of the sixth century.[482]

[476] Mainardi 2003, 52.
[477] "Manual for the Mistress of the Household"
[478] Mainardi 2003, 52.
[479] "The Chief of the Mountain, or the Contemporaries of Brunehilde, Historical Novel from the Sixth Century"
[480] There are also Fredegonde, Clothar I, Chilperic, Childebert etc.
[481] She only appears in the second volume, and although she is given negative qualities such as lust for power, in the end she saves the main couple.
[482] André's work was published by Charles Gosselin, a very famous editor of his time who also published, for example, Victor Hugo's and Honoré de Balzac's works. In this light, perhaps the criticism that the author makes of religious institutions and their actors was not perceived as all that extraordinary.

In fact, Radegonde is a very controversial character in the novel. She is pictured as a greedy and intriguing woman, who is prone to having young lovers. In the novel she is the widow of Theudebert I, brother of Clothar I. She had been married earlier and had borne a son from this previous marriage.[483] In the end, her son kills her and then commits suicide. Radegonde in André's novel was thus a total contrast to the Radegonde of any other work written about her in the early nineteenth century. Her name is not very common, so readers presumably associated André's character with the sixth-century saint. Radegonde as this negative figure reminds us of Nantilde, the immoral woman in Gottis' novel. In André's novel she is not alone among representatives of Christian belief in being described in a very negative tone, as others such as monks and abbots are also greedy and power-hungry. As in Gottis' case, André employs more archetypes than characters.

Of the authors examined in this section André was the only man. Nothing is known about him, except what is written in the cover letter of the novel, "ancien élève de l'école polythécnique"[484], former student of the école polythécnique, a highly prestigious school near Paris. His early death in 1828 probably explains why he did not publish anything else besides this novel. The novel has a great number of footnotes, very typical for the period's historical novels, as seen in Candeille's and Bonaparte's works.[485] André's approach to saints and the Christian religion may indicate that he was a liberal thinker who chose to use the form of a novel to criticise institutional religion, early Christianity, saints, and monks. Only in the guise of fiction could an author present critical ideas in the late 1820s, because these were the years of strict censure.[486] André was clearly more critical of Catholic religion and of its agents than the women authors who wrote historical novels with Merovingian themes.

Another atypical work on a Merovingian saint queen is Amable Tastu's work entitled *Chronique de France,* published in 1829. The work was not strictly speaking a novel, but a collection of long poems with themes from various periods of French history. One of these poems focused on Queen Clotilde, in a scene where she had to choose whether to have her grandsons executed or tonsured.[487] The poem, entitled *Les enfans de Clodomir*[488] starts with a four-page introduction to the historical

[483] André 1828 (II), 43.
[484] French *Grande Ecole*, originally established in 1794.
[485] According to Ian Wood, an author's choice to footnote a work signified that it was not only for entertainment. Wood 2013, 152. Perhaps the female authors wanted their works to be considered as serious literature.
[486] Especially in the 1820s there were several laws instituting a strict censure on the press. See, for example, Rémond 1965, 374-375.
[487] The scene is from Gregory of Tours, Book III, ch 18. 1823, 135-137.
[488] "Clodomir's Children"

background.[489] The poem itself is 19 pages long, the greatest part of it consisting of a discussion between Clotilde's son Childebert and a saint.[490]

In their works both André and Tastu were critical of Merovingian queens, although Tastu was less critical of the Catholic Church than André. One should remember that in another work from 1830 Tastu praised Clotilde's virtues, but this was not the case here.[491] Clotilde was not presented as an extraordinarily saint queen, even though the poem focused on moral questions concerning the killing of the young princes, Clotilde's grandsons. At the end of the poem Clotilde bemoans: "I have myself, carried away with the vain pride of a queen, // Lost the gentle children raised with pain unseen // […]." [492] The author attributed to Clotilde the most horrible sin of all, pride, but simultaneously made her repent her decision to allow her sons Childebert and Clothar kill Clodomir's young boys, their own nephews. It was, according to Tastu, the Church that saved the life of the third grandson, who later became Saint Cloud.[493] It seems that the reason why Tastu chose a scene from Clotilde's history was not related to Clotilde's own sanctity but rather to her grandson's sanctity. In Tastu's work she was neither a saintly mother of the nation nor a humble wife converting her pagan husband to Catholicism, but a proud queen sacrificing her grandsons. Possibly she later offered a completely different image of Clotilde because of a different intended readership. In the later work from 1836 the readers would have been pupils, but the potential readership of the earlier work is not brought up. Perhaps the first representation of Clotilde from 1829 is a poetic image of a queen who repents her sins rather then a literal image of Clotilde the fifth-century queen. In any case, there is no sign that the author aimed to highlight the virtues of the female sex.

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It is necessary to point out a change that seems to have occurred alongside the revolution of 1830. All the works of historical fiction that have themes taken from the Merovingian period were published in the Restoration period, whereas the devotional biographies of the saint queens were mostly published towards the end of the July Monarchy. The increase in devotional biographies coincides with the Catholic intellectual revival that started after the revolution of 1830 and which

[489] Tastu 1829, 39-43.
[490] Possibly the saint was Saint Severin of Paris, who died in 540. He is mentioned in the introduction, Tastu 1829, 42.
[491] *Cours d'histoire de France* from 1836.
[492] Tastu 1829, 63-64. "J'ai moi-même, emportée au vain orgueil de Reine, // Perdu ces doux enfans élevés à grand'peine // […]."
[493] Tastu 1829, 43.

assigned history an important role in regaining "intellectual prestige" for the Church".[494] The greater number of devotional works might imply a shift towards more devotional reading habits. The fact that these historical novels were published during the Restoration reinforces the historian Brian Hamnett's view that upon the death of Walter Scott in 1832 the historical novel in France lost its momentum and surrendered "before the primacy of entertainment".[495] I am not sure how Hamnett would define André, Tastu, Gottis and other authors I have examined in this section, as in his study of the historical novel in nineteenth-century Europe (2011) he examined only "great" names such as Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo or Honoré de Balzac. Perhaps he would see these authors as "lesser authors".[496]

Women who wrote devotional and moral biographies were perceived in every sense, even in their own eyes, as amateurs[497] compared with the so-called professional historians.[498] Even though there were also men who wrote historical novels and devotional literature about the Merovingian saint queens, the separation of genres according to gender was clear both in the authorship and in the readership, especially from the 1820s onwards.[499] The historical novels studied here have a lot in common with devotional biographies in addition to their themes. All these works included a lot of references to other contemporary historiographical works and to early medieval sources such as the *Ten Books of Histories* by Gregory of Tours. All historical novels and a number of other historiographical works as well had an omnipotent narrator who knew the characters' thoughts and wishes. This kind of narrating gave depth to the story, but it was one factor that blurred the line between historiographical fiction and emerging research in the early nineteenth century. It is interesting that some authors used saintly figures such as Radegonde and Clotilde in their works, but transformed them, more or less, into controversial figures. This proves that Clotilde was a contradictory figure and she was not exempt from criticism. Yet, one must keep in mind that in these historical novels the authors probably did not want to criticise any singular individual historical figure but used the historical figures, or certain types of figures, to represent the whole era or a part of it. For example, in André's representation of Radegonde she probably acted as a vehicle

[494] Den Boer 1998, 25.
[495] Hamnett 2011, 114.
[496] Hamnett wrote: "Earlier success created a popular market for fictional history, which Hugo, Dumas, and many lesser authors exploited to the full." Hamnett 2011, 114.
[497] The word "amateur", according to Bonnie Effros, did not have such a derogatory meaning in the early nineteenth century as it has today. Effros 2012, 25. Perhaps it is also the modern reader who applies the negative connotations to the word in the nineteenth-century texts. Another historian, Sophie-Anne Leterrier, uses the expression of "historiens 'établis'" to describe historians such as Guizot and Thierry. Leterrier 1997, 52.
[498] Smith 1998, 6, 37 & passim.
[499] On gender roles and literature in the 1820s, see Mainardi 2003, 61.

for wider criticism of the early medieval Church. Especially in the 1820s it was difficult to criticise the church directly so it had to be done implicitly by literate means.

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In the nineteenth century, there was more than one interpretation of Clotilde's history and queenship. In Jean Marie Frantin's work Clotilde had, as in many similar works, a role in three events of Frankish history: her marriage with Clovis, his conversion to Christianity and the care of her grandsons.[500] These three acts represented simultaneously the three roles ideally (even though one of them led to multiple deaths) belonging to a queen of France: wife, religious agent and mother. Clotilde could represent the ideal bourgeois wife because her marriage was arranged, yet it led to satisfaction and happiness. Happiness, however, was defined differently in the nineteenth century than today, as Denise Z. Davidson has argued: it was about finding personal satisfaction in the context of a beneficial familial alliance and learning to appreciate one's situation.[501] A good queen, or any woman, should thus place the general interest before her own and in this way find satisfaction.

[500] Frantin 1825 (II), 303-448 passim.
[501] Davidson 2012, 6, 8.

3. Narrating Nationalistic Queenships

"Thus perished the great queen; thus with her the Roman civilisation was vanquished by the Germanic barbarity, and the attempt of imperial monarchy was vanquished by the aristocracy of the leudes; thus ended the first era of a struggle between Austrasia and Neustria."[502]

The early nineteenth-century French historians and readers loved narratives about their history. It was important for historians to create coherent narratives of the French "nation". As I have made clear in the introduction, a narrative needs a beginning and actors. Queen Brunehilde was an actor *par excellence* in the narrative of the history of France; she was involved in the creation of the French "nation". Simultaneously, she provided a model for many subsequent queens. I suggest that whereas Clotilde could be the ideal bourgeois queen, Brunehilde was a ruler. She represented civilisation and the lost Roman culture in good and in bad.

In this chapter I explore the ways in which presenting history in a narrative[503] form affected the images of queenship and especially the images of the early medieval queens. I take a closer look at certain concepts such as "civilisation", which seemed to entail progress. The Revolution of 1789 affected considerably historiography and queenship, and also the perceptions of the French "nation".[504] The idea of civilisation was also an essential aspect of French nationalism, so early nineteenth-century nationalism will be analysed especially from the perspective of writing the history of queenship and queens.

In addition to the above mentioned themes, I analyse the way the ambigous concept of race was used to define the queens and the Merovingian dynasty, and what kind of race the queens were made to represent to the nineteenth-century readers. At the end of this chapter I examine the relationship between the Merovingian dynasty and individual queens in historiography; whether

[502] Lavalleé 1841 (I), 114. "Ainsi périt cette grande reine ; ainsi furent vaincus avec elle la civilisation romaine par la barbarie germanique, et les essais de monarchie impériale par l'aristocratie des leudes ; ainsi se termina la première période de la lutte entre l'Austrasie et la Neustrasie." In Frankish kingdoms Leudes were the free and powerful men near the king.
[503] I am aware that the term "narrative" has many different significations. See Roberts 2001, 16.
[504] According to Martyn Lyons, the French revolutionaries conceived for the first time the idea that print production separated modern thinking from the "barbaric" Middle Ages. Lyons 2008, 96.

nineteenth-century historian saw the individual queens as Merovingians or whether the queens were excluded from the first dynasty altogether.

3.1. Narrating Early Medieval Queenship

Early nineteenth-century French historiography was often about narrating events that the historians saw as meaningful for the history of France. Narrativity is at the centre of this section, and especially the way historians narrated Queen Brunehilde. I will use the representations of Brunehilde as an example here, because the sources give more information about her than any other queen from the Merovingian period. She is mentioned in many early medieval chronicles, and copies of her letters have survived to our day.[505] These sources, like so many others from all periods of history, are sometimes contradictory and biased. Because she was well educated many nineteenth-century historians presented her as cherishing Roman "civilisation". The multiple sources made her an important person in historiography and the fact that Gregory of Tours wrote so much about her made her a much more visible figure in nineteenth-century historiography than, for example, Saint Queens Clotilde and Radegonde. It is noteworthy that Gregory described Brunehilde in a very positive manner, but not all contemporary sources were as positive about her as Gregory's *Ten Books*: Fredegar's chronicles, for instance, presented her in a more negative light because they were written during the reigns of Fredegonde's descendants.

Queen Brunehilde[506] was an influential Merovingian queen and an effective diplomat in late sixth-century Frankish society.[507] Brunehilde was a Visigothic princess from the area that is now Spain. Her father was King Athanagild and she had a sister, Galeswinthe. She was married off to the Frankish King Sigebert, who was Clovis I's grandson. Sometime later her sister Galeswinthe was married to Chilperic, Sigebert's brother. Galeswinthe died after only a few years of marriage and many nineteenth-century historians perceived the late sixth-century wars between Chilperic's Neustria and Sigebert's Austrasia as indirectly caused by Galeswinthe's death. According to the

[505] She is mentioned in the works of Gregory of Tours and by the poet Fortunatus, in the Chronicles of Fredegar, in Liber Historiae Francorum, and in Jonas of Bobbio's Life of St Columban, among other works. Copies of Brunehilde's letters (and other relevant letters) are in Dumézil 2008, 481 - 506.

[506] Dumézil 2008, 481-506. On the correspondence between Brunehilde and Gregory the Great, see Santinelli-Foltz 2009, 3-5. Brunehilde had at least two children, a daughter and a son, who later became Childebert II. Sigebert was killed in 575. She remarried in 576 with Merovech, who was Chilperic's son from his first union with Audovera, but this second marriage was short. Brunehilde was, according to the French historian Bruno Dumézil (2008), an excellent politician and diplomat, who knew many of the important people of her era, such as Pope Gregory the Great and Emperor Maurice of Byzantium. She died in 613, at the hands of Fredegonde's son Clothar II, who had her executed.

[507] Dumézil 2008, 421-425. Nelson 1986, 1-48.

nineteenth-century historians, Brunehilde wanted to avenge her sister and she persuaded her husband to start a war against his brother.[508] Brunehilde's violent death in 612/3 made her famous among later historians and the death was a popular theme among artists, especially in the nineteenth century. Interestingly, she was always pictured as a (half naked) young woman in these pictures, even though she must have been at least 60 years old when she was executed. Depicting her in this way made the scene look like even more dramatic and scandalous (see Picture I).

Brunehilde has been a popular figure in French historiography since the sixteenth century, as is attested in the collective biography *Biographie universelle et historique des femmes* published in 1830 by Louis Marie Prudhomme, the revolutionary who returned to bookselling. Several historians are cited there in Brunehilde's biography, although the biography itself was only three pages long. Early medieval sources mentioned include the sixth-century poet Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory of Tours. From the eighteenth century there are Jean-François Dreux du Radier's collective biography of the queens and

[508]See for example Des Michels 1825, 14. Gregory of Tours and Chilperic's brothers accused Chilperic of the murder (Book IV, ch. 28. 1974, 222-223), Childebert II accused Fredegonde of the murder (Book VII, ch. 7. 1974, 392-393).

Picture I. Alphonse-Marie-Adolphe de Neuville - François Guizot, *The History of France from the Earliest Times to the Year 1789*, London: S. Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1883, 123.

regents of France. Of the early modern historiographical tradition it is said in Brunehilde's biography that:

> Paul-Emile[509], du Tillet[510], Papire-Masson[511], Mariana[512], Pasquier and Cordemoi[513] combined all their means to purge the memory of Brunehilde. Abbé Velly has written a very plausible apology, justified with a great number of authorities on the field; and Daniel, who was not so favourable to Brunehilde, observed, however, that the historians who have painted her image with such dark colours, wrote during [the reign of] Clothar's descendants […][514]

The number of cited erudite scholars indicates how popular Brunehilde had been even before the Revolution. The erudite men and historians mentioned as sources in the biography published by Prudhomme were not, according to him, unanimous about Brunehilde's role and influence in the history of France. On the one hand she was a model of good governance and Roman civilisation, but on the other hand she has been pictured as a monstrous queen who murdered members of her own family and seduced young men at the age of sixty. In her representations we find a microcosm of the debates about what the Merovingian kingdom/s represented: perceived Roman civilisation or Germanic passion, the art of governing or lust for power.

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[509] There is no certitude as to who Paul-Emile is, but one good candidate is the Italian Paolo Emili (1460-1529) who, according to BnF, was sometimes called in French *Paul-Émile.* In the sixteenth century his *Histoire de France* was translated from Latin to French by one Jean Regnart. Emili's works were mostly reprinted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See "Paolo Emili": http://data.bnf.fr/12805715/paolo_emili/, accessed July 23 2015.

[510] Jean Du Tillet, sieur de la Bussière and a bishop, was a French historian who died in 1570. In 1549 appeared a work entitled *La Chronique des roys de France, puis Pharamond jusques au roy Henry second du nom, selon la computation des ans jusques en l'an mil cinq cens quarante et neuf*. This work, also to be found in Gallica, mentioned Brunehilde briefly and declared that "a lot of wicked things" had been said about her, thus giving the impression that the author himself did not believe them. It is interesting that Du Tillet referred in the short passage about Brunehilde's death to Paul Emile. Indeed, it is possible that Prudhomme never read Paul Emile himself but merely copied his name from Du Tillet, who was far better known in the nineteenth century than the Italian historian. See Du Tillet, 1550, 13.

[511] Jean-Papire Masson (1544-1611) was a historian, humanist, lawyer and an erudite man who wrote, for example, a work entitled *Papirii Massoni Annalium libri quatuor, quibus res gestae Francorum explicantur* which dealt with French history. BNF does not mention any of his historiographical works being translated into French so it is again possible that Prudhomme did not read any of them, even though he probably did understand Latin. See "Jean-Papire Masson": http://data.bnf.fr/12375321/jean-papire_masson/, accessed Jule 23 2015.

[512] Juan de Mariana (1536-1624) was a Spanish historian and his most famous work is *Historiae de rebus Hispaniae* (1592), which was translated into French (Histoire générale d'Espagne) in 1725 by Joseph Nicolas Charenton. One should remember that Brunehilde was originally a Visigothic princess from the area that is now Spain, so it is likely that she was included in Spanish histories.

[513] Most likely Géraud de Cordemoy (1626-1684), whose *Histoire de France* was published posthumously in 1685-1689 by his son Louis Géraud de Cordemoy. Cordemoy the father was a lawyer and philosopher and a member of Académie francaise.

[514] Prudhomme 1830 (I), 481-2. "Paul-Emile, du Tillet, Papire-Masson, Mariana, Pasquier et Cordemoi ont réuni tous leurs moyens pour purger la mémoire de Brunehaut. L'abbé Velly a fait une apologie très-pausible, appuyée d'une foule d'autorités ; et Daniel, qui ne lui est pas si favorable, observe cependant que les historiens qui l'ont peinte de si noires couleurs, écrivaient sous les descendans de Clotaire […]."

Since at least the 1820s the history of France has been seen as a great narrative of civilisation, in which all historical figures and events had a role to play. Georges Lefebvre (d.1959), the French historian from the first half of the twentieth century, argued in his *La naissance de l'historiographie moderne* (1971)[515] that in the nineteenth century (at least) two historiographical traditions or schools existed simultaneously. Lefebvre, who died before the modern debate about history and narrative begun, saw narrative as the converse of "scientific" historiography. The latter school was an explanatory one; more exalted and, according to Lefebvre, making reference only to impartial, disinterested, and speculative intelligence which, again according to Lefebvre, is proper for men. The other school was narrative history, which appealed to men's imagination, to sentiments and to the reader's "banal curiosity". This last category included the historical novel and popular history, and the first historical account or study.[516]

There is no doubt which school Lefebvre considered more valuable, more important. It is obvious that he saw the primary one as true "historiography", but he emphasised that the period of the French Restoration was the heyday of the historical novel and that even "serious" historians such as Augustin Thierry used the methods of that tradition in his works. To the "scientific" school belonged historians such as Guizot and Julien Marie Lehuërou[517] (1807–1843). But Lefebvre emphasised that the historiographical traditions were about *presenting* history, not about the methods of study.[518] Lefebvre's distinction is quite common even today; historiographical genres are divided into a "scholarly" type and a less professional type of historiography, popular historical writing. It is important to note that Lefebvre did not see these two historiographical schools as completely separate at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as there were many historiographical works that had features from both traditions. We can take as an example Simonde de Sismondi's *Histoire des Français* (1821), which was simultaneously structured in a narrative form and highly rated by his contemporary historians such as François Guizot. As we will see, narrative chronological form was perceived as "scientific" in the early nineteenth century.

A good example of what Lefebvre called "serious" historiography comes from Lehuërou's work *Histoire des institutions mérovingiennes et du gouvernement des Mérovingiens*[519] (1843).

[515] Published based on his lectures given in 1945-1946. "The Birth of Modern Historiography"
[516] Lefebvre 1971, 171.
[517] He studied in École normale superieure and graduated in 1828, after which he worked in, for example, collège royale de Bourbon. After the 1830 revolution he taught in collège de Nantes and in 1835 in collège royale de Rennes. In 1838 he defended his doctoral thesis on the Merovingian period. His early death ended his promising career as a professional historian specialising in the early Middle Ages.
[518] Lefebvre 1971, 169.
[519] "History of the Merovingian Institutions and Government"

Lehuërous had specialised in the early Middle Ages in his thesis, and he taught history and literature in several colleges. He was a professional historian who disappeared into near oblivion after his early death.[520] His image of the Merovingian queens, however, encapsulated the importance of Fredegonde and Brunehilde for the Merovingian period. In addition, he and François Guizot both draw larger comparisons between the reigns of the queens and the Merovingian period.[521] Both Guizot and Lehuërou made them symbolise larger historical processes:

> […] From there the blood that stains the pages of Gregory of Tours and the heinous history of the Merovingians. Two persons dominate and summarise the entire scene: Fredegonde who had small children killed in their mother's laps in order to save her own family members' lives, and Brunehilde who pushed her grandsons into the arms of impure courtesans in order to rule in their place.
>
> But Fredegonde and Brunehilde were more than just cruel monsters; they were two political systems agitated by the hatred of two cruel women. They found themselves given, more due to their position than by choice, these atrocious roles which were composed of nothing but crimes, and could not end well. It was the moment when the political system, adopted by the Merovingians when they first arrived in Gaul, had its first consequences and started to encounter the obstacles that would eventually break it. The Merovingians had started to teach the Barbarians the civilisation of the conquered ones and to humiliate the pride of the conquerors […]. To transform and to change all the bases of the old Germanic society, in order to replace them with Roman ideas and imperial traditions, would have been a daring attempt in any time. [522]

Queens Fredegonde and Brunehilde were made to represent the Roman way of ruling, which Lehuërou juxtaposed with the Frankish and Germanic traditions. For these two historians, Lehuërou and Guizot, the queens together symbolised the Roman traditions of government. The interpretation can be stretched to refer to the juxtaposition between the civilised Roman traditions represented by the Merovingians, and the Frankish, barbarian conquerors. In this model the queenship represented civilisation in an otherwise barbarian society. The Merovingians, as will soon become obvious, were often considered a third party between the Romans and the barbarians. The above citation is also interesting because in the passage the author referred to the "Roman ideas and imperial

[520] Laferrière 1844, 1-32.
[521] See Guizot 1836, 71.
[522] "De là ce sang qui s'offre à chacune des pages de Grégoire de Tours, et cette atroce histoire des Mérovingiens. Deux figures dominent et résument tout le tableau: Frédégonde, qui faisait mourir les petits enfants sur les genoux de leurs mères pour racheter la vie des siens, et Brunehaut, qui livrait ses petits-fils à d'impures courtisanes pour régner à leur place. Mais Frédégonde et Brunehaut furent bien autre chose que des monstres de cruaté; ce sont deux systèmes politiques animés des fureurs de deux femmes implacables. Elles se sont trouvées chargées, autant peut-être par position que par choix, d'un de ces rôles affreux qui ne se composent que de forfaits, et qui ne peuvent finir que par une catastrophe. C'était le moment où le systèmes adopté par les Mérovingiens à leur entrée dans la Gaule produisait ses premières conséquenses, et rencontrait déjà les obstacles contre lesquels il devait se briser. Ils avaient entrepris de discipliner les Barbares avec la civilisation des vaincus, et de rabaisser la fierté des vainqueurs […]. Bouleverser et changer toutes les bases de la vieille société germanique, pour y substituer les idées romaines et les traditions impériales, eût été une tentative hasardeuse en tout temps." Lehuërou 1843a, 330-331.

traditions" that the Merovingians tried to impose in the Germanic society. He continued by saying that the Carolingians also tried to do the same thing but failed, like the Merovingians, and only the third race after seven hundred years managed to conclude the "great and laborious effort."[523] Thus Lehuërou claimed that the Merovingians started a process of making the Germanic society more civilised and this process was completely only several hundred years later. According to him, the fall of Rome was a catastrophe in many ways and it took France 700 years to recover from it.

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The American historian John Lukacs stated in his study *The Future of History* (2011) that in the eighteenth century history was regarded as a form of literature and in the nineteenth century it was regarded as a science.[524] As a generalisation this is something of an overstatement, but it draws attention to the enormous change that took place in historiography in that time all around Europe. The definition of history changed between 1798 and 1832 in the *Dictionary of the French Academy* – in the later edition history was defined in opposition to "Fables", fiction. [525] The change demonstrates well how history, despite still being seen as narrative, became an academic discipline. The period of the early nineteenth century, however, belonged to a transition period when history was being transformed from literature into an academic discipline.[526]

History as a narrative is how history was defined in the *Dictionary of the French Academy*. In the first edition of the dictionary from 1694, history was defined as "[n]arration des actions & des choses dignes de memoire" and this definition did not alter until the sixth edition from 1832, when history was redefined as "[r]écit d'actions, d'événements, de choses dignes de mémoire".[527] History was not only presented but most probably perceived as a narrative or as a story. History was about what was worth remembering, not so much about ordinary things or about "average" people. The historian was given the task, according to the dictionary, of choosing what was important to remember. So in fact we should read historiographical works as narratives of actions, events and people worth remembering. The narrative form supported the nationalistic writing of French history

[523] Lehuërou 1843a, 331. "les idées romaines et les traditions impériales", "ce grand et laborieux ouvrage".
[524] Lukacs 2011, 6-7. Lukacs does acknowledge the difficulty of writing about "science" in this context.
[525]The distinction did not exist in the previous editions. See "Histoire": http://portail.atilf.fr/cgi-bin/dico1look.pl?strippedhw=histoire&headword=&docyear=ALL&dicoid=ALL&articletype=1 accessed July 24 2015.
[526] According to the Dutch historian Marita Mathijsen, the French Revolution is the key event which enabled the "new" historiography, because it resulted in history being transformed from private to public. For example, museums and libraries became public and made many previously private source materials accessible to a larger number of historians. Mathijsen 2010, 26, 31. See also Leerssen 2010, xvii.
[527] See "Histoire": http://portail.atilf.fr/cgi-bin/dico1look.pl?strippedhw=histoire&headword=&docyear=ALL&dicoid=ALL&articletype=1 accessed July 24 2015.

because it enabled its writers to present history as a chronological story of progress and civilisation.[528]

A chronological narrative of events was the standard form of historiography both in biographies and in large histories of France in the early nineteenth century and it was still influenced by the medieval tradition of writing chronicles.[529] One example of this influence is the way of constructing history according to kings, their reigns and significant events, and presenting them in a neat continuum. The problem-oriented form, or explanatory form, was only later to become more popular. Of course, all historiographical writing can be seen as a narrative, as historian Geoffrey Roberts (2001) has pointed out.[530] In addition to explanatory and narrative form, a so called interpretative form exists today. But in the early nineteenth century the chronological form was not questioned, as it suited royal history and the habit of seeing history as a succession of kings and queens. Even though it was the monarchy (or to historians like Michelet, the *people*) that constructed history in many ways, individual queens like Brunehilde and Fredegonde gave history its substance. One should remember that historians perceived that queenship, the position itself, made women worth remembering, even though strong women could adapt and modify the boundaries of queenship according their own needs.

The chronological form was considered "scientific" and historians constructed the narratives of history as a coherent plot with an impersonal narrator. In the first decades of the twentieth century history was still often perceived as a series of events, exactly as it was seen some hundred years earlier. [531] In early nineteenth-century France there were only rare exceptions to the narrative form in the field of Merovingian history. Such exceptions were, for example, the works of François Guizot,[532] which were originally lectures, and some works of Jules Michelet[533]. Augustin Thierry's *Lettres sur l'histoire de France*[534], which will be examined later in this chapter, had no chronological order but were organised by theme. In many works, even if they were not written as a series of events, the themes or chapters would be organised in a chronological manner (except in

[528] On civilisation and progress, see Den Boer 2005, 58.
[529] There are differences as well, as M. C. Lemon has demonstrated. He argues that chronicles are mere descriptions of successive events, whereas narrative includes meaningful sequences. Lemon 2001, 110, 112.
[530] Roberts 2001, 2.
[531] Rahikainen & Fellman 2012, 9.
[532] See, for example, *Cours d'histoire moderne: Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe* (1828).
[533] Jules Michelet, *Origines du droit francais, cherchées dans les symboles et formules du droit universal* (1837).
[534] "Letters from the History of France"

dictionaries and encyclopaedias, of course). This was the case in many collective and individual biographies that presented the lives of individuals as series of events.[535]

Most nineteenth-century historiographical works were plot-oriented and there were only a few examples of problem-oriented works. Jules Belin de Launay's (1814-1883)[536] essay *Du Traité d'Andelot considéré sous les points du vue historique et politique* (1843)[537] was one of the latter. The text was written to criticise an opposing view of the treaty. The author of this opposing view was not named, and unlike many contemporary texts, the short essay discussed and commented on several contemporary historiographical texts, especially those written by François Guizot and Augustin Thierry. Perhaps surprisingly, books written by Chrysanthe Ovide des Michels were also mentioned in *Du Traité d'Andelot,* because his *Précis de l'histoire du moyen âge* (1828) was apparently one of the basic texts in colleges.[538] The aim of the work was to discover if the treaty of Andélot (587) established the heredity of certain benefices (*l'hérédité des bénéfices*) like that of lands. At the end of the essay, the author, a professor of history, argued that:

> The treaty of Andelot justified the Valois dynasty's ascending to the throne; in consequence of the treaty, the Valois ruled because it was the first legal text that ordained the order of royal succession. Finally, in consequence of the treaty, the kings allied with each other in order to oppose the aristocracy that already wanted royal minorities. The kings in theory then accorded these, and even partially the hereditary of benefices, to the aristocracy, hoping in this way to win them over. Soon the kings repented of this. This is all there is to the history of the Merovingians. [539]

[535] An example of problem-oriented text: Antoine Bailly (1780-1848), who identified himself as "inspecteur général des finances", published in 1830 a work entitled *Histoire financière de la France*. The work started with a clear question: "[a]re the public taxes and local taxation paid by France today higher or lower than the taxes of all sorts paid by the kingdom before the period of 1789?" (Bailly 1830 (I), I.) He wanted to prove that the contemporary administration was not worse in this respect than the one prior to the revolutionary years. Brunehilde and Fredegonde had a role in Bailly's history because he had taken from Gregory's *Ten Books* the references of the two queen decreeing taxes. He associated the two queens' taxes with crimes and extortion. Bailly 1830 (I), I-XI, 12-17."Les contributions publiques et les impositions locales payées aujourd'hui par la France sont-elles supérieures ou inférieures aux impôts de tous genres que le royaume supportait avant l'époque de 1789?"

[536] Jules de Belin de Launay was therefore a very young professor when writing his essays concerning the early Middle Ages. He taught in the college of Bergerac, but almost nothing else is known about him except that he was a journalist, geographer and a teacher. He published two relevant works, one in 1842 and one in 1843. The 1842 one was published under the name Jules Belin. I use his full name in the main text, but in the reference the name under which the work was published.

[537] "Of the Treaty of Andelot, Considered from Historical and Political Point of Views". The essay was written to criticise an anonymous study where the author had claimed that the Treaty of Andelot had not resulted in hereditary benefices. That work was actually one of François Guizot's.

[538] Belin de Launay 1843, 1.

[539] Belin de Launay 1843, 45-46. "Le traité d'Andelot justifie l'avénement au trône des Valois ; c'est par lui qu'ils règnerent, car c'est le premier fait légal qui règle l'ordre de succession royale. Enfin, par lui, les rois s'allient afin de résister à l'aristocratie, qui veut déjà des minorités. Ils lui accordent virtuellement et même en partie formellement l'hérédité des bénéfices, espérant ainsi le gagner. Bientôt ils s'en repentiront. C'est là toute l'histoire mérovingienne."

Belin de Launay's essay on the treaty of Andelot is interesting because one of the central figures in making the treaty was Queen Brunehilde, both in Belin de Launay's interpretation on the treaty and in the late sixth century when her name was indicated as one of the contracting parties.[540] Belin de Launay had nothing to say about Brunehilde's qualities as a queen and he did not judge her in any way, which was very unusual for a historian of his era.[541] So in this one peculiar text the lack of chronological narrativity went hand in hand with a certain type of neutrality towards female sovereignty.

In his essay, however, the author reduced the significance of the entire Merovingian period to the Treaty of Andelot. The author argued that in the Merovingian period there had been a conflict between the Merovingian kings and aristocrats, and that the aristocrats eventually won and in their turn became kings. Here Belin de Launay, however, did not take a stance on whether the aristocrats or the Merovingians were Franks. According to Belin de Launay, originally there had been a conquest by the Barbarians which had spread misery in Gaul, but eventually the Gallo-Roman had been compelled to look for protection from the Franks against "their new neighbours".[542] So Belin de Launay attached his theories to the Germanist tradition of seeing a conquest of Barbarians as the basis for the Frankish invasion even though he also saw that later the Gallo-Romans themselves looked to the Franks for protection. According to Belin de Launay, the question of ethnicity, which was very precious to many of his contemporary historians, had no role in the treaty. Ethnicity was not used by the author as an explanatory factor for the events that led to the signing of the treaty.

Belin de Launay's essay is an interesting exception, but it does not alter the fact that most early nineteenth-century historiography was presented in a chronological order, as a story about the past, and there the queens had a minor part compared with historical male agents such as kings. The question of how narrativity affected queenship is a difficult one. The ethos of Great Men and changing social norms could affect the representations more than the form did. Yet the chronological narrative form made past events seem more simple and straightforward than they really were. In Belin de Launay's work Brunehilde was mentioned because she was pictured as involved in actions that were masculine from the nineteenth-century perspective: signing treaties.[543] The (gender of) readership and author affected more which historical figures were included, what

[540] Gregory of Tours, Book IX, ch. 20. 1974, 502-509.
[541] Belin de Launay would not give harsh value judgments on Brunehilde either in his other essay, *Sur les Temps Mérovingiens, lettre à M. Augustin Thierry* (1842). I will examine this essay later in this chapter.
[542] Belin de Launay 1843, 35.
[543] In Antoine Bailly's *Histoire financière de la France* (1830) Brunehilde was mentioned for the same reasons: she was pictured as decreeing taxes.

sort of actions were described, and how. The work was clearly written for a readership of educated males, and for them Brunehilde was presented as a strong ruler. I consider the main reason to be the writings of Gregory of Tours, so popular in the early nineteenth century, because the historians saw him as the first authority on Merovingian history. Otherwise it would have made sense to present Brunehilde as a warning example of female rule, but in many cases she was not used as such.

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Next I present a case study from the period prior to the 1820s to demonstrate a different kind of narrative employed and the way in which Brunehilde was presented in it. The work is Louis Pierre Anquetil's *Histoire de France* from 1805. The image Anquetil created of Brunehilde was quite negative. Already Mézeray, a seventeenth-century historian who was one of the main sources in this work, had described her in a rather negative tone.[544] One similarity between Mézeray's and Anquetil's books is the narrative form of history, where the reader hears the historian's voice only in the introduction. There is nothing *outside* the historical events described in a series of actions in a seemingly chronological order. This is one thing historians after Anquetil only rarely managed to avoid, even though a slow change occurred in the following decades when historians such as Augustin Thierry started to criticise earlier historiographical interpretations.

Many of the early nineteenth-century historiographical works were constructed in a chronological order which makes it possible to see how the main source for Brunehilde changes around the 590s when Gregory of Tours died. For the period after the 590s all historians had to rely foremost on Fredegar's chronicles, which were written by an anonymous author in the 660s. They presented Brunehilde in a very negative light, a consequence of changed political circumstances in the Frankish kingdoms. The result was that all early nineteenth-century historians identified a change in her behaviour around the 590s, but few of them explained the change in her behaviour by the change in source. It was not until the 1830s that historians such as Paulin Paris pointed out that it was not Brunehilde who changed in the 590s, but the chronicler of her life: a pro-Brunhilde source was replaced by an anti-Brunhilde one.[545] Before the 1820s the change was perceived as having been a change in her nature rather than in the historiography. The change in Brunehilde's behaviour was visible in Anqetil's *Histoire de France* but it is impossible to say how or whether the historian perceived the sources' role, as no early medieval sources were mentioned or discussed. Perhaps

[544] See, for example, what Mézeray says about Brunehilde: that she was animated by vengeance and pushed her husband into war. Mézeray 1696, 74. According to Mézeray, Fredegonde saved Chilperic with her determined courage. Ibid. According to the French historian Marcel Gauchet, Anquetil was Mézeray's and Velly's "principal continuator in the early nineteenth century." Gauchet 1986, 281.
[545] Paris 1836, XXXIII.

Anquetil did not want to question the change in Brunehilde's behaviour or it simply did not occur to him to question it, because no previous historian had done so either. It seems likely that Anquetil only read late medieval and early modern works on French history such as Mézeray's *Histoire de France*.[546]

In addition to Brunehilde's changing nature, the enmity between her and Fredegonde was also handled unquestioningly. Anquetil wrote that:

> Fredegonde did not forgive Brunehilde for wanting to introduce another woman into the bed and on the throne of her husband. Neither did Brunehilde want to forgive Fredegonde the disgrace and the murder of Galeswinthe, her sister. This is enough to explain the reason for the furious hatred between the two princesses and its sad consequences.[547]

The hatred that many historians perceived as existing between Brunehilde and Fredegonde was always explained as caused by the death of Galeswinthe, who was indeed found strangled in her bed shortly after she married Chilperic. Anquetil rephrased well the attitude most historians took to the hatred between the two queens: a violent death was enough to explain it. It is a very tempting explanation - two women hating each other so much that they drove their husbands and kingdoms to war. What the coherent narratives did not bring out was the time lapse between the death of Galeswinthe and the supposed hatred between the kingdoms; if their theory was correct, it took many years before Brunehilde acted out her hatred. In addition, the theory granted enormous power to these women, simultaneously emphasising their husbands' weakness and women's inability to govern their emotions and passions. Indeed, many historians, including the famous François Guizot, wanted to discredit the Merovingian kings by presenting them as weak to prove right their idea that history was a narrative of progression towards a more civilised state.

Anquetil stressed Brunehilde's distinct nature as a queen because for him she was no ordinary queen. It is obvious that in the 1810s there were no big differences between the narratives of erudite historiography and poetic historiography regarding Brunehilde, and both genres used similar rhetorical tools to stress their interpretations. It is indeed interesting that two forms, the one deemed old fashioned and boring, the other inspired by the lively pictures of historical novels, show such small differences in their descriptions of the Merovingian queens. The narrative is almost entirely descriptive, much less analytical or even explanatory. Only in the 1820s did the number of

[546] About Brunehilde in Mézeray's work, see Mézeray 1696, 99.
[547] Anquetil 1825 (I), 302. "Frédégonde ne pardonna pas à Brunehaut d'avoir voulu introduire une autre femme dans le lit et sur le trône de son mari, ni Brunehaut à Frédégonde la disgrâce ou le meurtre de Galzuinde sa sœur. C'en est assez pour expliquer la cause de la haine acharnée de ces deux princesses, et les suites funestes qu'elle eut."

historiographical works start to grow and their narratives to diverge from each other. Albeit slowly, narratives started to diversify in their form and to include more and more analysis as well as description of historical events.

3.2 Merovingian Queens in the Emerging Historical Research

Of all the Merovingian queens, Brunehilde was given the most space in the emerging academic historiography, because the historians saw her as affecting the political balance in the Merovingian kingdoms, and even as far away as in Byzantium. No other Merovingian queen was as conspicuous in all branches of historiography. I have chosen to examine some genres more closely in relation to certain queens precisely because each queen was more prominent in a different branch of early nineteenth-century historiography. Clotilde, for example, had greater prominence in biographies and historical novels, whereas Brunehilde was often omitted from them. I approach the emerging historical research through the concept of civilisation that started to blossom during the Restoration. Undoubtedly the idea of civilisation was a grand narrative in itself. There have been numerous studies of the concept of civilisation, and I can only limit my analysis of the concept to the context of the Merovingian era and of the queenship.[548] In addition, I create a chronological overview of certain historiographical works from the 1820s to the 1840s to visualise the way in which the representations of Brunehilde and her contemporary queens were transformed and gained new significations in these decades.

The diversity of national ideas was reflected on the political chart of France. In the aftermath of the Charter of 1814 the Ultras hoped to return many features of the Old Regime whereas the liberals sought to extend the rights and freedoms legalised in the Charter.[549] All of them generally favoured the monarchy but, among other issues, they did not agree on the extent of the monarch's powers or on the relationship between the throne and the altar. The Ultras, who, like the liberals, were not a coherent party, wanted to reverse the Revolution of 1789, which they saw as harmful to the French nation, and the liberals wanted to continue the journey towards the rise of the "oppressed people", the Third Estate. However, the liberals' wish to promote the cause of the oppressed did not signify that they wanted to promote women's equality. The French historian Hélène Becquet (2012) has established that in the early 1820s and in 1830 there was discussion about the possibility for a

[548] On the concept of civilisation, see for example, Den Boer 2005, 51-62.
[549] Crossley 1993, 5.

woman to inherit the French throne. The liberals opposed the idea most strongly and the royalists were (partly) for it. In the early 1820s the discussion ended with the birth of the son of the late Duke of Berry, but in 1830 the discussion was sparked again by Spain's decision to reverse women's exclusion from the throne. The liberals argued then that giving women access to the throne would open the door to the French throne for "foreign" princes.[550] One must thus keep in mind that being liberal in the early nineteenth century did not signify a wish to give further rights to all social groups that lacked of political rights.

In the 1820s French historical research was rapidly being transformed into an academic field of study. Sir Walter Scott's historical novels marked the birth of modern historical fiction and they influenced the new historical thinking and the way of perceiving societies as results of historical processes. Graceffa (2008) has identified four major stages in French historiography on the Merovingians after the French Revolution; the first stage covers two thirds of the nineteenth century and is referred to as "bourgeois", a name applied by later Marxist historians. This first stage was dominated by the discussion about continuity and rupture in the Merovingian period, and the Merovingian era was regarded mostly from the political point of view, which in its turn was affected by the new definitions of the "people" and the "nation".[551] In other words, the historiographical discussion in the first part of the nineteenth century, according to Graceffa, focused on whether the Merovingian period continued the Roman traditions, Roman civilisation, or whether the period constituted a rupture in the traditions and a replacement of these old traditions with new barbarian traditions.[552]

The 1820s saw several influential French historians whose ideas affected how the Merovingians and the historical queens were perceived in France and elsewhere. Hence the 1820s witnessed the inception of a period of historian-politicians and the mixing of these two fields In addition to politics, criticism of earlier tradition(s) of historiography was common in the decade of the 1820s. One of the decade's most famous historians was Augustin Thierry. In 1820, Thierry published 10 letters, or essays, in the French journal *Le Courrier Français,* which he later edited into a book (1827), simultaneously adding fifteen new letters. The *Lettres sur l'histoire de France* was re-

[550] Becquet 2009, 140.
[551] Graceffa 2008b, 25. The second stage ran from the 1860s to the 1910s and was characterized by the geographical approach to history. The third stage started in the 1910s and lasted until the 1950s. This third stage was already much more diverse, and included, for example, economic and demographic approaches to Merovingian history. The fourth stage started in the late 1950s.
[552] The rupture and continuation were also clearly present in Julien Marie Lehuërou's citation, because he seemed to argue that the Merovingians continued the Roman traditions of government but that the barbarians (not Merovingians) replaced these traditions with their own.

published under the name *Dix ans d'études historiques* in the early 1830s. [553] Noteworthy in Thierry's works is his discussion with the previous historians – he did not spare his words in criticising them. Thierry was a very visible figure in the period's political life and debates. His most famous work about the Merovingians, *Récits des temps mérovingiens*, was published only during the July Monarchy.

One of the groundbreaking historians Thierry referred to in his *Lettres* was François Guizot[554], also mentioned by Lefebvre. The earliest work in which François Guizot discussed the Merovingian queens was *Essais sur l'histoire de France,*[555] first published in 1823, three years after Thierry published his first *Lettres.* In *Essais* Guizot already sketched the theory for the concept of civilisation which greatly affected the interpretations of the early medieval queens because it defined the Merovingian period as the infancy of French civilisation and as inferior to later periods of history.[556]

Clearly apparent features in Guizot's work and in the concept of civilisation were value judgment, progress, and determinism. Harry Ritter defines the last one in the following way: "[m]ost often, the belief that historical events are controlled by factors other than the motives and free validation of human beings - for example supernatural agencies such as providence, fate, and destiny or natural circumstances such as geography, climate, heredity, and social tradition."[557] There was not one but several statements of determinism in historiography and they all depended on the historian's point of view on history. Many Catholic historians saw the Christian God as guiding the saints.[558] Other historians, however, did not see God as guiding historical figures but found other directing factors. Georges Lefevbre has accused liberal historians, especially Guizot, of presenting the history of

[553] "Ten Years of Historical Studies". Thierry published several other works as well, such as *Histoire de la conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands, de ses causes et de ses suites jusqu'à nos jours, en Angleterre, en Écosse, en Irlande et sur le continent* (1825), *Rapport sur les travaux de la collection des Monuments inédits de l'histoire du Tiers État, adressé à M. Guizot* (1837), *Essai sur l'histoire de la formation et des progrès du Tiers-Etat* (1853),

[554] For more about Guizot, see Theis "Works on François Guizot": (http://www.guizot.com/en/works-on-François - guizot/) where 11 works written about him in the last 100 years are mentioned. Accessed July 24 2015.

[555] "Essays about the History of France"

[556] See Guizot 1823a, 81. He developed the concept further in his lectures turned works *Cours d'histoire moderne. Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe depuis la chute de l'Empire romain jusqu'à la Révolution française* (Course of Modern History. General History and Civilisation in Europe from the Fall of Roman Empire to the French Revolution) and *Histoire de la civilisation en France depuis la chute de l'Empire romain* (History of Civilisation in France since the Fall of Roman Empire). On the concept of civilisation, see Den Boer 2005, 51-62. Also on Guizot and civilisation, see Leterrier 1997.

[557] See Ritter 1986, 104-105.

[558] See, for example, Caroline de Falaize in *Clotilde, ou le triomphe du Christianisme*, where she declared "[…]the finger of Providence is there, the hour is marked, time advances, revolutions take place; nothing can interfere with God's plans.", "[…] le doigt de la Providence est là, l'heure est marquée, le temps marche, les révolutions s'accomplissent ; rien ne peut entraver les desseins de Dieu." Falaize 1848, 13.

France as a determinist process where everything happened because it was meant to happen. Great Men acted as they did because they were meant to do so.[559] Determinism in interpreting the history of France was thus common for historians from different schools of thought, even if their determinants differed. Some historians saw the Christian God as guiding history and its actors, and some saw historical events as necessarily following in succession.

A third interesting work published in the reign of Louis XVIII (d.1824) is that of Simonde de Sismondi. The work, which I have already mentioned, was *Histoire des Français* (1821).[560] These three historians[561], Thierry, Guizot and Sismondi, are examined here together because they belonged to the school of the so-called liberal historians whose works influenced one another, and they are very commonly used to represent the entire French historiography of the first half of the nineteenth century.[562] These three works, Thierry's *Lettres,* Guizot's *Essais,* and Sismondi's *Histoire des Français,* have a prominent position in twenty-first-century studies on historiography, even though they were never bestsellers among contemporary French readers.[563] Yet the works were forerunners because they reformed the field of historiography after Anquetil's work had been the authority in this field for almost 20 years. These works showed the way for the new kind of historiography and set the standards for the slowly emerging division between popular and academic historiography.

Indeed, Thierry started the 1827 published version of *Lettres* by reminding readers that when he published the first *Lettres* in 1820 Guizot's, Sismondi's or Prosper de Barante's[564] (1782–1866) works on the history of France had not yet been published, and Velly's and Anquetil's works were then considered the most instructive ones.[565] One must remember, however, that Thierry was looking back and judging the 1820 situation from 1827. According to Thierry himself, the 1820s was a period when writing about French history changed in several ways. The change was visible in the way Thierry criticised presenting the Frankish kingdom as French, as so many historians including Anquetil had done. Furthermore, he pointed out that not all people in the early Middle

[559] Lefebvre 1971, 165.
[560] In 1839 a work called *Précis de l'histoire des Francais* was published, which was a sort of a resumé of the earlier and larger *Histoire des Francais*.
[561] Guizot referred to Thierry and Sismondi in his *Histoire de la civilisation en France* and wrote highly of them. Guizot 1840 (I), 33 & 234. See also Guizot 1829, 34.
[562] With Jules Michelet's works. See, for example, the following works: Ceri Crossley (1993), Georges Lefebvre (1971), Sylvain Venayre (2013) and Ian Wood (2013).
[563] On the bestseller, see Lyons 2008, 20-27.
[564] Barante is best known for his work entitled *Histoire des ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois* (1824-1828). Like Guizot, he was active in politics in the July Monarchy, and after the Revolution of 1848 withdrew from politics.
[565] Thierry 1827, vii.

Ages in the region incorporated into modern France were Franks either.[566] Thierry distinguished between the Franks and the Gauls in early modern Frankish society, as did many of his contemporary historians. This division, established already before the Revolution, led to debates in both the eighteenth and the nineteenth century about who the French people's true ancestors were, the Franks or the Gauls. The debate, emphasised by Thierry in his later works, had a huge impact on the images of early medieval queens as they soon became categorised figuratively as either belonging to the Franks or the Gauls; to enemies or to "our" ancestors. Most often they were seen as in the enemy camp.

Thierry explicitly named and marked with references the works he was citing or criticising for anachronism.[567] He emphasised the way in which his interpretations differed from previous ones and presented the new ones as better and as more "scientific". In the *Lettres,* however, Thierry did not examine the Merovingian queens, even though he did study the Merovingian period on many occasions. This is the case with *Dix ans* as well. These works presented Thierry's historiographical theories and ideas, but the results, how the theories affected the representations of the early medieval queens, were only apparent in his later work, *Récits des temps mérovingien,* which was almost completely dedicated to these women.[568] With this work he made the queens popular even though he presented them as archetypes of uncivilised Franks. He was known not to have any special sympathy for the Catholic Church and therefore even the saints were judged by him.[569]

In his historical thinking Guizot had an important role reserved for the Merovingian queens in the early Middle Ages. In *Essais* Guizot, who was one of the most visible French historians and politicians of the first half of the nineteenth century, made his famous comparison between the battle between Fredegonde and Brunehilde and the supposed conflict between "Germanic France" (Austrasia) and "Roman France" (Neustria). In this comparison he made the queens represent larger entities just as Lehuërou would do some years later. Whereas Lehuërou saw the two queens as quite similar figures, Guizot chose another path and made only Brunehilde represent the Roman civilisation.

[566] Thierry 1827, 12.
[567] Velly, Daniel and Mézeray, though the last one was his favourite. Thierry 1827, 20-50.
[568] It is interesting that despite the popularity of the *Récits*, which was first published as a serial story in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, there were no historical novels or poetic histories of the Merovingians published in France in the 1840s.
[569] Thierry, for example, criticised Radegonde's religious fervour and religion's influence on civilisation generally in his *Récits des temps Mérovingiens*. For this Thierry received a lot of criticism, for example, from Édouard de Fleury, who wrote a religious biography of Radegonde. See Fleury 1843, XI.

Guizot saw the queens' battle as a symbol, in his own words, of a greater clash between the new conquerors (the Franks) and the old inhabitants (the Romans and the Gauls).[570] Even though Guizot named a great number of sources in his work, he cited only Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des Lois* in the passage concerning Fredegonde and Brunehilde. Guizot wrote what might be called "serious political history", which is apparent in the (low) number of women mentioned in his text. The actions described by Guizot are mostly actions of men.[571] Especially in the history of the early Middle Ages, Guizot argued that only the Church upheld civilization, so the clergy had a central place in his writings about the Merovingian period. For Guizot the Great Men were just that – men. It is therefore understandable that some contemporary female historians might have felt that they had to dedicate entire collective biographies to famous women, as the "serious" historians did not even bother to mention most queens.[572] Brunehilde, however, was not a queen to be forgotten, as she was in many cases perceived as an exceptional ruler, and the same may be said to a lesser extent of Fredegonde.

More than ten years after Guizot's work, a fervent Catholic and royalist, Mathieu Richard Auguste Henrion[573] (1805-1862), wrote that:

> […] The rivalry between these two famous queens was only a consequence and a symbol of a greater struggle, or a greater movement that after having driven the Franks into Gaul, pushed Germanic France against Roman France.[574]

Henrion juxtaposed Queen Brunehilde and Queen Fredegonde, the Franks and the Gauls, Germanic France and Roman France. Considering what was generally written about Fredegonde, that she was the only Frank among the best known Merovingian queens, it is interesting that Henrion did not equate Germanic France with Fredegonde and Neustria but with Austrasia. In his eyes, Austrasia was more "Germanic" than Neustria, which was in the more westerly part of today's France. Yet he followed contemporary views about Fredegonde when claiming that her "barbarity" was a contrast with her kingdom's "progressive civilisation". Similarly, he saw Brunehilde's mind as being "full

[570] Guizot 1823a, 74-5.
[571] In Guizot's *Essais* (1823a), whereas "roi" is mentioned a hundred times, "reine" only three times, Clotilde only once and Clovis 18 times.
[572] Guizot did not mention any of the queens in his *Cours de l'histoire moderne/ Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe* (1828).
[573] Henrion had studied law and held a position as avocat à la cour royal. In 1838 he was made a Baron. He was a devout Catholic and royalist, and he published several historiographical works on religious history. He was also a journalist and he contributed to several Catholica and royalist journals. He also worked in the Bibliothèque Mazarine during the July Revolution and after the 1848 he worked, for example, as a counsellor in the court of appeals in Aix. See Nainfa 1910.
[574] Henrion 1837, 47-48. "[…] la rivalité de ces deux fameuses reines ne sera que l'effet et le symbole d'une débat plus général, du mouvement qui, après avoir jeté les Franks sur la Gaule, poussera la France germaine contre la France romaine."

of Roman culture", which contrasted with the culture of savage Austrasia.[575] Thus for Henrion, the juxtaposition of the kingdoms was inversely reflected in the queens and "Germanic" functioned as the opposite of civilisation. Furthermore, it was almost seen as a synonym for barbarism, which was often associated with Fredegonde.

Henrion's writing about the rivalry between the two famous queens, however, was no accident. Exactly the same idea with the same wording can be found in Abel Hugo's *France historique et monumentale,* and there he rightly named François Guizot as the original source for this symbolic comparison between queens and kingdoms.[576] The idea is the same in all three works. Fredegonde's and Brunehilde's rivalry symbolised a greater early medieval conflict, though Guizot did not parallel the queens to civilisation and barbarism. According to Guizot, both kingdoms were controlled by Franks but Neustria was stronger in its geographical location and in its Roman traditions, which favoured a powerful government. Austrasia was more Germanic and despite Fredegonde and Chilperic's strong position in their kingdom, the Germanic influence soon dominated the whole area.[577] Interpreting Guizot literally, the Franks subjugated the Gallo-Romans. For Guizot, the rivalry of the queens symbolised first and foremost their tumultuous era, whereas Henrion also juxtaposed the kings against each other: the virtuous Sigebert against the sinful Chilperic.[578] For Henrion the Merovingian period represented a battle between good and evil, just as it had for Gregory of Tours.

All three historians, Henrion, Hugo and Guizot, presented the same monarchist ideas about the sixth century, even though they did not share other historiographical views. Hugo was a fervent supporter of Napoleon's reign in the 1830s. Guizot was a monarchist and, even though a Protestant himself, pro-Catholic, especially towards the end of the July Monarchy. Henrion, on the other hand, was a strong supporter of the French Catholic Church, which is visible in many of his works. What he had in common with Guizot was the glorification of the Church's role in the early Middle Ages. They both saw the Church as the basis for French civilisation.[579] Guizot's ideas about "civilisation" thus influenced considerably the image of the early medieval queens and the way their "Frenchness" was

[575] Henrion 1837, 51.
[576] Hugo 1857 (II), 100. Guizot's symbolic comparison most probably also influenced Philippe le Bas, who in 1838 wrote that Neustria was more "Roman" than "Germanic" Austrasia, and that just as Austrasia conquered Neustria, so "Germanic" influence conquered the Gallo-Romans. 1838, 122.
[577] Guizot 1823a, 74-5. The comparison is also in a later edition: Guizot 1836, 71. Michelet associated Neustria with Gaul and Austrasia with "Germania", the former with the (Catholic) Church and civilisation, and the latter with barbarism. See also Michelet 1835(I), 221.
[578] Henrion 1837, 48.
[579] Henrion: see Amalvi 2001a, 142; Hugo: see, for example, his work *Histoire de l'Empereur Napoléon* (1836); Guizot: see for example Guizot 1829 (I), 342.

defined by other "serious" historians. Moreover, sharing the symbolism related to the reigns of Brunehilde and Fredegonde demonstrates the spread of historiographical ideas in early nineteenth-century France and the resulting networks. Perhaps Fredegonde and Brunehilde were ideal for these comparisons because they represented the unnaturalness of female rulership to nineteenth-century authors and readers. Female rulership could be associated with negative issues such as struggle and conflict, which would lead the reader to associate masculine rulership with peaceful terms.

Going back to Augustin Thierry, his criticism of saints like Radegonde can also be found in Sismondi's work. Sismondi did not favour *Vitae* as historiographical sources, and he expressed this very clearly in his *Histoire des Français*. Sismondi criticised monks as historians because they could not differentiate between true and believable. Therefore, he recommended ignoring these texts altogether as sources.[580] In this respect Sismondi was somewhat ahead of his time, as later in the so-called "Rankean" (after Leopold von Ranke) historiography hagiographical sources were often considered almost worthless, seen as giving spurious or useless information about the actual lives of the saints they depicted.[581] Despite Sismondi, many of his contemporary historians did see the hagiographical sources as depicting the (*true*) lives of the saints and therefore as useful.[582]

Sismondi's critical attitude is not to be taken as a sign of anti-Catholicism, because he also wrote that "[t]he decadence in this part of the sciences was not universally acknowledged because the seventh century was the century which perhaps provided the largest number of saints in the calendar."[583] So, according to Sismondi, even though the culture was otherwise in a decadent state, the Church upheld civilisation, as it did in Protestant Guizot's historical imagination as well. One should remember that for Sismondi the starting point for France's path towards civilisation was in Clovis' conversion.[584]

Brunehilde, on the other hand, was, according to Sismondi, the mightiest queen the country had seen and the most capable of the Merovingian sovereigns to govern over men. Sismondi pictured

[580] Sismondi 1821 (II), 25.
[581] Rahikainen & Fellman 2012, 19, 22-23.
[582] Guizot somewhat contradicted Sismondi in 1840: "[y]ou will find in the Lives of the Saints more kindness, more tenderness of the heart, a larger role given to affection than in any other work from the period. I will present to you some features and you will be astonished, I am sure, about the development of our sensible nature that shines in the middle of all theories about sacrifice and selflessness." "On trouve, dans les Vies des saints, plus de bonté, plus de tendresse de cœur, une plus large part faite aux affections, que dans tous les autres monuments de cette époque. J'en vais mettre sous vos yeux quelques traits : vous serez frappés, j'en suis sûr, du développement de notre nature sensible, qui éclate au milieu de la théorie du sacrifice et de l'abnégation." Guizot 1840 (II), 39.
[583] Sismondi 1821 (II), 50. "La décadence, dans cette partie des sciences, n'est pas si universellement confessée, parce que le septième siècle est celui peut-être qui a donné le plus de saints au calendrier."
[584] Sismondi 1821 (I), 399.

Brunehilde as equalling all the kings of the "first race" in ferocity, but did not believe the stories about her crimes or "libertine" nature. [585] The "libertine" nature referred to allegations about her having sexual relationships with young men (or even with her own grandsons). Like so many other unpopular or ambiguous queens in history, Brunehilde was accused in many historiographical works of having abnormal sexual relationships after her husband died.[586] Depicting queens as sexually promiscuous was a fairly standard way of defaming them, as we have seen in Queen Marie Antoinette's case.[587] Sismondi, however, was clearly an admirer of Brunehilde and rejected all such ideas of her. In addition, one must keep in mind that many early nineteenth-century historians considered the Merovingian kings as degenerate due to their polygamous habits and what the nineteenth-century historians perceived as extramarital affairs and children. As will become clear, the nineteenth-century historians and authors judged the Merovingian royals from their own moral standpoints and therefore saw their different marital patterns as corrupt and amoral.

As the name of Sismondi's work *Histoire des Français* implied, it was about the history of the French people. Sismondi pictured the two women, Brunehilde and Fredegonde, as living in France. They were made to symbolise French civilisation and the French way of governing.[588] In 1839 *Précis de l'histoire des Français* was published, an abridged version of *Histoire des Français*, and there Sismondi did not see "France" as having so clearly existed in the early Middle Ages. In Sismondi's historical thinking the early sovereigns changed from ruling in France into ruling the Frankish kingdoms. In the earlier work Sismondi seemed to use names such as "l'empire franc" and "France" as synonyms and he only used the word "franc" to refer to persons whose lack of culture he wanted to emphasise. One such person was Chilperic who, according to Sismondi, *pretended* to be civilised by studying Latin and by discussing the language with bishops.[589] Clearly, according to Sismondi, and Guizot, there was nothing as pitiful and pathetic as an uncivilised person pretending to be civilised and educated. This attitude was not only applied to historical persons but was one penetrating the whole of contemporary society: people should not try to be something (better) than they (really) were.

[585] Sismondi 1821 (I), 444-5.
[586] See, for example, Edme Théodore Bourg's (Saint-Edme) edited *Répertoire général des causes célèbres francaises, anciennes et modernes* 1834, 395. "General Repertory of Famous French Court Cases, Old and New".
[587] There are also references to this sexual promiscuity in *Les crimes des reines de France* 1791, 452.
[588] See Sismondi 1821 (I), 463, 359. Only the French had culture and those without it were Franks.
[589] Gregory of Tours mocked King Chilperic's will to study Latin and to change the language: see, for example, book V, ch. 44. 1974, 310-312. See Sismondi 1821 (I), 359. According to Sismondi, Gregory of Tours named Chilpéric "Le Néron de la France" but I hardly think Gregory of Tours knew France would one day exist.

Only women who were seen as behaving contrary to the norms found a place in the emerging academic historiography. Only queens professing, or imagined as professing, political activities were included in large histories of France, most often written by men.The irony of this was that publicly only women with no political ambitions were worshipped and idealised, but in emerging historical research these apolitical women had no place. The saint queens who were pictured as behaving like good women were yet again consigned to oblivion. Fredegonde and Brunehilde were pictured as more significant queens for French history than the Saint Queens Clotilde, Radegonde and Bathilde. The hierarchy was inherited at least in part from Gregory of Tours, who focused heavily on Brunehilde and Fredegonde. The bishop of Tours' words guided subsequent representations of the two queens, even though no historian recognised it directly.

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The July monarchy saw a considerable increase in the number of historiographical works related to the Merovingians, and this affected the representations of queenship(s) compared with the 1820s. The increase was obvious in the number of both academic and popular works. The growth did not, however, concern only historiography, as the whole printing industry grew considerably in this time. The large number of historiographical works signified a more diverse field of representations as each historian and author had an interpretation of his or her own. The material we have suggests that the 1830s was the heyday for large, multi-volume histories of France, whereas the 1840s saw a small reduction in the number of works related to the Merovingians although the number of devotional histories grew slightly. This correlates well with the general number of printed books in France between 1815 and 1881. The number grew almost constantly from 8,000 copies to 1,800,00 at the end of the period.[590]

The 1830 Revolution ensured the disappearance of the French monarchy that tried to imitate the Old Regime, and bourgeois domesticity became a "defining cultural code for the regime."[591] In historiography, the new code was most apparent in biographies of the queens, as we saw in Chapter II. Indeed, the ideal of bourgeois domesticity affected female historians and readers by narrowing down morally and socially acceptable topics for reading and writing. As I have established, the expectations for both royal motherhood and royal marriage changed after the Revolutionary years and the Napoleonic era. The changes did not affect only the current society but also the history of queenship and the way the historical queens were perceived. In 1834 Henri Martin wrote of the

[590] Smith Allen 1991, appendix table A.1. Printers' Declaration in Paris, 1815-1881.
[591] Margadant 1997, 55.

marriage of Sigebert and Brunehilde that "[…] also she was tenderly loved by the king of Austrasie, who married her with great pomp in his city of Metz."[592] The idea of tender love between spouses, especially in aristocratic or royal spheres, was rather new, but it was encouraged actively by Queen Marie Amelie and King Louis Philippe, who provided a model for this kind of marriage. Even the marriage of Brunehilde and Merovech, who was Chilperic's son from a previous marriage, was described by Martin in romantic rather than in political terms.[593] Brunehilde's second marriage, which even Gregory of Tours said little of, was usually interpreted by the early nineteenth-century historians as a love affair rather than a political alliance.[594] Tenderness was never described as having existed in the relationship between Fredegonde and Chilperic, indicating that it was something which belonged only to an ideal (royal) marriage, as in the one Brunehilde contracted with Sigebert. Fredegonde and Chilperic's marriage was associated with passion which, as we will see in the next chapter, was not a positive term in relation to women and marriage. The two marriages were associated with different terms to create hierarchies between them: Brunehilde's marriage was decribed with positive sentiments whereas Fredegonde's marriage was described with terminology associated with carnal sensations.

The effects of the changes in historiography in the 1820s and the new vision of French civilisation only truly blossomed after the July Revolution, when the historians who developed the idea of civilisation were given political authority. But the liberal historians were not the only ones expressing their views on the history of France. Fierce royalists like Peyronnet published their interpretations once their political careers were over following the July Revolution.[595] In addition, other ex-politicians of the Restoration turned their hands newly to history in the 1830s, their previous career having ended, and authors like François René de Chateaubriand published treatises about the history of France and the early Middle Ages.

The idea of civilisation was not just the prerogative of liberal historians, as Chateaubriand proved in his *Analyse raisonnée de l'histoire de France*[596], originally published in 1831. There he argued that "[o]ne should distinguish civilisation from barbarian actions in the crimes of Clothar and Chilperic. Clothar killing with bare hands is savage; the desires to conquer the throne and to

[592] Martin 1834, 257. "[…] aussi fut-elle tendrement aimée du roi d'Austrasie, qui l'épousa en grande pompe dans sa ville de Metz."
[593] Martin 1834, 274.
[594] Gregory of Tours, book V, ch. 22. See, for example, the translation of 1823, 219-220.
[595] According to Pim Den Boer, rightwing legitimists and Catholic historiographers "flourished" during the July Monarchy when their time in active politics had ended. Den Boer 1998, 38.
[596] "Reasoned Analysis on History of France"

enlarge the state are the actions of a civilized man."[597] Savagery could be associated with passion and uncivilised behaviour, something that separated the "cultivated" French from the Germanic Franks. Behaving like a conqueror was thus a civilized action whereas killing was not a civilized act, even though Chateaubriand must have realized that conquering often demanded human lives. According to Graceffa, Chateaubriand did not perceive the Franks as politically, culturally, morally or socially savage.[598] All through the passages where Chateaubriand described the actions of the Merovingian kings, those who he thought constructed the history of the Merovingian period, Chateaubriand proved to be a writer and a historian simultaneously. Gérard Noiriel (2010) proclaimed that all great historians were writers in the early nineteenth century and Chateaubriand proves this point.[599] He described historical events in an exaggerated poetic manner, and who could offer Chateaubriand better poetic scenes than Queen Brunehilde? [600] He wrote that:

> One should not believe all that the good Fortunatus, Gregory of Tours and Saint Gregory, the pope, have said about Brunehilde, nor all the bad that Fredegar has told of her, Aimoin and Adon [?], who, above all, were not the princess' contemporaries. Taking all sides into consideration, she was a brilliant woman whose monuments are still standing. If she were tortured for three days, led on a camel [?] to the middle of a camp site, attached to a tail of a horse and torn into pieces by this untamed animal, it was not to punish her for her adulteries, because she was almost eighty years old. If she had killed ten kings (which has been proven wrong) it would have been more just to punish her with the crime of the princes that she delivered than of those she delivered France from.[601]

Chateaubriand certainly perceived Brunehilde as an exceptional figure, although he warned the reader not to believe everything, good or bad, written about her. It is difficult to say what the quotation tells us about Chateaubriand's overall view of queenship, as he clearly focused on exceptional individuals. But he did picture the representatives of the monarchy as special people in a positive sense, which is not surprising taking into consideration his royalist tendencies.

[597] Chateaubriand 1861, 2. "Dans ces crimes de Clotaire et de Khildebert, distinguez ce qui appartient à la civilisation de ce qui tient à la barbarie. Le massacre par les propres mains de Clotaire est du sauvage ; le désir d'envahir un trône et d'accroître un Etat est de l'homme civilisé."
[598] Graceffa 2008a, 91. See also about Chateaubriand's perceptions of history, Fritzsche 2004, 55-62
[599] Noiriel 2010, 520.
[600] He, for example, compared the engagement of Clotilde and Clovis to the story of the Odyssey. Chateaubriand 1861, 2. Taking into consideration Chateaubriand's earlier works, it is no surprise that he highlighted the Church's role in the Merovingian period and in remembering the Merovingian kings. He wrote "Who would remember Clovis all through the ruins of the centuries? A priest on the grave." "Qui s'était souvenu de Khlovig à travers tant de ruines et de siècles ? un prêtre sur un tombeau." On this comparison, see also Graceffa 2008a, 91.
[601] Chateaubriand 1861, 2. "Il ne faut croire ni tout le bien que Fortunat, Grégoire de Tours et saint Grégoire, pape, ont dit de Brunehaut, ni tout le mal qu'en ont raconté Frédégher, Aimoin et Adon, qui d'ailleurs n'étaient pas contemporains de cette princesse : c'était à tout prendre une femme de génie, et dont les monuments sont restés. Si elle fut mise à la torture pendant trois jours, promenée sur un chameau au milieu d'un camp, attachée à la queue d'un cheval, déchirée et mise en pièces par la course de cet animal fougueux, ce ne fut pas pour la punir de ses adultères, puisqu'elle avait près de quatre-vingts ans. Si elle avait fait mourir dix rois (ce qui est prouvé faux), il eût été plus juste de lui faire un crime des princes qu'elle avait mis au monde que de ceux dont elle avait délivré la France."

Chateaubriand even went so far as to approve the murders possibly carried out by Brunehilde, seeing them as justified and the victims as a threat to "France".[602] The most important objective was to protect "France", which, no doubt, was also Chateabriand's own aim. It is not, however, clear if he saw Brunehilde's "France" as the same "France" he lived in.

Chateaubriand argued that not all Franks were Barbarians. However, they were not completely civilised either, even though they had preserved some of their earlier civilisation.[603] As noted, Chateaubriand blamed Fredegonde and Brunehilde for the wars in the Frankish kingdoms in the latter part of the sixth century, but not once did he associate Fredegonde with barbarism, and, as seen in the previous chapter, on some level he even approved of the early rulers' acts of violence as justified measures of conquests.[604] Yet it should be kept in mind that Chateaubriand himself was a pro-monarchist and even if he was not as fervent as Peyronnet, they still shared a similar vision of history, especially about the Catholic religion and the birth of the French monarchy.[605] One should keep in mind that it was the influence of Chateaubriand's earlier work that made Augustin Thierry perceive the Franks as terrible.[606]

In the July Revolution the idea of civilisation produced favourable representations of Brunehilde. We can see this in Théophile Lavallée's[607] (1804–1867) work *Histoire des Français depuis les temps des Gaulois jusqu'en 1830*[608] (1838). Of all the Merovingian royals, Brunehilde was associated with civilisation and given the credit for bringing Roman civilisation to the Frankish kingdoms.[609] According to Lavallée, she constructed roads and monasteries, protected arts and religion, reformed the clergy's manners and helped to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity.[610] She professed religious good deeds and conserved the arts, which made her a good queen. Among the list of her accomplishments there are only acts convenient to women, nothing much concerned

[602] In the citation Chateaubriand referred to Merovingian kings such as Chilperic, Sigebert and Brunehilde's son and grandsons, all who died violently or in suspicious circumstances.
[603] Chateaubriand 1853, 2, 5.
[604] Chateaubriand 1853, 13. Neither did Jean de Marlès in his study of history of Paris present Fredegonde as a barbarian, though he otherwise depicted her in a very negative way. Instead, he called her son, Clothar II, a Barbarian, for cruelly executing Brunehilde. For Marlès, barbarism was not determined only by character or origin, but by actions as well. Marlès 1837, 30-1.
[605] They had both been politically active in the 1820s, but had withdrawn after the revolution of 1830. Chateaubriand, though, moved often between different parties, from ultras to liberals and to republicans.
[606] Thierry 1842a (II), 22. One should, however, take into consideration that the Franks Thierry referred to were from the Roman Empire period, hundreds of years before the Merovingians.
[607] Lavallée was a répétiteur of geography, statistics, and mathematics in École militaire de Saint-Cyr, a military academy founded in 1802. He published historiographical works, text books for the students of the military academy, and, for example, works on geography.
[608] "History of the French from the Gauls to 1830"
[609] Lavallée 1838, 125.
[610] Lavallée 1838, 137.

with politics. Yet it was, according to Lavallée, her politics that got her killed eventually.[611] Should this be interpreted as meaning that had she dedicated her life only to "good" acts, those proper to women, she would not have died? One should remember that Brunehilde's death was in a sense an act of transition in the history of France, as it enabled a shift in the balance of power within the Merovingian dynasty, and even though many nineteenth-century historians disapproved the violent nature of her death, it was also seen as inevitable. This "inevitability", of course, once again demonstrates the existence of a deterministic vision of history in the early nineteenth-century historiography.

In the 1840s, two interesting works about the Merovingian period were published, perhaps inspired by Thierry's popular *Récit des temps mérovingiens*. The works represent well the slow change in historiographical traditions that occurred in the middle of the nineteenth century: specialization in themes and "professionalisation". The two, unlike many of their contemporary works, focused almost completely on the Merovingian period and, even though presenting history in a chronological order, they had a well-defined theme. Both concentrated on the institutions, politics and laws of the Merovingian period. However, queenship as an institution was not examined in any way in either work. The institution was visible in these works only through individual queens and in the discussion of the Salic law.

The two works that dealt with the Merovingians came out in consecutive years, in 1842 and 1843.[612] The first one came out just before the author Julien Marie Lehuërou died suddenly in 1843 at the age of 36.[613] This work, which he managed to finish, was the above-mentioned *Histoire des institutions mérovingiennes et du gouvernement des Mérovingiens.* The history started from Roman times and the first part ended in the early seventh century, in the reign of Clothar II (d. 628). The second part of the work, which concentrated on the Carolingian period, came out in 1843, and it started where the first part ended. The strange choice of date for the division was due to the author's view that the Merovingians' true power ended with Clothar II's reign and that the following period of (so-called) weak kings, *rois fainéants,* could already be accounted as a Carolingian era.[614]

Lehuërou did have more to say about Queen Brunehilde. He wrote in the first volume of his work that:

[611] Lavallée 1838, 138-139.
[612] The second work, by de Pétigny, was reprinted in 1851.
[613] See Laferrière 1844, 1.
[614] See Lehuërou 1843b, 257.

> This old queen, who arrived in Gaule with the imperial traditions of the Spanish Visigoths and the passions of the Midi, was wholly worthy of the Merovingian barbarism. For half a century (566-615) she governed a considerable part of Gaul with vigour and virile strength, using the indomitable energy of her character to bend violently all to her will, and using her cruelty to overcome all obstacles.[615]

For Lehuërou Brunehilde was not a representative of Roman civilisation but a cruel ruler from Visigothic Spain. Interestingly, he presented her as reigning while her husband was still alive and not only during the minority of her offspring. Clearly Lehuërou depicted her as a very strong, almost masculine, ruler who had faculties comparable to those of kings.

The second work, written by Jules de Pétigny, was entitled *Etudes sur l'histoire, les lois et les institutions de l'époque mérovingienne.*[616] It had three parts, probably all published by 1845. The work won an annual prize from *Académie des Inscriptions* and was praised by Édouard Lauboulaye, whose speech was copied in the introduction of the work's third volume. Laboulaye's influence was thus present in both Lehuërou's and de Pétigny's works, despite the intervening years, because Lehuërou used Laboulaye's work as a model and de Pétigny's work was praised by him.[617] De Pétigny's work heavily emphasised the period before and after Clovis, and despite being in three volumes the time span did not go much beyond that of Gregory of Tours' *Ten Books.* In fact, the work was not so much about the Merovingian rulers as about the establishment of the monarchy and various laws. The third volume included almost 500 pages on the different criminal codes that were used in the Merovingian period. De Pétigny's work was by no means an ordinary narrative history of the early medieval period, even though the queens had only a small role in it. Probably he felt that they had played only a small role in creating the laws or the governmental institutions.

Although the title of de Pétigny's work had the word "institutions" in it, there was no mention of queens or women being excluded from the throne. Even though de Pétigny dedicated a considerable number of pages to the history of the "monarchie Mérovingienne" he had almost nothing to say about the queen's role in it, almost as if the dynasty was constructed entirely of men. It seems that de Pétigny used the word "institution" to mean either a legal institution or the habits and the character ("mœurs") of the Merovingians. Given the small amount of space accorded to the queens,

[615] Lehuërou 1843a, 471. "Cette vieille reine, arrivée dans les Gaules avec les traditions impériales des Wisigoths d'Espagne, et les passions du midi, parut digne en tout de la Barbaire mérovingienne. Pendant un demi-siècle (566-615), elle gouverna une partie considérable des Gaules avec une vigueur et une fermeté toute virile, employant l'indomptable énergie de son caractère à courber violemment toutes les volontés sous la sienne, et sa cruauté à vaincre les obstacles."
[616] "Studies on History, Laws and Institutions of the Merovingian Period"
[617] On de Pétigny's work and his views on the creation of Frankish kingdoms and nation, see also Graceffa 2009b, 61-62. On Lehuërou using Laboulaye's work as a model, see Lehuërou 1843b, IX. Lehuërou discussed in the introduction several contemporary works he used (or did not use) to create his own work.

he must have thought either that the nature of queenship was not an important question deserving of discussion (for instance, compared with the debate on how the Franks arrived in Gaul), or that it had already been handled sufficiently by earlier authors.

Considering the power used by women, de Pétigny briefly wrote in the context of Clotilde's marriage that "[p]ower did not belong by inheritance to women in the Roman world or among the Barbarian nations of the Teutonic race, but we have seen several circumstances where women were recognized as having the right to relay power to their husbands."[618] De Pétigny used these lines to explain the marriage of the Burgundian princess Clotilde with Clovis, because he saw that Clovis had hoped to gain Burgundy with the marriage. One should remember that in France women could not pass the throne to their husbands or even to their sons. De Pétigny thus implicitly explained how the norms of transmitting power had changed since the Merovingian dynasty, even though he presented this possibility of transferring power as an exceptional case.

De Pétigny mentioned Brunehilde and Fredegonde in the third volume of his work. Whereas he had not said anything evaluative about Clotilde, he did make judgements about these two queens.[619] For example, he described Brunehilde as a "foreigner", which clearly was not a positive term.[620] He wrote that "[s]he came from a race disgusting to the Germanic people, and having received an education of a Roman woman, whose taste, vices and weaknesses she had […]."[621] Roman civilisation represented negative qualities to de Pétigny, but he did not elaborate these qualities further although he obviously valued the Germanic qualities over the Roman ones. Neither of the authors, de Pétigny or Lehuërou, discussed the Salic Law or how it might have affected women's exclusion from the throne. In these two works that focused on the institutions and laws of the Merovingian period, the failure even to mention women's possible inheritance of the throne tells us how insignificant the topic was perceived to be in the later July Monarchy period, especially in the eyes of the two "academic" historians. Brunehilde, who got the power through her male heirs, was not depicted as a queen but as an extraordinary individual.

[618] Pétigny 1851 (II), 401. "Le pouvoir d'appartenait pas héréditairement aux femmes dans l'empire romain ni chez les nations barbares de race teutonique; mais nous avons vu dans plusieurs circonstances qu'on leur reconnaissait souvent le droit de le transmettre à leur époux."
[619] Pétigny 1851 (II), 400-415.
[620] Pétigny 1851 (III), 39.
[621] Pétigny 1851 (III), 39. "Sortie d'une race odieuse aux Germains, ayant recu l'éducation d'une Romaine dont elle avait les goûts, les vices et les faiblesses [...]."

Both de Pétigny and Lehuërou described Brunehilde in rather negative terms but as a powerful queen. In their descriptions both historians blamed her "race" for her vices but this "race" did not seem to be Germanic in their historical thinking. In fact, in this context both of them seemed to associate the Germanic "race" and positive values and the Roman "race" and negative concepts. Many historians perceived quite the contrary and thus there was no unanimity among them about the role of Brunehilde, but in general one can argue that her reputation benefitted from the idea of civilisation, because new meanings such as the positive values of Roman (high) culture were associated with her. Anquetil had not made any references to Brunehilde preserving Roman culture, but subsequent historians increasingly emphasised her abilities to govern rather than her alleged crimes. Consequently more pages were dedicated to her history once she was accepted among the rulers of the Frankish kingdoms. Why, then, did some historians see her as a negative and others as a positive representative of Roman (high) civilisation? Perhaps it was not so much to do with her but to do with the theories of Roman influence in Gaul and in the Frankish kingdoms: she was made to represent the conflicting political approaches to the question of the early stages of Frankish dynasties and French aristocracy.

I have examined in this section the ways in which especially Queen Brunehilde was represented in the emerging academic historiography from the 1820s to the 1840s. The examined works do not represent, obviously, the whole of the era's historiography, but do make visible the change both in historiography and in the representations of Brunehilde, from a narrative story to a detailed examination of institutions and laws. The representations of Brunehilde as a ruler and as a politician survived the change in historiography that marginalized women and separated the genres into masculine and feminine. Yet the works that relied on a chronological plotting of Merovingian history, and of the whole history of France, had more room for female actors, also as authors and as readers, than the emerging academic tradition. The narrative form permitted historians to present what they perceived as progress in French history, which was an important part of the remarkably popular nationalist narrative.

3.3. Early Medieval Queenship in Nationalist Historiography

The early nineteenth century was a time when nationalism was born in its modern form and it became highly popular among historians, politicians and intellectuals. However, as many historians have shown, early nineteenth-century nationalism had its roots in earlier forms of national thinking,

or one could say in earlier forms of national feelings. In the eighteenth century and before, nationalistic thoughts or feelings usually affected only the elites of society.[622] In the first half of the nineteenth century nationalism was limited to certain elements of society, but by the latter part of the century it had the support of the masses. The first half of the nineteenth century can thus be seen as a transition period from elite nationalist culture to the mass culture that blossomed in late nineteenth-century Europe.[623] In this section I analyse how the nationalistic ideas that found their way into historiography affected the representations of Merovingian queenship(s). As noted, together with the new interest in the Middle Ages nationalistic ideas led many historians to pay special attention to the medieval history of France and to seek the nation-state's origins there.[624] However, historians were not simply influenced by the new ideas; they also shaped and adapted them. The king also had a role in the French nation. According to Bradford C. Brown, King Louis Philippe was perceived to have two roles in regard to the nation: he represented the nation's interest and saw himself as the mentor for its moral education.[625] The king was thus necessary in two senses: he incarnated the nation's desires and simultaneously he was morally above it.

Historians thrilled by the nationalistic ideas influenced the image of the French queens by re-defining what "Frenchness" meant and what they perceived as important in the history of France.[626] In 1830, according to the French historian Grégoire Franconie (2009), nation replaced religion as a confirmation of the union between people and its monarch. Still in 1818 Louis XVIII had affirmed that religion consecrated the union between the people and the king. The Charter of 1830 did uphold the idea of the person of a king as inviolable and sacred, but the contract between king and nation was sealed by Louis Philippe in 1830. The justification for his kingship came from the nation, not from "divine Providence".[627] This made him a citizen king.[628] The kingship was not, however, left without any sacrality and the king became a (self identified) "sacred citizen", "sainteté citoyen".[629] Franconie argues that Louis Philippe presented himself as the father and the saviour of the nation.[630] The ideas of, or the mental constructions of nation and monarchy were thus closely

[622] Caspar Hirschi, lecture in Radboud University, 22.1.2015.
[623] On nationalism in Europe, see also Salmi 2008, 60-61.
[624] For medievalism and nationalism, see also Evans 2014, 155.
[625] Brown 2012, 22.
[626] A criticism of French nationalistic historiography that most would find valid nowadays is that although women constitute half of the French nation, they do not have the space in historiography that this entitles them to. In the early nineteenth-century this criticism was presented by Monteil 1835 (II), 389. About Monteil, see also Leterrier 1997, 319.
[627] Price 2007, 192.
[628] Franconie 2009, 97.
[629] Franconie 2009, 98.
[630] Franconie 2009, 101-102.

associated in the early nineteenth century, especially in the July Monarchy, because the concept of nation was used in political discourse to justify the change of regime.

There were several nationalistic approaches to the history of France in the early nineteenth century and one was presented by Auguste Nougarède de Fayet[631] (1811-1853) in his *De la conquête de Clovis*[632] (1843). Nougarède de Fayet is also a splendid example of the difficulty of categorising historians according to their writings alone. His father had been an active politician in Napoleon I's reign and the son had very positive opinions about an emperor ruling in France. He highlighted the role of Great Men in the history of France, even over the role of nation. His work on Clovis was, however, mostly written to criticise the theories of François Guizot and Augustin Thierry. Nougarède de Fayet, for example, criticised their use of sources and their interpretation of Franks as a completely barbaric people. Of course this criticism was not only about an interpretation of history, but a collision between conflicting political views. Nougarède de Fayet's father had been pro-Napoleon and the Restoration had ended his career. The son therefore had no sympathy for monarchists like Guizot and Thierry.[633] According to Nougarède de Fayet, nationalities or races had not been a *primus motor* for historical events, as national hatred merely followed political events. He argued that wars were not started out of national hatred but for economic and political reasons and only afterwards did the hatred become one of the motivating factors in a war. Accordingly, he concluded that the wars of the Merovingian kingdoms were not due to "rivalry of the races" as he called it, but for economic benefit. He declared that the great masses of people did not achieve anything alone but only with the help of Great Men such as Napoleon and Louis XIV.[634] Here we see clearly the nineteenth-century emphasis on individual actors and acts that are worth remembering.

Nougarède de Fayet was plainly a follower of what might be called the cult of Clovis because he saw the Frankish king as one of the great men in the history of France. However, he saw the Franks neither as a horde of barbarians nor as liberators of the oppressed Gauls. Rather, he highlighted the economic motives behind conquests and wars, in this way undermining the idealistic image of nations as unified groups of people. He also seemed to oppose the liberal historians' view of Franks

[631] He was a son of a baron, a lawyer, and studied in École polythecnique. He published a lot of academic writings about history and on technical matters. He was also a representative of Aveyron in the early 1850s up until his death. He favoured the politics of Napoleon III. His father had been in the service of Napoleon Bonaparte and apparently lost his positions as a result of the Restoration.
[632] "About the Conquest of Clovis"
[633] Nougarède de Fayet 1843, 38-9, 49, 7. According to Robert Morrissey, Guizot admired great men such as Napoleon. Morrissey 2001, 159.
[634] Nougarède de Fayet 1843, 53-56.

as the oppressors of the Third Estate. Even though his views belonged to a minority, his writings demonstrate that there were not one but several nationalistic theories existing in early nineteenth-century French historiography. Nougarède de Fayet's emphasis on re-evaluating contemporary nationalistic view(s) of history led to presentation of the Merovingian queens in a different light. One might presume that an essay about Clovis would have something to say about Saint Clotilde, but in fact the author had more to say about Fredegonde and Brunehilde. He used the two queens to represent the two parties or races so often contrasted in early nineteenth-century historiography: Fredegonde and the Franks as opposed to Brunehilde and the Gallo-Romans.[635] It seems that the author wanted to defend these women against false accusations of murders and crimes, and although his aim was to criticise contemporary historians for giving only anecdotes about the Merovingian period, at the same time he managed to create a more neutral image of the actions of Brunehilde and Fredegonde. Perhaps to use the juxtapostion was also to defend the Franks against the accusations of the liberal historians he criticised so much in his work.

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The notion of nation has sparked a lot of discussion ever since it developed into something approaching its modern meaning. The meaning of the concept was being redefined in the nineteenth century, a process that has continued ever since.[636] There was not one but several concepts of what the word "nation" meant in France between the years 1815 and 1848. Charles Cottu, a liberal monarchist politician who also wrote the *Guide Politique de la Jeunesse*, defined a nation in 1838 as follows: "[a nation] ends where its language, first degenerated into a patois, becomes another language, a foreign language."[637] Language was (and is) one of the most important factors in national identity. Philological studies were very popular in early nineteenth-century France and this popularity emphasised the role of language in defining a nation. Yet, as Eric Hobsbawn has argued, in 1789 only half of the French spoke the French language and only 12-13 % spoke the language correctly.[638]

According to the American historian David A. Bell, the birth of French nationalism in its modern form started in 1789 with, for example, new educational programs and the enlarging of the borders between 1789 and 1799. Regarding the French language, it was only following the revolutionary

[635] Nougarède de Fayet 1843, 28-30.
[636] Indeed, it seems that both the concept and the realities change constantly. See Koselleck (1994) in Arcangeli 2012, 33-34.
[637] Cottu 1838, 11. "Elle finit là où sa langue, dégénérée d'abord en patois, devient enfin *une autre langue, une langue étrangère*."
[638] Hobsbawm 1994, 71.

years that the necessity for all French to speak and understand the same language was created, according to Bell. But of course this "nationalist program" was not created unanimously or instantly, as there were many conflicts between theory and practice in the program.[639]

It was *conscious* nation-building that was new after the revolutions in the late eighteenth century. This conscious nation-building was visible in the writings of many French historians in the first half of the nineteenth century – they were constructing a nation even though they thought it obvious that the nation, in this case France, already existed as a coherent community, or at least had done in various forms in the past. According to Bell, nationalism in the twenty-first-century is "the idea of the nation as a political artifact whose construction takes precedence over all other political tasks."[640] This way of perceiving nationalism was born only in the eighteenth century. In France nationalism was originally based on religion and this basis, among others, changed considerably after the French revolution. In fact, nineteenth-century nationalism was not a coherent movement, as nationalists were divided by their views on how the nation should be realised, whether through republican, monarchist or any other idealism. Nationalistic ideas were transformed even from the Restoration to the July Monarchy, according to Bell. During the Restoration a compromise between the Old Regime and the Revolution was sought, whereas there was a stronger leaning towards revolutionary ideas in the July Monarchy.[641] As regards queenship the bourgeois view of queenship belonging to the domestic sphere during the July Monarchy and this idea also had its roots in the revolutionary era. Thus the nationalism(s) found in historiographical works in the early decades of the nineteenth century were mutations of the eighteenth century ideas just as the entire historiographical tradition was.

In the work of Anquetil, which was much criticised by subsequent historians for its uncritical use of sources, nations had very little place on the textual level. Of course, as mentioned earlier a concept does not need a word to exist, but it is nevertheless significant that Anquetil did not use the word. Anquetil, however, wrote about "France" in the context of the Merovingian period and he clearly perceived France as having existed in the early medieval period. As noted, this interpretation slowly disappeared from the 1820s onwards in the emerging academic historiography, although it persisted in popular discourse almost throughout the nineteenth century. The changes in concepts related to historical structures were also visible in Sismondi's works, which were examined in the previous

[639] Bell 2015. Peter Sahlins has also argued that France prior to the Revolutions was "imagined national space" without any true uniformity, linguistic or otherwise. See Hillman 2011, 5.
[640] Bell 2001, 198.
[641] Bell 2001, 204.

section: “France” was transformed into a Frankish kingdom from the *Histoire des Français* of the 1820s to its *Précis* published in the 1830s. The changes most likely resulted from several factors, including criticism of earlier historiographical traditions, new reading of sources and the new way of perceiving the royal family. The concept of civilisation and its theoretical basis made it possible to perceive the Merovingian period as not yet French, but as a sort of proto-France, its archaic form or *enfance*, childhood.[642]

Eric Hobsbawm has argued that we can identify three phases in the history of national movements. The first was in the nineteenth century: “[i]n nineteenth-century Europe, for which it was developed, phase A was purely cultural, literary and folkloric, and had no particular political or even national implications […].”[643] In early nineteenth-century France historiography was political in many ways, but history was not the only force guiding politics nor was history purely propagandist. In a sense historiography was still innocent and idealistic by comparison with the political historiography written a hundred years later. Nationalism, the idea of “nation”, and constructing a “nation” was, however, an important justification for a growing number of historiographical works. Historians perceived that all French people should know their history in order to become better members of the “nation” and better citizens. In other words, historians should teach their readers that they belonged to a nation called France. This can be deduced from the repetition of “nation” over and over again in all historiographical writings.

A representative example of a historian teaching readers about the history of France is the work of Laure Boen de Saint-Ouen, who directed a question to the working class readers in her text book *Histoire de France* (1830 edition), which was an interesting *mélange* inspired by both the 1820s liberal historians and their ideas about French civilisation and by the eighteenth-century lack of source criticism:

> But how much time to reading can those whose time is consumed almost entirely by the work of agriculture or the practice of another useful occupation dedicate? Don't you have, I will ask, any spare time, in the evening, even in the summer, or even better, in

[642] The whole Middle Ages could be seen as a childhood of civilisation. For example, Victor Hugo in his *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) presented the Middle Ages as the “pitiless childhood of humanity”. Hamnett 2011, 121. Also Caroline Falaize described the early Frankish kingdoms as the infancy of Barbarism. Falaize 1848, 17. According to Laurent Avezou, the Merovingian period was also seen up until the early nineteenth-century as an “anti-mémoire politique”, the opposite of good government with all its “barbarian actions“, “murders” and “degenerate kings”. Avezou 2013b, 50-51.

[643] See Zuelow and http://www.nationalismproject.org/what.htm accessed July 24 2015. Hobsbawm continues with phases B and C: “In phase B we find a body of pioneers and militants of 'the national idea' and the beginnings of political campaigning for this idea. […] phase C when - and not before - nationalist programmes acquire mass support, or at least some of the mass support that nationalists always claim they represent.” See also Hobsbawm 1994, 20-21.

> the long winter evenings? Why not make the most of them by reading, every evening as a family, some pages of our country's history?[644]

She wanted to involve the whole family in reading and learning the history of France. The will to instruct the lower classes[645] and especially to make them familiar with "their own" history is clear. Here the notions of nation and class went hand in hand, because instructing the members of the working class was one of the means to make them citizens of the new French nation.[646]

According to Graceffa (2009), Augustin Thierry did not perceive the Merovingian kingdoms as a "nation" but rather as a confederation. Graceffa argues that Thierry's view was shared by almost all contemporary historians whatever their political or religious views.[647] I do not see the question in such simple terms, as I have found variations in the way the Merovingian kingdom's unity (or lack of it) was perceived. Even though Thierry was an influential historian, his writings did not influence all contemporary historians in the first half of the nineteenth century. Simonde de Sismondi wrote that the "nations germaniques" had helped Sigebert when he had entered Gaul.[648] However, like Thierry, Sismondi did not see the German tribes as having had any high level of civilisation.

The diversity in the use of "nation" becomes clear from a survey of several works. Théodose Burette wrote in 1843 that with Clovis the obscure tribe of Franks became a powerful "nation" in the late fifth century.[649] According to Burette, one man could change the faith of a tribe and guide it on its path to become France. Burette believed that the Franks constituted a nation in the same way as the French would do later. In addition to Burette, who was a professor of history and a text book author, Adélaïde Celliez, a biographer and a prize winning author with an essay about suicide[650], thought that there were other nations in Gaul contemporaneous to the Franks. These nations were, according to Celliez, barbarian, but nations all the same. Amable Tastu, a text book author and a

[644] Saint-Ouen 1830, 5."Mais quel moments pourront donner au lecture les personnes dont les travaux de l'agriculture ou l'exercice d'une profession utile réclament les temps presque entier ? N'avez-vous pas, leur demanderai-je, quelque loisir, le soir, même en été, et bien davantage dans les longues soirées d'hiver ? Pourquoi n'en pas profiter pour lire, chaque jour en famille, quelques pages de l'histoire de notre pays ?"

[645] It was actually quite rare that historians wrote *to* the working class instead *about* the working class. See Scott 1999, 54. According to Graceffa, Catholic historians perceived the "people" primarily as a Christian one, whereas following Thierry "people" were from various backgrounds but united by their (poor) state, legitimate to form a nation. Graceffa 2009b, 65, 68.

[646] Moralizing aspects were very common in many nineteenth-century French works. According to Martyn Lyons, the moralizing works were very popular in the nineteenth century because religious and secular authorities wanted to instruct the readers and promote moral standards. Lyons 2008, 37-38.

[647] Graceffa 2009b, 60.

[648] Sismondi 1821 (I), 338.

[649] Burette 1843 (I), 78 & 90.

[650] Her essay, published in 1838, was called *Du Suicide* and it won a prize from the Académie des science, belles-lettres de Besancon.

poet, perceived that there were several nations existing simultaneously.[651] It is not clear how these nations were constructed in the minds of these historians, because they all used the word without any explication, which was quite typical of the early nineteenth century. It is possible that the word "nation" was sometimes used simply to refer to a certain group of people without deeper meanings, thus in a different way than Thierry. Despite the exceptions that I presented, the notion of nation seems to have been most often associated with France or its perceived ancestral peoples ("races") in the context of the early Middle Ages, and only rarely used for ethnic groups such as the Visigoths. This emphasis is understandable, as the primary intention of most authors was to study and describe the history of France and its development as a "nation".

Tastu wrote in her text book *Cours d'histoire de France* (1836) that the judgment of the "nation" would decide against Brunehilde and "her race".[652] In other words, Tastu thought that Brunehilde's family had became very unpopular, but it appears that she wanted to present this supposed unpopularity as very widespread and therefore she posited it as existing even among ordinary people. Was it, according to Tastu, the nation's will to have Brunehilde executed? Did she see Clothar II, the king who decided on the execution, only as a tool for the nation? Perhaps Tastu wanted to justify the killing of Brunehilde by claiming that it had been desired by all and that all disliked her. Tastu thus found a nation in the Merovingian period in order to justify the past actions of the kings and queens. Brunehilde's violent death was present in all writings about the Merovingian period because it was quite extraordinary event even in a period presented as an inherently violent. Like Brunehilde's character, also the death divided the historians: some saw it as a justified punishment for her crimes, some as a result of Clothar II's politics, some as a representative act of the Merovingian barbaric cruelty.

The idea of one's own nation being the most civilised one was apparent in French historians' narratives of the history of France. Yet there are and always have been several types of nationalisms and in early nineteenth-century France there were several co-existing contradictory and conflicting historical narratives. As the historian Lloyd Kramer argued in 1997, no definitive narrative exists about nineteenth-century nationalism, and probably never will, despite various theories of nationalism and studying the object from multiple angles.[653]

[651] Tastu 1836, 19.
[652] Tastu 1836, 22.
[653] Kramer 1997, 525-545.

It is reasonable to ask what role was given to queenship in these nationalistic interpretations, because monarchy and the French royals had a central place in many early nineteenth-century interpretations of the history of the French nation, and often the history of France was still constructed according to the reigns of various kings and queens. The progressive view on the nation's history did not always include queenship because in many historiographical narratives queenship never changed or evolved. If it changed at all, it evolved into the passive role of queen and woman I presented in the Chapter II. In the early nineteenth century progress was not seen to signify advancement in women's political activity but rather advancement in their domestic role. The more women had a place in politics, the less civilised the society was seen to be. The nation most often did not include individuals but only a (masculine) people which lead many historians to ignore even the position of most visible women, the queens. Perhaps consciously historians wanted to justify women's invisibility by not giving them a role in history and presenting gendered institutions to have always been similar as they were in the early nineteenth century.

The concept of nation was related to historiography with the task assigned to historians: selecting what is worth remembering.[654] A good example comes from analysing the role of Bathilde and Radegonde in the emerging academic historiography, especially that written by the 1820s generation. The two queens were almost completely left out from this genre, which was almost invariably produced by male historians, and they were only remembered in the devotional and moral historiographical tradition. Does this mean that the "serious" historians did not consider them worth remembering? That they were not essential for the formation of the French nation? According to the Catholic interpretation of French national history they were, whereas many historians defined as liberals, like Guizot, seemed to regard these queens as secondary figures. In local traditions of writing history saint queens such as Radegonde were more important.[655] I see that leaving out queens such as Radegonde and Bathilde from the narratives of French history was a conscious decision and it highlighted history's and politic's masculine aspects.

The nationalistic view of history affected the depiction of Merovingian queenship in historiography in several ways. Firstly, this view augmented the number of works written about history, which in turn made the queens better known among readers. Secondly it highlighted the birth of the monarchy and turned many historians' attention to the early Middle Ages because, especially in the

[654] The role of history in creating a "nation" is a factor that Anthony D. Smith (1994) emphasises in his definition of the concept. He points out different approaches to the question of the role of history or the past in creating a "nation" and explains that for most nationalists the role of the past is often unproblematic and clear. They remember or they forget the past. See Zuelow and http://www.nationalismproject.org/what/smith1.htm accessed July 24 2015.
[655] See, for example, Folz 1992, 19-24.

1830s, the nation was associated with the monarchy. Individual queens could be seen as either advancing the nation, as Brunehilde was seen as doing, or retarding its progress. A completely different story is the nationalistic ideal of Republican France where, naturally, queenship caused no problems as no monarchy could exist there. Therefore only royalists and monarchists had a "problem" with the queenship. However, most nineteenth-century Republicans did also argue for women's exclusion from the public political sphere, just like the monarchists and royalists, and thus in this sense they all shared a similar conception of gender roles in French society.[656]

Nations have no histories unless historians, authorities or authors give those histories and nationalism always stems from the moment of acting it out. Since the birth of modern theories of nations, history has played an essential part in the process of creating them but historiography has been used on many occasions to create uniform pictures of "nations" and this was also the case in early nineteenth-century France, where historian-politicians were in the frontline emphasising and creating national histories. There is not one but several histories and often the contents vary according to the historian in question. Nationalism was not an agent itself and it did not affect anybody, humans only affected other humans.[657] Historians and writers sought and found nationalistic feelings among the early medieval groups and draw conclusions to support the arguments of their own time. According to the French historian Françoise Mélonio, in the 1820s "race" and "nation" replaced kings as the engines of history, and therefore I will next look at the "race" of the queens. [658]

3.4. The Queen's Race

Amable Tastu, who published poems and text books about history of France, wrote in 1836 that the "nation's" judgement had decided against Brunehilde's "race" in the trial that lead to the queen's execution. The race referred to Brunehilde's family as the two words, "race" and "family", were often used as synonyms. I now analyse further the concept of race which was widely used in early nineteenth-century historiography, and had a close association with the nationalistic perceptions of history. Many historians wrote about races in French and Frankish history, and the word can often be found in narratives about the Merovingian queens. Augustin Thierry, for example according to

[656] Foley 2004, 116.
[657] See Roberts 2001, 5-6. Roberts is referring in his text to the philosopher M. C. Lemon.
[658] Mélonio 1998, 133.

historian M. Seliger, confused all the time the terms "race" and "nation".[659] Also according to Foucault, the notion of nation used by Guizot and Thierry, among others, was "vague, fluid, shifting".[660] Therefore it is important to see what meanings the race included and moreover, what meanings it did not include.

After 1815 French historiography focused mostly on the history and culture of different ethnic groups. The notion of nation was very ambiguous because there has never been a consensus on how it should be defined. As noted, for some historians a nation was defined by the language.[661] Other historians had no such restrictions and they used the term in a very general sense. This was the case especially during the Restoration. The important thing, however, in all *national* histories in France was the way history was perceived as a dynamic process including several stages and involving an inevitable progression.[662] All periods in history had a role in this process, albeit not always in a positive sense. The Merovingian period was generally seen, by all parties and groups, as the lowest stage, especially in "cultural development", even though it also represented the starting point for French Catholic Christianity. However, it was not just the Christian nation that was born of the baptism of Clovis but also a race. The expression "race de Clovis" was used to refer to all the Merovingian kings, as Clovis I was often seen as the Merovingians' "progenitor".[663]

Race was used to define different social, ethnic and cultural groups in history. The concept has very negative connotations in twentieth- and twenty-first-century historiography as a result of its use as a biological determiner. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century it generally had no biological bearing, as was seen in Tastu's description of Brunehilde's "race".[664] The textbook author Laure Boen de Saint-Ouen wrote in her very popular textbook of history, used in French schools until the 1880s, that "[t]he kings of France are divided into three races or families who successively occupied the throne."[665] Saint-Ouen thus drew a parallel between family, dynasty, and race, as Tastu did. It is

[659] Thierry often applied the ambiguous concept of "race" in different periods of history. The concept of "nation" was popular among the contemporaries of Thierry, although it was as unsuitable as "race" to describe early medieval social, geographical and cultural groups, especially without proper definition. Seliger 1958, 274, 282. On these concepts and their use, see Graceffa 2008b, 18.
[660] Foucault 2003, 142.
[661] Graceffa 2008b, 21-22.
[662] Crossley 1993,4
[663] See, for example, Tastu 1837, 9.
[664] There were works such as *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853, "Essay on the Inequality of Human Races") by Joseph Arthur Gobineau where the idea of races was acquiring biological dimensions. This work was later very popular among the Nazis because the writer highlighted the role of Aryans in universal history and concluded that the concurrence of races was one of the engines of history.
[665] Saint-Ouen 1830, 9. "On divise les rois de France en trois races ou familles, qui occupèrent successivement le trône." See Boureau for structuring history according to the three "races" of kings. According to Boureau, the system of three races of kings has been in use since the sixteenth century. Boureau 2001, 187. It is noteworthy that even though

noteworthy that the word "family" at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and earlier, was not understood uniquely as a biological unity either.[666]

Race could thus also refer to a more restricted family than to "the family of kings". Paulin Paris, a professor of medieval French language and literature in the Collège de France, claimed that with Brunehilde's death ended "la race de Sigebert", meaning that Brunehilde was the last member of Sigebert's non-biological family.[667] This is interesting give that the Merovingians were often perceived as a race in which women had no role because they were excluded from the throne. The contradictory use clearly demonstrates the lack of unanimity among historians on the definition and implications of the concept "race". One reason could be the lack of clear historiographical authority defining the use of the concept and also that it had not yet been associated with biology.

Many historians saw the early medieval population as having been mostly Franks or from Frankish origins, so that the Gallo-Romans were often left out of history altogether. Even those who wrote about "France" saw it as inhabited by Franks, like Sismondi in his *Précis de l'Histoire de France* (1839). Sismondi simultaneously referred to France and the Franks in the context of the fifth century. This simultaneous existence did not seem contradictory because, as noted, France was for him more than a geographical area or a state; it was a certain type of civilisation.[668] There was no concept resembling "nationality" as understood in the nineteenth century in the Merovingian era and yet nationalities were identified by the early nineteenth-century historians in Gregory's *Ten Books*. [669] One should keep in mind that historians such as Augustin Thierry truly imagined Gregory of Tours looking at his surrounding society, and the Franks, in the same way as he did.[670]

Saint-Ouen relied on the eighteenth-century views on monarchy it does not make her an "Ultra" but rather reveals how the 1820s show a certain continuity with eighteenth-century historiography.

[666] Graceffa 2008b, 18. Furthermore, there are no expressions such as "family of the Franks", so that, although "family" was sometimes used as a synonym for "race" or "dynasty", it had a more restricted definition.

[667] Paris S.A.,18. (Brunehauld) In another instance Paris claimed that Sigebert was the "hero of the Merovingian family" (Paris S.A., 3). Both terms, family and race, functioned as unifiers of a certain group of people who had more legal and symbolic ties than biological ties.

[668] Sismondi 1839, 37-38. As already mentioned, Peyronnet also saw France as having been inhabited by Franks in the Merovingian era. Peyronnet 1835 (I), 74, 118, 229.

[669] According to Walter Goffart (1982), a historian who has specialised in the early medieval historians, Gregory of Tours quite often defined individuals as belonging to a specific ethnic or national group but only rarely described any specific feature associated with these groups. One such occasion when Gregory did mention "Frankish habits" was related to Queen Fredegonde. Even though Gregory often defined who was a Frank and who was something else ethnicity was not as important for him as the religious status of a person or the city of origin. I agree with Walter Goffart that Gregory of Tours was not always very consistent in categorizing persons, some according to their *natio* (Frankish etc.), some according to religion and some according to birthplace. In any case, it seems that ethnicity carried less weight for Gregory of Tours than for the nineteenth-century historians. Goffart 1982, 81-82. Laurent Avezou agrees that for Gregory of Tours "nationalities" or ethnicities were not as important as the religious orientation of the society. Avezou 2013b, 34.

[670] See Aali 2014a, 17-31.

The word "Frank" has a long history as it comes from the Latin word *Franci*, which was already used in the reign of Childebert I (d. 558) in a text called *Decretio Childebertii Regis*.[671] In the French language the word *Franc* became established in the seventeenth century as meaning "a member of Germanic peoples who, on the eve of the great invasions, inhabited the shores of the Rhine and maritime regions of Belgium and Holland." The word was also used as an adjective from 1721 forwards.[672] In the study of François Hotman (1524-1590), Fredegonde was represented as a Frank in a positive sense: as the member of the new (ruling) class of Francs. In the revolutionary years at the end of the eighteenth century both Fredegonde and Brunehilde became negative figures associated with the aristocrats who "oppressed" the subjugated "Third Estate".

Of the two queens Fredegonde was not always pictured as the worst, but rather, as Graceffa has shown, in the Old Regime she was pictured as a positive representative of the Frankish, aristocratic class.[673] So, even if Fredegonde's Frankish nature had roots in sixteenth-century French historiography, and originally in Gregory of Tours' writings, it was not until the end of the eighteenth century, in the revolutionary years, that these Frankish roots were turned against her. In the same way the whole idea of the Frankish aristocratic class was transformed into one of an oppressing class to justify the change in regime. Similarly, the roles of Brunehilde and Fredegonde were turned upside down in the late eighteenth-century historiographical imagination. Brunehilde gradually became represented as the "good" queen when the juxtaposition of the two queens became more and more an essential part of historiography that focused on the Merovingian period.[674]

Fredegonde was often defined by her barbarism. [675] According to the dictionary of the Academie française (6th edition, 1832-5) "Barbarian" was rather closely connected and juxtaposed with civilisation:

> Barbarian […] It signifies figuratively, savage, vulgar, ignorant, [one] who lacks civilisation. *It is a Barbarian people. The Greeks called Barbarians all those who did not speak their language, all foreigners; the Romans named all other people barbarian, except the Greeks. The barbarian nations, Barbarian kings. Rude and barbarian manners*."

[671] See "Franc": http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/franc, accessed July 28 2015.
[672] See "Franc": http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/franc, accessed July 28 2015.
[673] Graceffa 2008b, 4-5.
[674] There were also other periods in history when Brunehilde had been rehabilitated. See Dumézil 2008, 415-420.
[675] For example Lacépède described Fredegonde in his work *Histoire générale, physique et civile de l'Europe* (1828) as a "bloodthirsty barbarian". Lacépède 1826a (I), 308. Also Martin (1834, 283), Lavallée (1838, 131), Michelet (1835 (I), 221), Thierry and Henrion called her a barbarian. Also Maraise called her a barbarian (1821, 84-5) but he did not connect it with her Frankish origins.

> It is also used as a noun with expressions such as Savage, vulgar, ignorant, people or men lacking civilisation.[676]

Calling Fredegonde a barbarian was not a nineteenth-century invention.[677] Some historians saw barbarism as an optional characteristic and not as an inherent feature. According to the liberal historian Théodose Burette, Guntram was the first Frankish king to renounce his barbaric nature.[678] Burette thus saw it as possible to be a Frank without being a barbarian at the same time, and that this was a question of choice. The possibility to choose signified that being barbarian was a serious flaw, as certain persons knowingly chose "wrongly", like heretics. Burette's interpretation made barbarism seem more a form of behaviour than a nature. In Fredegonde's case, however, historians never described barbarism as a chosen behaviour but as a predestined or inherited nature that guided her actions. Foucault intrestingly emphasised the difference between savage and barbarian in his writing about French historiography. He argued that in the eighteenth century the difference was that a barbarian was a barbarian in comparison to civilisation. A savage was only savage as long as he or she did not have contact with a civilised society. A barbarian, on the other hand, existed outside the civilisation but a civilisation had to exist in order for the barbarians to exist. A barbarian wants to destroy civilisation and is arrogant, wicked, cruel, and bad. [679] Thus calling Fredegonde a barbarian implied that there was a civilisation and Fredegonde was a barbarian by comparison to it. Furthermore, it implied that Fredegonde wanted to destroy the civilisation, perhaps as Germans were sometimes imagined as wanting to destroy France.

"Race" was used most often in historiography to refer to Franks. A historian of French nationalism, Eugen Weber, has argued in his article "Gauls versus Franks: Conflict and Nationalism" that the juxtaposition of Gauls and Franks was an important part of nineteenth-century historiography, especially for Augustin Thierry, who in his turn strongly influenced his contemporary writers and

[676] "Barbare […] Il signifie figurément, Sauvage, grossier, ignorant, qui manque de civilisation. *C'est un peuple barbare. Les Grecs appelaient barbares tous ceux qui ne parlaient pas leur langue, tous les étrangers; les Romains nommèrent aussi barbares tous les autres peuples, excepté les Grecs. Les nations, les rois barbares. Des moeurs rudes et barbares.* […] Il s'emploie également comme substantif lorsqu'on parle De peuples ou d'hommes sauvages, grossiers, ignorants, privés de civilisation."
"Barbare": http://portail.atilf.fr/cgi-bin/dico1look.pl?strippedhw=barbare&headword=&docyear=ALL&dicoid=ALL&articletype=1, accessed October 15 2014.
[677] Gregory of Tours had associated the barbarian group with queen Fredegonde although, as Walter Goffart (1982) has emphasised, Gregory used the word very rarely and he might have used it simply as a synonym for a Frank or implying 'uncivilized'. In the nineteenth century, "barbarian" was a pejorative name but earlier in the late sixth century it had been more neutral. Goffart 1982, 82.
[678] Dumont & al. 1834, 83.
[679] Foucault 2003, 195-197.

their ideas about the early Middle Ages.[680] Interestingly, Weber's article argues that the interpretation of a conflict between the historical ethnic groups became popular in historiography after the revolution of 1848, when the Gauls started to be seen as the true ancestors of the French, even if Amable Tastu, for example, had referred to the Gauls as "our" ancestors already in 1836.[681] Generally the historiography produced before 1848 did not have conflict or revolutions, or the so-called juxtaposition of races, in such a central position as in the works of Thierry, where these elements were the engines and driving forces of history. For him, the races referred also to classes. In other words, Thierry interpreted the Franks as the noble class or aristocracy, and the Gauls as the oppressed lower and middle class which gained power only after the revolution of 1789. There was, however, certain juxtaposition present in all historiography of this period, if not always as strongly as in Thierry's perception of classes and races. For example, François Guizot saw the reason for the Merovingians' fall not as the rivalry between the Franks and the Gauls but the rivalry between kingship and landowners.[682] Similarly to Thierry and Guizot, many historians included evaluative components in their interpretations.

The notion of barbarism changed after 1848 when it became even more eagerly associated with Germanic intruders and "enemies of the nation", influenced by the contemporary political and military threat to France from Prussia and German nationalism. This threat, which eventually led to war in 1870-1871, was seen by many historians and writers as similar to the situation in the sixth century when "Germania" had threatened "France".[683] In addition, it is interesting that according to historians Jardin and Tudesq (1973), the Prussians were the most hated and feared of the occupation troops that arrived in France in 1815 after the second Restoration.[684] It is thus understandable that many French had fears about a Germanic invasion of France. Fredegonde was transformed from a famous queen to a German threat, which she had not been in the eighteenth century. For example, in the work of the Jesuit *père* Gabriel Daniel (1713), she did not represent anything other than herself.

[680] Weber 1991, 8-21, especially 10-11. Already in 1821 Eugène-Amédée Balland had interpreted the ancestors of the contemporary French as both the Gauls and the Franks. Balland had also made a similar progressive interpretation of the French nation as Guizot did later. See Balland 1821, 5-6. Lavallée also interpreted the French nation as having been formed by various races and suggested that following numerous revolutions the history of France could be divided into two major stages: History of the origins, or that of Gaul; and a history of nationality, or that of France. Lavallée 1841, introduction.
[681] Amable Tastu in her *Cours d'histoire de France* praised Thierry for "de nous faire comprendre la longue lutte des races diverses sur un même territoire, ou de nous rendre les titres de famille de nos ancêtres gaulois ensevelis dans les archives de leurs conquérans […]" Tastu 1836, 5.
[682] Guizot 1836, 65,
[683] Weber 1991, 14.
[684] Jardin & Tudesq 1973, 23.

She was, according to Daniel, more famous than the kings.[685] Her "Frenchness" diminished along with the creation of the new politico-historical theories in the early nineteenth century and she was made more Frankish and more barbaric. In Daniel's work she was not a foreigner, and she became so only later in the eighteenth century.

The nineteenth-century debates about Franks and Gauls in the history of France had long roots in the pre-revolutionary discussions on the birth of France.[686] As Graceffa has argued in her dissertation *Les historiens et la question franque*[687] (2008), Henri de Boulainvilliers and abbé Dubos sparked the discussion in the eighteenth century on whether or not the Franks were liberators or oppressors of the people living in Gaul. From the start the discussion was more than about the history of the early Middle Ages, and especially in the early nineteenth century the debate raged between politicians who wanted to justify their interpretations with early medieval history.[688]

Henri de Boulainvilliers' main argument regarding the history of the Franks is to be found from his posthumous work from 1727. The argument was that the French nobility descended from the fifth-century Frankish conquerors and that the Gauls were the ancestors of the comtemporary Third Estate. Boulainvilliers thus wanted to emphasis the role of nobility against the French monarchy.[689] According to historian Sylvain Venayre, consequent historians, the nineteenth-century historians included, would interpret and reduce Boulainvilliers' theory to that of finding the origins of France from the fifth century when the Frankish conquerors subjugated the Gauls, thus creating two peoples, the nobility and the Third Estate, living on the soil of France.[690] Jean-Baptiste Dubos, on the other hand, wanted to prove the French monarchy's legitimacy and that it originated from the Roman Empire. According to Venayre, Dubos argued that the barbarians had not been conquerors but often Roman soldiers, the monarchy had been hereditary from the start and that there had been no difference, or inequality, between the Franks and the Gauls. Clovis had been the link between Roman Empire and the French monarchy, and the nobility, according to Dubos' argument, had only been formed in the tenth century. Dubos' theory, published for the first time in 1734, aimed to reinforce the French monarchy's position because he was the official historian of the monarchy. For subsequent historians Dubos came to signify the theory of French monarchy's Roman origins.[691]

[685] Daniel 1713, 155. Augustin Thierry praised Daniel and his work for aiming for historical accuracy and for using sources. Thierry 1855, 33.
[686] See, for example, Thiesse 2010, 47.
[687] "Historians and the Question of the Franks"
[688] Graceffa 2008b, 23. About Boulainvilliers and Dubos, see also Wood 2013, 19-36.
[689] Venayre 2013, 21. About Boulainvilliers, see also Nicolet 2003, 67-89.
[690] Venayre 2013, 22.
[691] Venayre 2013, 23-24. See also about Dubos, Nicolet 2003, 89-106, especially 93-94.

Even though Dubos did discuss and criticise Boulainvilliers' theory in his own work, it was Montesquieu who juxtaposed the two theories and presented them as "systems" this way making them famous especially among the nineteenth-century and consequent historians.[692]

The two "systems" are often defined as "germanist" and "romanist" because Boulainvilliers emphasised the nobility's Frankish origins and Mably the monarchy's Roman origin. This way of defining the theories was established in the nineteenth century. The germanists saw that there had been a veritable conquest whereas the romanists saw that the Frankish soldiers had entered the Gaul in agreement with the Roman Empire before Clovis' time. The romanist interpretation perceived that there had not been a subjugation of the Gaulish people.[693] In the nineteenth century, for example, in the writings of Guizot and Thierry which were inspired by Montesquieu, Boulainvilliers was seen first and foremost as the father of the "germanist" theory and his ideas were reduced to highlight the Frankish conquest and juxtaposition of the two "races".[694] Boulainvilliers, however, never made any statements that one "race" (Franks or Gauls) would be or would have been better than another.[695]

In 1772 a third historian, *l'abbé* Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, published a work on history of France that partly combined the "systems" of the two previous historians. He did refute Boulainvilliers' theory on conquest and subjugation of the Gauls but he added to Dubos's theory the idea of primitive assemblies which made his theory especially popular in the early times of the Revolution.[696] In the beginning of the nineteenth century François Dominique de Reynayd, count of Montlosier (1755-1838) reformulated these theories and made them current issues again. It was Montlosier who started to use in 1821 the expression "une lutte entre deux classes","a battle between two classes" and frequently emplyed the term "class" in historiography even though it was not yet in the beginning of the nineteenth century very popular term among historians.[697] Montlosier was from a noble yet impoverished family and he was educated in Clermont by the Jesuits. He fled Paris in 1792 but returned in 1800 when Napoleon was in power. Napoleon charged him to write a new history of France where the consulate would be the highlight if its history. Yet, the work did not represent Napoleon's wishes which resulted that it did not get a

[692] Nicolet 2003, 58; Venayre 2013, 21.
[693] Nicolet 2003, 58-59.
[694] Nicolet 2003, 73.
[695] Nicolet 2003, 87.
[696] Venayre 2013, 25-6.
[697] Piguet 2009.

permission to be published. Eventually the work was published in 1814 and it entitled *De la Monarchie française depuis son établissement jusqu'à nos jours*[698].

According to Augustin Thierry, Montlosier established the last of the "great systems". Montlosier did not prefer any of the previous "systems" but he wanted to legitimise the Restoration and the return of the monarchy. He accepted Dubos' idea that the Franks followed closely the exemple of the Romans, but he also took from Boulainvilliers the inspiration to see the history of France as a struggle between two peoples. He saw the French nobility as having had certain "Germanic" habits, a view reminiscent of Boulainvilliers'.[699] Montlosier argued in his work that "The Franks continued to live […] under Clovis' rule like under the rule of a king of Germania."[700] This again brings his theories closer to Boulainvilliers', even though he actively distinguished himself from previous historians. One can thus find a transformation of interpretations from one historian to another leading to Thierry and Guizot who used, like the earlier historians as well, these theories to justify their political views on French monarchy. It is important to keep in mind that all these historians had a political motivation to see the French history in a certain way.

Graceffa demonstrates in her study that many large source collections, notably the *Recueil des Historiens de la Gaule et de la France*, which was started in the eighteenth century, were the basis for the new idea of nationality in the nineteenth century because the main historiographical texts from the fifth century and from the reign of Clovis were edited there.[701] The collection tied together the history and memory of the early Middle Ages, and made it a part of French history. It was clear that history had a major role in the creation of the French nation already in the eighteenth century and this process continued and accelerated in the nineteenth century with the publication of several important sources collections. One good example of such a collection is the already mentioned *Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France,* which started in the early 1820s and was edited by François Guizot. The collection included all major sources *translated into French* about the history of France starting from the Merovingian period. Translating was significant because, as mentioned earlier, not all French spoke French and emphasising the language's role in creating the French "nation" was one important aim for historians. The British historian Geoffrey Roberts has

[698] "Of the French Monarchy from Its establishment to Our Days"
[699] Venayre 2013, 17-33. According to Venayre, Montlosier's conclusions are reminiscent of Boulainvilliers' ideas but his idea of the Frankish conquest made references to Dubos' theories.
[700] Montlosier 1814, 45. "Les Francs, […]durent continuer à vivre sous Clovis comme avec un roi de la Germanie." Montlosier continued on the same page that the royal reign "floated" between three principles: Roman law, divine law, and German customs. About this passage, see also Foucault 2003, 230.
[701] Graceffa 2008b, 35-6. The same was done with legal sources in the 1820s. Graceffa 2008b, 37.

claimed that "[a]ctually, historians are readers as well as constructors of narratives, not least their own stories."[702] This is very useful to keep in mind because in order for historians to write new narratives about French history they had to first read the sources and the reading affected them as Chateaubriand's *Les Martyrs* influenced Thierry: Chateaubriand's image of the violent Franks astonished the young Thierry.[703] After reading about the eighteenth-century debates concerning the Franks and the Romans, and about the interpretations made of the debates, some readers transformed themselves into historians and authors.

Michel Foucault has also discussed these very same questions. I find it interesting that Foucault noted that one big difference between eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century historiography was that in the latter the present was the positive starting point whereas earlier it had been a negative moment.[704] Nevertheless, especially the early nineteenth-century historians inherited from the eighteenth century the idea of struggle, even if the parties of the struggle were no longer the same. No longer was the struggle like a war, but more an internal struggle within a state.[705]

During the struggle between the Germanists and Romanists, a new French expression became popular in the 1820s to designate a specific group: the Gallo-Romans.[706] The attribute referred to the inhabitants of Gaul during the period of Roman rule (first-second century BC - fifth century AD) and it united two central ideas in historiography. First of all, the word "Gallo-Roman" reflected the positive idea of Roman civilisation[707] in Gaul. Secondly, historians perceived the Gallo-Romans as the counterforce for the Franks because the Romans alone were no longer seen as a sufficient opponent for barbarism. The birth of the Gallo-Romans simplified historiography, as historians no longer needed to take three groups (Franks, Roman, Gauls) into consideration, only two which were consequently juxtaposed. The need to imagine history from a new perspective led to the creation of matching linguistic terms. The creation of the new terms was the only way to transmit the new theories to readers. Even though the role of the Franks was still a central question

[702] Roberts 2001, 4.
[703] Thierry 1842a (I), 22. On Chateaubriand's influence, see also Smith Allen 1991, 210.
[704] Foucault 2003, 227.
[705] Foucault 2003, 226.
[706] According to the CNRTL, the term was first used by Michelet in 1833. "Gallo-Romain, aine" http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/gallo-romain accessed July 25 2012. However, the term was already in use in 1827 as it appears in Augustin Thierry's *Lettres sur l'histoire de France*. See Thierry 1827, 11.
[707] See, for example, how Guizot described the early Middle Ages in his *Essais sur l'Histoire de France* (1823a, 69): "l'enfance de la civilisation".

in the history of the early Middle Ages, they were now juxtaposed with the Gallo-Romans instead of the Romans.[708]

The French literature historian Lionel Gossman has argued that gender was in the nineteenth-century often used as a symbol for race. According to Gossman, an oppressed woman was associated with the Gauls and an aggressive man with the Franks in Thierry's work *Récits des temps mérovingien*. Gossman gives the marriages of the unfortunate Galeswinthe and Saint Radegonde as examples of this interpretation.[709] Yet, this grouping cannot be applied in all cases, Fredegonde being one exception. She was defined by Thierry right at the beginning of the *Récits* as "d'origine franke".[710] For Thierry two types of negative nature were united in the character of Fredegonde; she was Frankish and a passionate female. According to Gossman, passion[711] was for Thierry the key which divided historical figures into two groups, the good and the bad. Each group included men too.[712] So for Thierry, being Frankish defined human nature more than gender, though it seems that female nature and being Frankish together automatically created a negative character. There are no examples in Thierry's works of a non-passionate Frankish woman, so it is difficult to state conclusively whether passion was associated more with Gallo-Romans or with Franks.

According to Graceffa, Thierry perceived that the Merovingians did not belong to the nation and were separate from the people. In Thierry's historical imagination this separation was a negative feature of the Merovingians and it was due to their illegitimate use of power and incapacity to rule. This incapability justified the people's fight against them. Graceffa argues that in the *Récits* Thierry excluded the "noble race" from the "nation" and from the French people.[713] These three concepts were (and still are) very ambivalent, but Thierry was not alone in distinguishing the Merovingians as a race of their own and some historians even divided the Merovingians into different races. In Thierry's historical imagination, however, it was not the fact that he saw Merovingians as a separate race that justified the opposition of people but their illegitimate use of power.

[708] The change was also considerable compared to the eighteenth-century historiographical thinking. For Gabriel Bonnot de Mably (1709-1785), for example, there were only French in the reign of Clovis. See Mably 1765 (I).
[709] Gossman 1976, 67-70.
[710] Thierry 1842a(I), 379.
[711] Passion was a negative feature for women in early nineteenth-century historiography. According to the Italian historian Michela de Giorgio, passion was a negative feature in other contexts too, especially as a basis for marriage. De Giorgio 1993, 173.
[712] Gossman 1976, 70
[713] Graceffa 2009b, 63.

Augustin Thierry's theories were well known and popular among his contemporary historians, but he had his critics too. In 1842 Jules Belin de Launay wrote an essay of some 50 pages refuting Thierry's ideas presented in the first part of *Les Récits des Temps Mérovingiens précédés de Considérations sur l'histoire de France* (1840). The point in Belin de Launay's essay *Sur les temps mérovingiens. Lettre à M. Augustin Thierry*[714] was that whereas Augustin Thierry agreed with Henri de Boulainvilliers on the issue that the Franks had arrived to Gaul as conquerors, he agreed with abbé Dubos that this had not in fact been the case. Belin de Launay and Dubos preferred the theory that the Franks had arrived in Gaul as *liberators*, and moreover, as invited liberators. Belin de Launay saw the Catholic religion as one reason why the Franks would have been invited to Gaul; that is, so that the Catholic Franks could save the Gauls from the slavery of the Arians.[715]

Belin de Launay even went so far in his criticism of Thierry's work as to ask who the Franks truly were and if the way they were defined affected the way the relationship between the Franks and the Gallo-Romans should be perceived. Belin de Launay, very differently from Thierry, saw that anyone could be a Frank according to Salic law and therefore even a Gallo-Roman could become a Frank.[716] Following this argument, even Clotilde or Brunehilde, although not Gallo-Romans either, could have been defined as Franks. In addition, de Launay argued that in no way had the Franks aimed to make a sharp distinction between themselves and the Gallo-Romans, as Thierry claimed in his *Considérations* (the first part of *Les Récits*).[717] Belin de Launay also pondered whether the Franks were a nation and came to the conclusion that they were not, but rather "une confédération".[718] Belin de Launay almost certainly saw France as a nation, but he did not see the Franks as coherent enough as a population to be one, although they were a race.

There were many other historians who were not as critical of the Franks as Thierry was. The ultra-royalist Peyronnet did not describe the Franks as oppressing the Gauls or treating them cruelly.[719] Sophie de Maraise[720] was a relatively unknown author who was best known as a novel writer and

[714] "About the Tales of the Merovingian Period. A Letter to M. Augustin Thierry." The motivation to write the essay was not, according to Launay, who was perhaps being facetious, to promote scientific historiography but "simplement pour satisfaire un peu à ma nécessité de montrer que je travaille, nécessité née de ma position. Ce besoin de publicité […]" Belin 1842, 2. So in fact depending on whether he was being serious about his intent or not he was writing the essay just to get something published.
[715] Belin,1842, 4-5, 51. Did Belin see the Franks as arriving in Gaul only after Clovis' conversion?
[716] See also van Dam 1985, 180. According to van Dam, all free men could be called Franks in the sixth-century society of the Frankish kingdoms, as Romans had disappeared from the narratives of Gregory of Tours. So Belin's argument was not very far-fetched, even though in its own time it was quite peculiar.
[717] Belin 1842, 13-14, 25, 27.
[718] Belin 1842, 35. According to Agnès Graceffa, this is exactly what Thierry saw as well. Graceffa 2009b, 60.
[719] Peyronnet 1835 (I), 40, 242-250.
[720] Amalvi 2001a, 188.

for translating the novels of Walter Scott into French but in the 1820s she wrote two works of popular history and according to her interpretation, the history of France started from the conquests of Clovis. She did, however, recognise the existence of Gaul as she saw Christianity as saving Gaul from the "barbarians".[721]These views, published before Guizot's works on civilisation, highlighted the struggle between the Franks and the Romans, not between the Franks and the Gauls. Maraise's interpretation of the early decades of France is thus a good example of the way the Franks were perceived, in a good sense, as the ancestors of the French monarchy. Interestingly Maraise saw Brunehilde as a worse ruler than Fredegonde. She did not attribute Fredegonde's actions to her origins, but she treated her as a "remarkable exception of laws of nature". Fredegonde had, according to Maraise, more "firmness of character" than Brunehilde. It is clear in Maraise's work that it was Christianity that smoothed away the Franks' barbaric character. But there is almost no information about her besides her books so it is difficult to say where she got her inspiration. Religious and moral history were closely attached to pro-monarchist ideas and also more accepted genre for women, so the choice of genre might have also been a necessity.[722] This way of interpreting Fredegonde's nature shows how individuals were categorised in historiography before the notion of races was reformulated and started to dominate the historiographical thinking together with nationalism. [723]

The meanings related to ethnicities were turned upside down and new concepts such as "nation" were added - thus creating a new hierarchical system involving the valuing of some ethnic groups over others. Individuals came to represent their ethnic groups and consequently the ethnic groups, or their essential features, were found in individual historical agents. In a sense the early medieval queens lost their individuality and free will, as Harry Ritter has put it.[724] Certain historical persons were perceived as imbued with their national habits and characteristics, which ruled their actions and guided their morals. Many historians, excluding Belin de Launay, saw that persons could not

[721] Maraise 1821, 92-102.
[722] Maraise 1821, 87. "exception remarquable aux lois de la nature". On Brunehilde as a worse ruler than Fredegonde, see Maraise 1821, 97.
[723] Political affiliation alone did not dictate how a historian saw the Franks. Rewarded liberal academic historians such as Claude Fauriel, professor of literature in the Sorbonne from 1830 onwards and Thierry's friend, separated the Franks from Germanic barbarism, and refused to designate Franks as barbarians even though the Merovingian period was, according to Fauriel, a somewhat decadent one. He argued that Brunehilde, whom he otherwise did not see as a Frank, championed the interest of the monarchy and of Frankish conquest. According to Fauriel, Brunehilde's victory was a victory for the Roman kingship against Germanic Barbarism. So Fauriel's vision illustrated well the fine line between different interpretations and shows that, as difficult as it is to classify different theories, it is also challenging to classify historians into different groups or schools of thought. Fauriel 1836 (II), 135. On Fauriel, see also Leterrier 1997, 315. Fauriel 1836 (II), 407.
[724] Ritter 1986, 104.

choose their nationality or ethnicity and consequently concluded that they could not choose their actions.

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Brunehilde was originally a Visigothic princess, as was stated by Abel Hugo, Henrion, Sismondi, Amable Tastu and *Répertoire général des causes célébres francaises* published by Saint-Edme.[725] Many writers such as Thierry and the writers of *Cahiers d'Histoire Universelle*[726] defined her through her father or imagined family; "fille des Goths" or "fille du roi des Goths".[727] Being a Goth[728] or a Visigoth was very significant in her history and it formed a part of her character in many works. The reason for this importance was that many historians saw the Goths as the successors of Roman civilisation and culture and as a counterforce to Frankish "barbarism" in the sixth century, even though they were Arians whose belief was seen by the nineteenth-century historians as a heresy.[729] Brunehilde and Galeswinthe only abandoned Arianism when they married the Christian (Catholic) kings.

Thierry and Guizot defined the Goths as less barbaric and more civilised than the Franks.[730] For example, Michelet described Brunehilde as "daughter of the king of the Spanish Goths, a mind full of Roman culture, a woman full of charm and insinuation [...]."[731] Brunehilde's beauty was not left unmentioned and Michelet even described her as a slightly dangerous woman who would not hesitate to use her charms to get what she wanted. Brunehilde was no doubt a highly educated person in her time. She is one of the period's rare rulers whose letters have been preserved as copies to our era. She wrote letters to Pope Gregory the Great and supported the foundation of churches and monasteries. Peyronnet, the exiled Royalist, did not spare words when he described Brunehilde's merits, which began with founding hospitals and included government involvement in charity. Peyronnet considered these proofs of Brunehilde's imitation of the Romans.[732] For him Brunehilde represented (Roman) civilisation against Fredegonde's cruelty. However, according to Bruno Dumézil (2008), Brunehilde was also included in the group of "savage and cruel" Germanics

[725] Hugo 1857 (II), 102; Henrion 1837, 50; *Répertoire général* 1834, 391; Sismondi 1839, 58; Tastu 1837, 18.
[726] "Notebook of Universal History"
[727] Dumont &al 1834, 86; Thierry 1842a (I), 383.
[728] "Goths" in Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed July 25, 2015.
[729] About Visigoths imitating the Roman traditions, see, for example, Sismondi 1839, 20.
[730] Thierry 1842a (I), 390; Guizot 1840 (I), 234.
[731] Michelet 1835 (I), 221, "fille du roi des Goths d'Espagne, esprit imbu de la culture romaine, femme pleine de grâce et d'insinuation […]", see also page 224 where Michelet drew a parallel between Romans and Goths in the context of Brunehilde's and Childebert's history. (Exactly the same description can be found in Henrion 1837, 65.) According to Robert Morrissey, Michelet often emphasised the gap between French and Germans in his works. Morrissey 2001, 157.
[732] Peyronnet 1835 (II), 205.

when the categorisation of people into Germanic and Gallo-Romans became imperative in mid-nineteenth-century historiography.[733]

A large number of historians thus saw Brunehilde as cherishing the Roman heritage, which was no doubt one reason why she was seen as so important for the development of civilisation in the early Middle Ages. Yet this is also one reason why Brunehilde was seen as having problems in her own kingdom. According to Henri Martin, Brunehilde, because she was a member of an "enemy race", aroused antipathy among the Austrasians and made them jealous. In other words, Martin suggested that it was Brunehilde's race that led to power struggles in Austrasia and eventually to her destruction at the hands of Clothar II. Martin justified his theory with Fredegonde's position in Neustria: as a Frank, she had encountered less resistance in Neustria after her husband died.[734] Jules Michelet agreed with Martin concerning the factors that led to Brunehilde's aggravated situation in Austrasia. Michelet saw noble Austrasians as hating Brunehilde because she was a Goth and a Roman. According to Michelet, she had been an enemy of Germanic influence, but in the battle against Clothar II she had had to rely on the barbarians, the Germanics, to aid her.[735] Brunehilde's supposed connections with the Romans are also mentioned in *Cahiers d'histoire universelle*. As a daughter of the Goths, she was their friend and wanted to organise Austrasia like a Roman province.[736] The writers of this text book seemed critical in their views and according to them, Brunehilde's intentions were to limit Germanic freedom. These historians saw the animosity between Franks and Roman minded Goths as one reason that Brunehilde was eventually executed. This interpretation demonstrates how ethnic tensions were added to history to explain certain peculiar events like Brunehilde's execution. In addition, the eighteenth-century dislike of foreign queens, and the nineteenth-century historians no doubt perceived that Austrasians saw Brunehilde as such, could affect these theories of "people" or certain "race" disliking their queen.

The history, actions and nature of queens were often interpreted from the standpoint of their background. Clotilde was a Burgundian and this seems to have been important because many historians brought it up. Historian and geographer Théophile Lavallée defined Clotilde as "niece of the Burgundian kings" as did Michelet, who was famous not only for his narrative history but also for his mistrust of kings and priests.[737] Sismondi wrote that she was "daughter of Chilperic, one of

[733] Dumézil 2008, 15.
[734] Martin 1834, 311.
[735] Michelet 1835 (I), 247.
[736] Dumont & al. 1834, 86.
[737] Lavallée 1838 (I), 103 ; Michelet 1835 (I), 198. "niece des rois bourguignons".

the Burgundian kings".[738] In *Cahiers d'histoire universelle* she was "daughter of Chilperic, king of the Burgundians".[739] Gaultier similarly defined her as "from the house of the Burgundians".[740] Historians interpreted that it was her royal background as a Catholic (Burgundian) that led to Clovis' religious awakening.

Historians perceived ethnic backgrounds as affecting different Merovingian queens in different ways. Being a Burgundian did not have the same implications for Clotilde as being a Frank had for Fredegonde.[741] According to Sismondi, the Burgundians were a Germanic people who arrived in Gaul in the fifth century along with the Visigoths and Franks. According to Peyronnet and Lavallée, the Germanic Burgundians had Arianism as their chief religion, Clotilde being an exception as an "orthodox" (Catholic).[742] Historians therefore presented her as an exceptional person among the Burgundians, because of her "correct" faith. Her Germanic background was only rarely brought up. The "Germanic nature" seemed to define a historical person only when it suited historian's other interpretations and it appears that only the Franks were defined as "truly" Germanic.[743]

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In a matter of some hundred years the opponents for the Franks changed. First, prior to the 1820s and before the Revolution of 1789, the Franks were defined in opposition to the Romans. Then the emphasis changed and they were set against the Gallo-Romans, and finally, towards the end of the nineteenth century, they were seen as opposing the Gauls, who by that time had come to be seen as the "ancestors" of the French. These categories in opposition were also used to describe other relations such as Fredegonde's Frankish "race", which was constructed in a hierarchical relation with Brunehilde's Gothic "race". These pairs of races reflected more general hierarchical systems, such as the gender system with its hierarchical man–woman opposition.[744] This model of construction legalised the hierarchical juxtaposition and attached the pairs to similar type of "natural" order as the gender relations. Historians created meanings through differences and

[738] Sismondi 1839, 29. "fille de Chilpéric, l'un des rois des Bourguignons".
[739] Dumont &al 1834, 38. "fille de Chilpéric, roi des Bourgognes".
[740] Gaultier 1832, 10. "de la maison des rois Bourgognes".
[741] With Théophile Lavallée and Jules Dubern as exceptions. Lavallée 1838 (I), 115; Dubern 1837 (I), 9. Lavallée stated that her vindictive nature was due to her parents' murder. Already in the ninth and tenth century, when her *Vita* was written and she was accepted into the Catholic pantheon of saints, the emphasis was on her perfect motherhood as a spouse and as a queen. A nineteenth-century historian could choose whether to follow the later saintly description of her life or the earlier more worldly interpretation, such as Gregory of Tours' history. In most cases, these two descriptions were followed simultaneously.
[742] Sismondi 1839, 20; Peyronnet 1835 (I), 54; Lavallée 1838 (I), 103.
[743] See, for example, Sismondi 1835 (I), 265-6. Describing the events leading to Clovis' marriage to Clotilde he explicitly valourised Burgundians over Franks.
[744] See Cova 2009, 49-50 for the construction of male and female gender in European history and about their meaning to historians (both men and women). It was essentially gender that was central in many socio-political discussions.

differentiation: for example, Fredegonde's meaning is to be found in the ways she was distinguished from other early medieval queens.[745]

Fredegonde and Brunehilde encapsulated the history of the late sixth century in early nineteenth-century French historiography. They represented decadence and civilisation, bourgeoisie and the "bad" aristocrats. Education was also used to juxtapose Fredegonde with Brunehilde: the latter was well educated, the former without any education, and therefore without civilisation.[746] François Guizot on many occasions highlighted that literacy was a feature of a civilised society. According to Guizot, almost without exception only clergymen knew how to write and read in the early Middle Ages, and therefore he emphasised that the bishops alone, like Gregory of Tours, promoted civilisation through the dark centuries.[747]A queen, Brunehilde, came to represent the bourgeoisie, a civilised bourgeois who sacrificed herself for France. Brunehilde's actions were no longer seen in the mirror of Fredegar's chronicles and his continuators in the seventh and eight centuries, which told of her cruelty, but her actions were explained by the tumultuous period. It is all about historians' selection. Historians selected, they chose, to leave aside some cruelties that she had supposedly committed. This was, in my opinion, at least partly conscious nation building.[748]

It is difficult to pin down how the historians writing about the "races" fitted queenship into their theories because women had only a minor role in their histories. General groups of people such as Franks as a rule only included men and monarchies seemed to be constructed only of kings. Historians, either in the nineteenth or the eighteenth centuries, did not discuss the general rules of queenship in connection with the "germanist" or "romanist" theories, most likely because the conquerors/rulers were almost only seen as men and because the conquest was only about men and somehow did not affect women.

[745] On the construction of meanings, see Scott 1999, 55.
[746] See, for example, Lavallée 1841 (I), 102.
[747] See, for example, the preface of François Guizot in the translation of Gregory's *Ten Books* in the 1820s. Guizot 1823b (I), vij-xxiv. See also Guizot 1840 (I), 116.
[748] Of course one can debate how conscious the nation-building was at this time in historiography, or whether it was rather a historiographical tradition. Perhaps for some authors it was more of a tradition and for some more a question of nation building. The unconscious side of historians' minds is beyond my reach and I therefore have to interpret their intentions as if everything they wrote was conscious.

3.5. Queenship and the Merovingians

The Merovingians were Franks, but not all Franks were Merovingians. Many of the most famous Merovingian queens, namely Clotilde, Radegonde, Brunehilde, and Bathilde, were not Franks in the same way that many of the most famous queens of France were not French. However, the group of Merovingians was even more exclusive. By studying who was included in the various groups it is possible to learn how the nineteenth-century historians defined the dynastic affiliations of the queens. In this section I examine the question of who the early nineteenth-century historians perceived to have belonged to the group called the Merovingians. The queens who are often defined as Merovingian queens in the twenty-first century were not generally defined as such in the early nineteenth century. My aim is to untangle the reasons for this, yet another gendered exclusion.

Again, I have to start with kingship to access the definitions of queenship. Belin de Launay, who has already been mentioned, wrote in his essay about Augustin Thierry's theories on the Franks that "[t]herefore the king, despite his claims for imperial Roman power, had in the eyes of the Franks hardly any other power than that of a troop leader and could hardly offer his personal protection to anyone." [749] and "[t]he Merovingian king, not finding obedience and the power to command (and consequently power for himself) other than among the Gallo-Romans, relied more and more on them among his *antrustiones*."[750] Belin de Launay depicted the kings as at the mercy of the Franks or even opposing them. The king was, according to Belin de Launay, relying on the Gallo-Romans, who seemed more loyal to the royal power than the Franks, although he had earlier stated that he considered the two groups, Franks and Gallo-Romans, as having been similar and in no way hostile to one another.[751] The king, not to say anything about the queen, apparently belonged to neither group. A Merovingian king seemed to be a third party. In the quotation from Lehuërou given earlier, the idea that the Merovingians were something between Franks and Romans was also present. Lehuërou wrote at the end of that passage that the Merovingians tried to "teach" the Franks. This clearly indicates that the historian saw the Merovingians as more civilised than the average Frank. According to Lehuërou, the "Merovingian origins" were more affected by the traditions of the Roman Empire than by Germanic traditions.[752] Lehuërou elsewhere referred to the Merovingians as a race but he failed to clarify whether he used the term to signify a dynasty, or if

[749] Belin 1842, 42. "Ainsi le roi, malgré ses prétentions à l'autorité impériale romaine, n'avait guère, aux yeux des Franks, d'autre droit que celui d'un chef de bande et pouvait à peine offrir sa protection personnelle."
[750] Belin 1842, 51. "Le roi mérovingien, ne trouvant de l'obéissance et de la faculté d'ordre (et conséquemment de puissance pour lui) que parmi les Gallo-Romains, s'appuya sur eux plus que même sur ses antrustions."
[751] Belin de Launay 1842, 12 et passim.
[752] Lehuërou 1843 (I), xxij.

the race included other Franks as well. As he generally used it to refer to the ruling class, it is probable that he referred here to a dynasty.

Henri Martin described only one woman as queen of the Franks and that was Brunehilde.[753] Martin was 23 years old when the first volume of his *History of France*[754] was published in 1833 and it won several awards, including Grand Prix Gobert in 1844. He was politically active, but his most influential years were in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[755] He used the attribute "queen of the Franks" twice, when describing Brunehilde's death in 613. First he used the attribute as a rhetorical tool to emphasise the barbaric nature of Brunehilde's death and the second time to make a distinction between the "queen of the *Franks*" and the Gallo-Roman people. In the latter passage the writer wanted to highlight that the Gallo-Romans had a positive picture of Brunehilde, even though she was the Franks' queen, not theirs. It is known that he had a fairly negative view of the Franks in his later works, so he made a clear distinction between the different early medieval peoples.[756]

A similar distinction between Franks and Gallo-Romans was made by Michelet, who wrote that "[t]he girls of the Franks, given as hostages to Thuringians, were attached by the barbarians to the tails of untamed horses. The Franks themselves treated *their* queen Brunehilde in this way […]."[757] In this passage the attribute "queen of the Franks" was not explicit but the possessive determiner (italicised) indicated that Brunehilde was seen as a queen of the Franks. The Franks were collectively separated from other groups of people, especially from the Thuringians, who were called Barbarians by Michelet. It was made clear that Brunehilde was indeed only a queen of the Franks, not of all of those who lived in the Merovingian kingdoms. The Gallo-Romans were left without a ruler, except in Belin de Launay's historical thinking.

Théodose Burette too wrote about Franks in the context of the Merovingian period, but he mentioned one specific group *among* the Franks: *Les Mérovingiens*.[758] The Merovingians were a Frankish people and more particularly a ruling dynasty. The word Merovingian itself often refers to

[753] Martin 1838, 169-170.
[754] *Histoire de France* had altogether 15 volumes and was rewritten and reprinted several times. According to Graceffa, Martin's work was clearly republican, but did have a monarchist penchant as well, especially in its interpretation of Clovis. Graceffa 2009b, 61.
[755] See "Henri Martin" in L'Académie Française http://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/henri-martin?fauteuil=38&election=13-06-1878, accessed July 25 2015.
[756] On Martin's later works, see Amalvi 2001a, 191.
[757] Michelet 1837, 371. My own italicisation. "Les filles des Francs données en otages aux Thueringiens, furent attachées par les barbares à la queue de chevaux indomptés. Les Francs eux-mêmes traitèrent ainsi *leur* reine Brunehaut […]."
[758] Burette 1843 (I), 87.

royalty and royals. It was mostly used in the early nineteenth century in the emerging academic historiographical discourse and only rarely in more literate or devotional branches, such as biographies or historical novels.

The Merovingian kings' wives are not once referred to as "Merovingian queens" in the historiographical works I have studied from the early nineteenth century. It is difficult to estimate how the word Merovingian was perceived as gendered before the Revolution of 1789 as there are no complete studies about this theme, but the attribute was not widely used before the Revolution of 1789 and this was one thing the new historiography did *not* change or alter. In the first half of the nineteenth century not many historians pondered whether women could or should be defined as Merovingians, or whether they had been Merovingians. Perhaps it was obvious to everybody that women were not Merovingians. Is it likely that the women would have been perceived as Merovingians even if they were not defined explicitly as such?

The word Merovingian comes from the seventh century, when an author known as Fredegar used it for the first time in his chronicle to refer to the heirs of the Frankish leader Merovech (Latin *Merovechus).*[759] According to Graceffa, in France the attribute has never been very popular and has mostly been used to separate the Carolingians from the preceding dynasty. Especially among the Republican historians the word came to signify old, barbarian and cruel.[760] Though this was not yet fully the case in Restoration and July Monarchy historiography, the word Merovingian was much more rarely used than Frank.

So the Merovingian lineage did not start, and neither did the kings of France or kings of the Franks, from Clovis I. The Merovingian queen or king is different from the other concepts of royalty studied previously, because it attaches a person to a certain group and identifies his or her kinship. However, the heredity of this group was not entirely biological, as Ian Wood has shown in his studies on the Merovingian family (2003).[761] It is noteworthy that in the first half of the nineteenth century the Merovingians were often perceived as a race. Simultaneously, however, the word Merovingian was used to describe the whole period from the fifth century to the eight century.[762] The expression, "l'époque mérovingienne", literarily referred to the period when Merovingian kings governed.

[759] Clovis I's great grandfather. "Mérovingien, -ne": http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/mérovingien accessed July 25 2015. See also Wood 2003, 149-173 (especially the beginning).
[760] Graceffa 2008b, 8.
[761] Wood 2003, 164-178.
[762] See, for example, St-Ouen 1830, 9-13 or Gaultier 1827, IX-XI.

Is it thus possible to argue that women were not similarly defined or understood as Merovingians because the word was not used to refer to females? Augustin Thierry referred in his famous *Récits des temps mérovingiens* at least twice to the Merovingian kings[763] but not once did he write about a Merovingian queen. Instead, he used once the expression "les autres épouses mérovingiennes"[764] to refer to the spouses of Merovingian kings other than Sigebert, husband of Brunehilde (so essentially the citation reads: "other kings' wives than Brunehilde"). According to Thierry, women could become Merovingians through their marriage in the same way as they could become queens. Thierry wrote generally about men when he wrote about Merovingians. For example, he explained that the Merovingians were distinguished from other Franks by their long hair. According to Thierry, the Merovingians' hair was never cut after their birth and the hair symbolised their right to inherit the throne.[765] Though he did not specify it, Thierry was clearly writing about men. This should not surprise us when we consider that in the general discourse of the nineteenth century "human" often referred only to men. Women were an exception.

As noted, as a rule the early medieval people often included only men in the writings of the early nineteenth-century historians. Belin de Launay, Thierry's harsh critic, wrote only about men when he described the possible conflict between Gallo-Romans and Franks and the invasion of Gaul after the collapse of Rome. This becomes clear in a passage about the Franks' way of life "[The Franks] soon moved away from the wagon they were born in and from their mothers to become the *antrustiones* […]."[766] For him too, the early Middle Ages were essentially about Merovingian kings, even though Brunehilde was present in both of his essays about the early medieval period. Despite their differences of opinion, both Thierry and Belin de Launay shared the perception that men played all the leading roles in history and most women were left with supporting roles or in complete oblivion.

The exclusion from the throne did not include only women, but also all non-Merovingian men in the early Middle Ages. Janet Nelson (1986) has argued that because of the non-institutionalisation of the (earthly) power, the position of most men was weak in Merovingian society as well. The exclusion from the throne was thus not only due to biological sex but also due to other factors such

[763] Thierry 1851b, 98, 231, 178.
[764] Thierry 1842a (II), 49.
[765] Thierry 1842a (II), 88. On the long hair, see also de Pétigny 1851 (II), 329.
[766] Belin 1842, 35. "[…]s'éloignant bientôt du chariot où ils sont nés et de leur mère pour se faire les antrustions […]"

as family background.[767] Femininity was not the only reason why the queens were excluded, but just one reason. Women were not full Merovingians although they could sometimes be included among them. Nelson's argument on men's exclusion is noteworthy, as the early nineteenth-century historians rarely, if ever, discussed the possibility for men outside the Merovingian family to inherit the throne. There were, however, other factors that distinguished the Merovingian men from those men who could not inherit power. One factor, as Thierry and de Pétigny explained, was the long hair. All except the "race royal" were to cut their hair short.[768]

Merovingians were specifically kings because they could inherit power and distinguish themselves from the other Franks by their long hair, which would not have worked with women. Louis Gaultier, who produced several text books from various fields of knowledge, wrote that: "[r]ois de la première race, dite de Mérovingiens."[769] Gaultier equated kings with the Merovingians. The importance of the long hair is clear in an event described by Gregory of Tours, where queen Clotilde had to choose for her grandsons either scissors or a knife; monastery or death.[770] But the cutting of the hair most likely had a double meaning here. If their hair was cut, the young boys would lose their chance to inherit the throne. Indeed, tonsure would assure exclusion, which was likely known to all early nineteenth-century historians even if they did not explicitly write about it.

Being a Merovingian was impossible for women because women could not inherit the royal power. Seeing a woman as a possible heir to the throne was impossible before the Restoration and coninuted to be so until the monarchy was ended. As a concept, "Merovingian queen" was thus unthinkable, as the two parts of the concept were contradictory: the one implying the right to inherit the throne and the other exclusion from the throne. In the early nineteenth-century the Merovingians were depicted as a race and as a dynasty, and apparently women had no place in this race or dynasty.[771] Thierry seems to have been the only historian who considered the existence of a female Merovingian a possibility. Even he, however, did not see a female Merovingian as a possible heir to the throne.

[767] Nelson 1986, 44-45.
[768] De Pétigny 1851 (III), 329. But of course the definition of a Merovingian was anything but easy.
[769] Gaultier 1827, XI. On writing as if all Merovingians were men, see also Martin 1855, 40 & 370.; Frantin 1825 (IV), 265. See also, for example, Sismondi 1821 (I), 461, 403 & 243. Sismondi only wrote about male Merovingians. See also Des Michels 1825, 14; Des Michels 1835 (I), 99; Lacépède 1826a (I),44; Des Michels 1828, 22.
[770] On this episode, see, for example, Lavallée 1841, 95.
[771] See, for example, Michelet 1842, 43. A dynasty can also refer to kings from the same family who ruled one after the other. See also "**d**ynastie": http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/dynastie accessed July 27 2015. A change in the concept, from a line of kings to include family and an idea of similar features started after the mid-eighteenth century.

Thierry claimed in his essay *Sur la classification historique par races royales*[772] that "[…] Merovingians, as we call them, or *Merowing* as was used by the Franks, was not only a name of a family but sometimes a name for a people. All Franks, without distinction, called themselves Merovingians, from the name of Merovech, their ancient leader, who was venerated as a common ancestor by all the members of the nation."[773] According to Thierry, all Franks called themselves Merovingians. In other words, here is a contradiction as to who was and who was not a Merovingian, and even more, who considered him- or herself a Merovingian. It is obvious that Thierry knew that the first time the name Merovingians was mentioned was in the seventh century in Fredegar's chronicles. But apparently this did not stop him from arguing that already prior to that chronicle the kings would have called themselves Merovingians. It is clear that most aspiring professional historians dismissed Fredegar's version of the origins of the name and neglected him as the first source to have mentioned the name. Guizot would not even include the passage where the Merovingians were mentioned for the first time in his translation of the Fredegar's chronicles in 1823. [774]

The contradiction regarding the Merovingians' identity can be, however, approached from a different angle. When Thierry wrote about "all Franks" he might have been referring implicitly to all *male* Franks, which would not have been uncommon as I have argued before. The contradiction can be approached from a genealogical point of view as well. In his article "Deconstructing the Merovingian Family" (2003), Ian Wood has shown that virtually every genealogy constructed of the Merovingian dynasty differs from the others.[775] There has never been a consensus about the definition of a Merovingian. Evidently the general will of the nineteenth century to exclude women from the throne also excluded them from the Merovingians.[776]

[772] "About the Historical Classification According to Royal Races"
[773] Thierry 1851a, 266-7. "[…] *Merovingien*, comme nous disons, ou *Merowing*, comme disaient les Franks, ne fut point seulement un nom de famille, mais quqelquefois un nom de peuple. Tous les Franks, sans distinction, s'appelaient Mérowings, du nom de Merowig, ancien chef, que tous les membres de la nation vénéraient comme leur aïeul commun."
[774] Wood 2003, 149.
[775] Wood 2003, 157.
[776] Interestingly, the emphasis regarding the members of a group called Merovingians has somewhat changed since the Restoration and the July Monarchy period. It has become more explicitly a group of the kind Thierry described in his essay included in his famous work *Dix ans d'études historiques*: an inclusive name for all the people who lived in this Frankish kingdom from the fifth to the eighth century. For example, the French historian Roger-Xavier Lantéri uses the concept very comprehensively in his study *Les Mérovingiennes* (2006). He does not define the concept, but from his work it can be concluded that he saw all women who lived from 490s to 750s as Merovingians. Graceffa also referred to Brunehilde and Fredegonde as Merovingians and Merovingian queens (2009a). The French gender historian Eliane Viennot also applies the attribute "Merovingian queen" to Brunehilde, Fredegonde and Radegonde in her comprehensive work *La France, Les Femmes et Le Pouvoir* (2006). It seems that the idea of a Merovingian as a potential heir to the throne no longer dominates historiography. It is, however, impossible to say when the definitive

It is noteworthy that this contradiction was not the only one in French early nineteenth-century historiography; in fact, the whole ideal of historiography was based on contradictory values, as Hervé Mazurel has argued (2010). According to Mazurel, historians were expected simultaneously to write "érudite et philosophique" history and to give the historical periods their accurate "colour" and the right distance in order to avoid the dangers of anachronism. The contradiction culminated in Thierry's desire to make art while practising science at the same time.[777] Undeniably history is full of contradictions and historiography should not make them all disappear, as often happened in the narrative form. The Merovingian period was full of contradictions for the nineteenth-century historians, such as simultaneously being the cradle of the French monarchy and a "decadent" period.

The uses of the word Merovingian among nineteenth-century historians reveal a consistent emphasis on women's exclusion from the throne, even if otherwise the uses of the word were sometimes contradictory and conflicting. As queens, the women had to be part of the royal family, even though at the same time they were detached from it. The Merovingians did not call themselves Merovingians, which is probably the reason why there is no unanimous view of how to define them. If queens of the fifth-eighth centuries were not called Merovingian queens in early nineteenth-century historiography, what were they called? There is no one title they were given. They were

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change occurred. Based on Wood's article, it seems that originally the name Merovingian referred to men, to kings. Wood cites the chronicle of Fredegar from the seventh century:

"It is said that while Chlodio was staying at the seaside with his wife one summer, his wife went into the sea at midday to bathe, and a beast of Neptune rather like a Quinotaur found her. In the event she was made pregnant, either by the beast or by her husband, and she gave birth to a son called Merovech, from whom the kings of the Franks have subsequently been called Merovingians." (Wood 2003, 149)

The historians and writers of the early nineteenth century seemed to follow this idea of Merovingians as kings, as men, quite closely, even though they also qualified the whole period through the kings, which itself is quite common even in modern historiography. In the context of my research, how the early medieval Frankish rulers defined themselves is not of primary importance, but how the nineteenth-century historians imagined the early medieval kings as having defined themselves and how the historians defined the rulers is. In the context of nineteenth-century France, it is understandable (highlighting men over women as rulers) that Fredegar's wording about kings was taken literally, even if it had not been taken so in the seventh century. In the modern interpretation, it is not only a period of Merovingian kings but a period of Merovingians in general, or of Merovingians as a ruling class.

Logically it follows that Merovingian queen is not the proper term to use when writing about early nineteenth-century historiography and early medieval queens. However, the term is useful, as it implies more exact dating than the term Frankish queen, which might also refer to women who lived prior to the 450s or after the 750s. This is why I choose to use it, even if this runs counter to its original signification or nineteenth-century signification. It is the most informative term, which is probably the reason why it is also generally popular in twentieth -and twenty-first-century historiography. But changes that have occurred in its use should be taken into consideration when applying it to nineteenth-century material.

[777] Mazurel 2010, 598-599. And it was not only historiography that was contradictory; for example, the marriage ideal was also contradictory: simultaneously arranged and loving. See Davidson 2012, 24. Davidson argues in another article that it has become very popular in recent research to bring forth the contradictions of history rather than to try to hide them. Davidson 2008, 198. I agree with Davidson that this is a good direction.

often defined either through their husband's kingdom or through sainthood. In most cases, however, they were just queens without further attributes. The lack of a common term can be explained by the fact that there was no such thing as a unified Merovingian kingdom which existed from the late fifth century to the mid-eighth century. Instead, the "kingdom" was most often constructed of several smaller kingdoms that were ruled by different kings and queens. Most of the early nineteenth-century French historians knew of this situation and, since the attribute Merovingian was too masculine to refer to women, I believe this was one reason why it was so difficult for them to agree on one name for all the early medieval queens of the "first dynasty".

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Queen Brunehilde represented a very peculiar kind of queenship for the early nineteenth-century historians, very different from the queenship associated with Clotilde. For many historians, Brunehilde symbolised an archetype of an educated and civilised queen, a relic from the Roman times. Her defeat, her violent death at the hands of the Frankish king Clothar II, symbolised the defeat of Roman civilisation for authors such as François Guizot. The defeat was seen, however, as necessary for the development of a new French "nation" because it eventually enabled the change in dynasty from Merovingians to Carolingians. Brunehilde's execution was not, however, related in early nineteenth-century historiography to the events of the Revolution, to the executions of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, even though a violent death of a queen was not very common. Perhaps Brunehilde's death was ultimately seen as a sign of the barbaric Merovingian times, and since the outcome of the death was known and distant in time, it did not raise similar passions as the relatively recent ending of the Old Regime, whose outcome was still under debate in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Whereas Clotilde symbolised to a group of historians the ideal of a submissive queen, Brunehilde represented the intellectual, wise and educated ruler who was not only a queen but a true sovereign, almost as capable as men. This capacity in a woman naturally made some historians see her as a threat to society and to its "natural order", as the author or authors of the *Repertoire genéral des causes célébres anciennes et modernes* did in 1834. There she was pictured as an ambitious and cruel queen who had sexual relationships with various men after her husband's murder and even had her grandson murdered.[778] It seems that the more popular the work, the crueller and more negative Brunehilde became. Gender, class and age affected what the French read. Brunehilde was indeed pictured as a strong and influential queen among the most educated readers, but as a warning

[778] *Répertoire général* 1834, 391-398.

example for the less educated readers for whom Clotilde symbolised the ideal queenship. There was no single literary genre that promoted this picture, but it ran all through the historiographical genres because the male individual was perceived as the norm and female individuals like Brunehilde and Fredegonde were the exceptions, often pictured by historians as unnatural.

4. Representing the Queens' (Abuse of) Power

"It would be difficult to find from our history a person whose character, actions, vices and gifts would have been more remarkable and better known than those of Fredegonde."[779]

The themes of this last chapter are regency, the power queens had, and the queens' social standing. The themes especially intermingled in the representations of Fredegonde and together they helped to create the image of this (in)famous queen. Yet, particularly regency is a notion apparent in the representations of many other Merovingian queens as well. The regency refers to the nineteenth-century perceptions of women acting as regents in the early Middle Ages, although historians could not conclusively define what it meant to be a regent. The early medieval queens' regencies divided historians' opinions because they had difficulties in defining the nature of the power these women used and whether that power was legitimate or illegitimate. The second theme, the queens' use of power, is thus related to the question of regency. Especially Queen Fredegonde was most often described as using power that should not have been hers. Therefore, I analyse the reasons why her exercise of power, both before and after Chilperic's death, was as a rule judged negatively. Finally, given that her wielding of power was often pictured as unnatural, what does this tell us about early nineteenth-century France?

I also analyse the relationship between the Merovingian queens and other famous French regents such as Catherine de' Medici in historiography. What allusions to Old Regime queens or female regents did the early nineteenth-century historians draw, especially from Fredegonde? Until the late eighteenth century Fredegonde was included in the category of *reines noires* in French history, alongside Catherine de' Medici, Marie Antoinette and Anne of Austria, although her negative representation had originally been created in the late sixth century by Gregory of Tours.[780] None of the above-mentioned queens were seen in the early nineteenth century as absolutely evil, and all of them were seen to possess positive qualities too. According to Katherine Crawford in her article "Constructing Evil Foreign Queens" (2007), the negative association between the queens was created in the late sixteenth century, and already in this period Fredegonde was associated with

[779] Le Bas 1842 (VIII), 483. "Il serait difficile de trouver dans notre histoire un personnage dont le caractère, dont les actions, les vices et les talents aient été plus remarquables, et soient mieux connus que ceux de Frédégonde."
[780] On the sixteenth century and onwards, see Crawford 2007, 11. According to Crawford, it was believed that widows were more prone to sexual promiscuity.

Catherine de Medici.[781] At the end of the eighteenth century, during and following the revolutionary years, the comparison was strengthened in a pamphlet describing a dialogue between Fredegonde, Catherine de Medici and Marie Antoinette in Hell.[782] Fredegonde was also made to represent the Frankish aristocracy, and not the royal family, in the works of many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historians. However, in the early nineteenth century the representations associated with Queen Fredegonde were often highly contradictory and they reveal the conflicting visions many historians had about the French queenship(s). In this section I will also discuss one woman, who, according to historian Munro Price, was one of the powerful French women of the nineteenth century, Madame Adélaïde (1777 - 1847), the sister and adviser of King Louis-Philippe.[783]

I examine how the changing social structures and historiography affected each other and how the latter represented meanings related to the social classes. Here again the representations of Fredegonde are interesting because she had a humble background. France was a very hierarchical society in the nineteenth century, and historians perceived history from their own social and political standpoints. For the early nineteenth-century historians Fredegonde's marriage with King Chilperic was not a success but a horror story. Queen Bathilde's history, on the other hand, offers a different version of the same narrative because of her saintly nature; her rise on the social scale was presented as a morally uplifting example for all readers. The differences in these narratives reveal the controversial attitudes historians (and readers) had to the two types of women and their representations.

4.1. Becoming a Queen

Fredegonde's becoming a queen, the construction of her queenship, can be examined on multiple levels and I approach it from the perspective of early nineteenth-century historiography. It is necessary to start by noting that the sources the nineteenth-century historians used were not impartial. As often noted, and something that should be kept in mind, *Ten Books of Histories* was all but impartial either. For example, Gregory described Fredegonde's husband King Chilperic (d. 594) as the Nero and Herod of his time.[784] The nineteenth-century historians took it for granted that

[781] Crawford 2007, 1.
[782] *Antoinette d'Autriche ou Dialogue entre Catherine de Medicis et Frédégonde, reines de France, aux enfers : pour servir de supplément et de suite à tout ce qui a paru sur la vie de cette princesse* in 1789 by an anonymous author.
[783] Price 2007, 6.
[784] Gregory of Tours, Book VI, ch. 46. 1974, 379-381.

queens such as Fredegonde and Brunehilde were important and *therefore* Gregory of Tours wrote about them. None of them stopped to consider that perhaps it was Gregory of Tours who *made* them important by writing so much about them.

Ferdinand de Guilhermy (1809–1878) was an archaeologist[785] and in 1848 he published a monograph on the cathedral of Saint-Denis. He was one of the rare authors to include a picture of Fredegonde in his work, although in the work about the cathedral of Saint-Denis the interest was concentrated on her tomb rather than on her actions. Several sepulchres found in Saint-Germain-des-Près in 1645 and 1656 were believed to belong to certain Merovingian royals including Fredegonde and Chilperic I. These finds, together with other grave finds in Tournai, constituted for a long time the basis for the Merovingian mortuary archeology in France, even though the scientific study of Merovingian graves started only in 1848. Many of the *erudits* publishing on Merovingian archeological findings used Gregory of Tours as a source to identify artefacts, especially the weapons.[786] Guilhermy did not believe that the sepulchres dated to the early Middle Ages, attributing them to the eleventh century.[787] I find it interesting that even though the finding of Fredegonde's possible grave must have been widely known to early nineteenth-century historians, not many of them made any remarks about it. As noted, in general only textual sources mattered to the historians.

Guilhermy published many similar works later on and was, like many of his contemporaries, a member of many learned societies such as the *Société nationale des antiquaires de France* and the *Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*.[788] The picture of Fredegonde in Guilhermy's work is in fact a copy of a mosaic found with her tomb, which was in the cathedral of Saint-Denis.[789] Unusually, the person who produced the drawings for this work was named, as Charles Fichot.[790] He was probably named because both he and Guilhermy were members of the same committee, the *Comité des arts et monuments*[791], which was a sub-committee of the *Comité des*

[785] It is, of course, impossible to know with any certainty what kind of education a learned man who called himself an archeologist had in the early nineteenth century.
[786] According to Périn, especially savants from Lorraine used Gregory of Tours as a source. See Périn 1980, 7-9, 19.
[787] Effros 2003, 40. Guilhermy 1848, 2009.
[788] "Society of Antiquaries of France", "Society of the history of Paris and the Île-de-France". See "GUILHERMY Ferdinand De, Ferdinand-Marie-Nolasque" in http://cths.fr/an/prosopo.php?id=101970, accessed October 16 2014. For example, in 1855 Guilhermy published a work entitled *Itinéraire archéologique de Paris*.
[789] Guilhermy 1848, 209-211. A picture of Fredegonde's tomb had already been published in Gabriel Daniel's work. Daniel 1720, 254.
[790] Guilhermy 1848, 2.
[791] "Committee of arts and monuments"

travaux historiques et scientifiques[792], founded on the orders of the minister of education François Guizot in 1834.[793] Guilhermy was simultaneously typical and non-typical: as a baron he was non-typical but as a historian he was typical, because he was male and he came from a privileged social class and family background. As a result of his position he had the means and the time to focus on history and historical monuments such as those in the cathedral of Saint-Denis.

According to Guizot's 1823 translation, Fredegonde was a "maîtresse", a concubine, before Chilperic married Galeswinthe, and she became wife and queen only after Galeswinthe's death.[794] Obviously the sources the early nineteenth-century historians had at their disposal affected the historians' representations of the queens. The number of available sources varied from one historian to another but it is possible to examine how some of the most popular sources were used. For example, Prudhomme showed in his collective biography from 1830 a great distrust of medieval sources and he called Aimoin[795], the French medieval chronicler, "the biggest liar of all historians". Twice he emphasised that Gregory of Tours was Fredegonde's great enemy and therefore untrustworthy.[796] Prudhomme refused to brand Fredegonde a murderer and an adulterer and seemingly tried to defend her by saying that the accusations against her may have been a little exaggerated.

Prudhomme's large collective biography marks a change in the use of sources regarding Fredegonde from Revolutionary times to the late Restoration years. At first sight, Fredegonde's biography in Prudhomme's 1830 collective biography varies very little from the biography written by Louise Félicité Guinement de Keralio Robert published in 1791, *Les crimes des reines de France, depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie-Antoinette*.[797] Almost all of the crimes attributed to Fredegonde were mentioned in both, and the only thing separating the two short biographies, albeit a very significant thing, was that in the later one the sources were blamed for having created Fredegonde's negative image.[798] In the earlier work only one historian, Mézeray, is

[792] "Committee of historical and scientific works"
[793] See "Historique Du Cths". Cths: http://cths.fr/hi/historique.php, accessed July 29 2015.
[794] Gregory of Tours, Book IV, ch 28. 1823, 182.
[795] Monk Aimoin of the monastery of Fleury (c. 965-1008) wrote about history and his most famous work is entitled (vulgarly) *Historia Francorum.*
[796] Prudhomme 1830 (II), 427-429. "le plus menteur des historiens".
[797] There were two versions of this work; one published in France in 1791 and one published in London the following year.
[798] Only one historian, François Eudes de Mézeray, was named in passages concerning Fredegonde in Robert's work, *Les crimes des reines de France*. Robert 1791, 23. If we look back at one work contemporary to the one published in 1791, a short pamphlet called *Antoinette d'Autriche ou Dialogue entre Catherine de Medicis et Frédégonde, reines de France, aux enfers* (1789), we see that it had the same elements of Fredegonde. This included adultery, several murders, possibly killing Chilperic and at the end leading an army. Anon 1789, 9-11.

mentioned. It will be remembered that he was also the only historian mentioned in the context of Merovingian history in Anquetil's work. Nevertheless, saying that certain sources are untrustworthy made Fredegonde seem only slightly less monstrous in the 1830 version.

There were historians who used many more sources than Prudhomme in 1830. Jean Marie Félicité Frantin used a great number in his *Annales du Moyen Âge* from 1825 and, even though the work was published shortly after Guizot's edited translation of Gregory's and Fredegar's chronicles, it seems that Frantin used the Latin versions of the chronicles, which he marked not in the footnotes but in the margins.[799] There is no clear logic in how the various sources concerning the early Middle Ages were used in the early nineteenth century, but it is clear not all sources were available to all authors. The sources that Frantin used included Gregory of Tours' chronicles, Fredegar's chronicles, *Gesta Regnum Francorum*[800], Aimoin's chronicles, Bollandist manuscripts[801], *Vita* of saint Columba, *Vita* of saint Desideratus, *Vita* of saint Bathilde, *Vita* of saint Radegonde[802], *Gesta Dagoberti*[803], Fleury's work[804], Isidore of Seville's Chronicles[805], Paul the Deacon's writings[806], Dom Bouquet's collections[807], Venantius Fortunatus' poems, Saint Remigius[808], and Montesquieu's works. Typically for early nineteenth-century historiography, Frantin did not specify which sources

[799] He uses the abbreviation "Greg. Tur." which refers to the Latin name Gregorius Turonensis. See, for example, Frantin 1825 (III), 368.
[800] An anonymous chronicle written in the eight century, which mostly adds to and copies Gregory's and Fredegar's chronicles. According to Bruno Dumézil (2008) the work, which is now known as *Liber Historiae Francorum*, was the first historical novel of the Middle Ages. Dumézil 2008, 406.
[801] The Bollandists were named after the Jesuit priest Jean Bolland (1596-1665), who started the large hagiographical collection *Acta Sanctorum* which is still continued today. See, for example, De Smedt 1907. See Frantin 1825 (II), 424. Here the author refers to Saint Sigismund's *Vita* in the Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum*, but the year of the edition is unknown.
[802] The *Vitas* of Desideratus, Columba, Bathilde and Radegonde are all in the Acta Sanctorum ordinis S. Benedicti – collection, which was edited by Jean Mabillon (1632-1707) among others. See, for example, Radegonde's *Vita* in Acta Sanctorum 1668, 319-334. Bathilde: Frantin 1825 (V), 194; Radegonde: Frantin, 1825 (III), 131; Desideratus: Frantin 1825 (IV), 82; Columba: Frantin 1825 (IV), 74. About Bathilde's and Radegonde's *Vitas*, see also McNamara & al 1992, 60-105, 264-278.
[803] King Dagobert (d. 638) was not a saint, but his life was later recorded and it was also translated in the collection of Guizot in 1823. As Guizot stated in *Notice sur la vie de Dagobert I*, the author and year of writing are unknown. Guizot 1823c (II), 269. Used as a source for Bathilde's husband's education and Bathilde's role in it, Frantin 1825 (V), 195.
[804] The French historian Claude Fleury (1640-1723), with his most famous work *Histoire Ecclésiastique* first printed in 1691. Originally it had 20 volumes but it was extended later to include 85 volumes. It is not clear which edition Frantin used. On seventh-century ecumenical councils in the Frankish kingdom, Frantin 1825 (V),194.
[805] Isidore, archbishop of Seville (560-636). Frantin probably used his work entitled *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Vandalorum et Suevorum,*written at the beginning of the seventh century. Frantin used the source to describe the political situation in Spain in the 580s. See Frantin 1825 (III), 318.
[806] Paul the Deacon (720-799) *Historia Langobardum* was used as a source on the same occasion as Isidore's work on Spain. See Frantin 1825 (III), 318.
[807] Dom Martin Bouquet (1685-1754). He was a Benedictine from St-Maur's congregation and the initiator of the large collection *Rerum gallicarum et francicarum Scriptores,* which was first published in 1738. It was a collection of histories from all of Gaul and France. It includes an edition of Gregory of Tours' *Ten Books of Histories*.
[808] Saint Remigius (437-533) was involved in Clovis' conversion and therefore an essential saint in Frankish (and in French) history. Frantin did not explain which version of his *Vita* he was using. See Frantin 1825 (II), 372.

were contemporary with the studied period and which were later productions.[809] Even if only a few sources were explicitly mentioned in the passages referring to Fredegonde, it is likely that a historian's interpretations would be influenced by all those he or she had read.[810] However haphazardly they were used, in the 1820s there was a dramatic change in the importance of sources in historical inquiry, which is apparent in Frantin's work. There sources are both marked and referred to, even if there were still a lot of direct quotations without clear references. This still marked a shift in practice, as it became more common to name the sources in historiographical works. There were earlier historiographical works with extensive notes, but the practice of noting sources became more common after the 1820s. It is difficult to know where Frantin got his inspiration to do this, but he used a similar type of vocabulary as Augustin Thierry used in his works.[811]

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At first glance Clotilde, Brunehilde and Fredegonde became queens in a similar manner, by marrying a king. Yet a great number of nineteenth-century historians, and many before them, perceived a difference between these queens in the way they became kings' wives. According to the early nineteenth-century historians, Clotilde and Brunehilde were destined to become queens by their high birth, whereas Fredegonde was not. She made herself a queen by intriguing and seducing. For example, Adélaïde Celliez wrote in her collective biography of Fredegonde and Audovera that:

> Audovera, whom the king had solemnly married with the ring and the denarius, beautiful perhaps but with a simple mind, had pleased Chilperic; but for some time the king had noticed among the queen's servants a handmaid of rare beauty whose lively spirit and playful conduct had seduced the queen, who let her control everything she did. – Fredegonde, the name of this servant girl, drew up plans to have Audovera repudiated and these plans she knew how to act out ruthlessly[812]

[809] For example, in the passage concerning Clovis' conversion he cited Hincmar "bishop of Reims" (806-881) without telling the reader that Hincmar was the bishop of Reims some three hundred years after Clovis' death. Frantin 1825 (II), 373.

[810] For the history of Fredegonde Frantin used Fredegar, Gregory of Tours, Aimoin's chronicles, *Gesta Regnum Francorum* (aka *Liber Historiae Francorum* from the eight century) and perhaps Radegonde's *Vita* (Frantin 1825 (III), 583), but because Frantin was not very clear with his references the use of this source is uncertain.

[811] Frantin used in the introduction rather similar vocabulary and metaphors as Thierry often used: he described history as a theatre or as a picture and he made a "painting of the customs". See Frantin 1825 (I), 12-13. Another 1820s author, Lacépède, described the history of France as a theatre of thirteen hundred years, using similar terms as Augustin Thierry used some fifteen years later. A theatre of great drama where the first scenes were acted in the sixth century. In this drama, the French or Frankish nation was called on to play a significant role which, according to Lacépède, ended in the middle of the eighteenth century. Lacépède 1826a (I), 34.

[812] Celliez 1851, 48. "Audowêre, que le roi avait épousée solennellement par l'anneau et le denier, belle peut-être, mais d'un esprit simple, n'avait pas déplu à Hilpéric; mais depuis quelque temps le roi avait remarqué parmi les femmes de la reine une servante d'une rare beauté, dont l'esprit vif et les saillies enjouées avaient séduit la reine qui se laissait en tout dominer par elle. -- Frédégonde, c'était le nom de cette servante, combina, pour faire répudier Audowère, un plan qu'elle sut exécuter d'une façon hardie."

In the nineteenth-century historical imagination the humble birth made all the difference when associated with the active role given to Fredegonde in her queen-making process; it emphasised the negative representations of her. In the citation from Celliez' work Fredegonde's active role is also accentuated by juxtaposing her with the simple minded Audovera, who allowed Fredegonde to manipulate her.

Regarding the kings of France, especially in the Old Regime, there was an unwritten rule concerning their marriages: they did not marry their subjects. A king of France, a term here referring to the late medieval and early modern period, has always married a foreigner.[813] Clovis and Sigebert, imagined as French kings, followed this pattern but Chilperic did not. He married his subject, a Frankish woman. I have not found any clear indications from the early nineteenth-century historiography that the authors would have condemned the marriage of Fredegonde and Chilperic on these grounds, but perhaps the Old Regime kings' marriage patterns implicitly affected the authors' judgments on Fredegonde.

In the early nineteenth century the worst possible marriage was considered to be between two persons of different social classes, or of different wealth. According to James F. McMillan, who has studied the position of French women from 1789 to 1914, this kind of "unconsidered" matrimony has been a popular topic in French literature through the centuries as a warning of its inevitable failure.[814] Freedom was perceived as a positive value for (some) men, but a dangerous feature for women. McMillan also emphasised that marriage was not something women were forced into, but it was a route to social power and influence. Women were not uniquely passive and the role of a wife was seen as very valuable.[815]

In his text book *Histoire de France, à l'usage de la Jeunesse* (1831), Jean Nicolas Loriquet described how Fredegonde "captured" Chilperic's heart with her beauty while he was married to Galeswinthe.[816] The emphasis was on the active verb: it was not the king who charmed Fredegonde

[813] Cosandey 2000, 74-75, 80-81. Cosandey is referring to the late medieval and especially Old Regime kings, and said nothing in this context about the Merovingian royals.
[814] McMillan 2000, 49-50. What is truly interesting is that marriage was the *only* socially acceptable role and there were no options which should be kept in mind when the role of a wife is under discussion. Passion was seen as a bad basis for marriage and it was often seen as the reason why Chilperic married Fredegonde. Passion was then used to highlight the inconvenient nature of their marriage. See also de Giorgio 1993, 173. According to Scott (1999, 143), in the 1840s passion was seen as possibly even leading to prostitution and criminality for working class girls. Low family background was also associated with promiscuity - as seen in Fredegonde's history.
[815] McMillan 2000, 47-63.
[816] Loriquet 1831, 70-71. In the description concerning the marriages of Brunehilde and Clotilde Loriquet did not use active verbs as in Fredegonde's case. See Loriquet 1831, 71 & 59. Loriquet was almost a perfect example of the type of

but Fredegonde who charmed the king. Loriquet, like so many other text book authors in the first half of the nineteenth century, still engaged with the pre-Revolutionary views on the monarchy and on the value of noble birth, and therefore saw Fredegonde as unsuitable to be a queen. This standpoint is not surprising given Loriquet's religious status and how after the years of Revolution and Napoleonic rule fervent Catholics like him strongly supported the re-installation of a government and social order similar to the Old Regime. The Ultra-Royalist's wishes to re-establish a similar society as before 1789 put the king in a difficult position, because the adversaries of the Ultras reacted strongly to all attempts to return any aspect of the old society.[817] In Loriquet's historical imagination Fredegonde was made to fit the model of a queen; by failing to mention her low background Loriquet was able to define her as a queen, but by presenting her as the active partner he showed his criticism on her. As a text book, this work was probably the first book about history many young people read, so that it had a strong influence on the readers' historical imagination. Loriquet seems to have used the active verbs instead of her low birth to highlight Fredegonde's unsuitability as a queen, although the unsuitability was obviously related to her low birth as well in the both his mind and the minds of other nineteenth-century historians.

The polygamy of some of the Merovingian kings, like Chilperic's, was a major problem and a source of contempt for the nineteenth-century historians, as I have established in the Chapter II. Some historians, like Loriquet, silently denied the existence of polygamy and presented the simultaneous wives as successive wives.[818] The challenging question of polygamy was also examined by Philippe Antoine Merlin, who studied queenship from the point of view of marital status in his comprehensive dictionary of jurisprudence.[819]

Merlin, who was an active revolutionary in the late eighteenth century, stated that even though "queen" referred primary to a female ruler, in the context of France and the Frankish kingdom it was also used to refer to the king's wife. According to Merlin, the key to discovering who was a queen was in the nature of each marriage. He stated that the marriages of the early medieval kings could be divided into two groups: the secret or private marriages, and the public marriages. It is known that Merlin was active in approving the law accepting divorce during the 1790s and

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writer who Augustin Thierry criticized for transposing the image of modern kingship into the early Middle Ages and making the French monarchy seem a non-historical institution. Loriquet described how "our" kings came to the throne with great "pomp" to receive the sovereign power. According to Loriquet, already in the "first race" the "people" celebrated loudly the new king. Loriquet 1831, 93. Thierry 1851a, 201-208 & passim.

[817] Wrede 2006, 119.

[818] Loriquet 1831, 70-71. Chilperic only cheated Galeswinthe with Fredegonde. Also, for example, Dagobert's wives are left unmentioned. Loriquet 1831, 76-77.

[819] Merlin & Guyot 1828, 390-410.

therefore I find it even more interesting that Francis Ronsin (1992) has found that in the 1790s there was discussion about a dualist marriage model: official "established" marriage and "private" marriage.[820] I don't know whether Merlin was in any way involved in developing this dualist model but it sounds quite similar to the one Merlin "found" in the Merovingian period. According to him, only women who had entered public marriages could receive the title of queen.[821] It seemed obvious to Merlin that women could not rule the Frankish kingdoms in their own right, so he did not discuss this question at all. Merlin used the marriage of Fredegonde and Chilperic as an example of his theory on how the status of marriage, either public or private, influenced the woman's role as a wife and as a queen. According to Merlin, Chilperic was simultaneously married to Fredegonde and Audovera, but only the latter was a queen and a spouse because only their marriage was public. When Chilperic married Galeswinthe, Fredegonde, the secret wife, decided to get rid of both Audovera and Galeswinthe. According to Merlin, she plotted against the legal wife, Audovera, and got Chilperic to abandon her in order to become herself the legal, public wife and as a result, a queen. Merlin stated that Chilperic could not marry Fredegonde publicly before because she was Audovera's slave and only when he divorced her could he free Fredegonde.[822]

Merlin argued that there had been two marriages between Fredegonde and Chilperic, first a secret and then a public one. The public marriage was to enable her to take the title of the queen. Merlin was, as the following examples show, one of the few historians of his time who thought that Fredegonde and Chilperic had been married *before* the death of Galeswinthe in 568. It is difficult to understand why Merlin insisted that the couple were twice married; the only logical explanation is that the double-marriage supported his theory about the marriage's role in defining queenship. He used no sources to back up his theory, and mentioned no other previous or contemporary historian who shared his views. It seems that he had first constructed an explanatory model and then made the historical material fit it.

It is interesting that the chapter "Reine" in Merlin's encyclopedia was in fact written fully from the point of view of men, the kings and princes, and how they could or should marry. It was about how they could divorce or choose their spouse, and how the women were given the title of queen or if they were defined as concubines. Merlin, for example, approved the morganatic marriage of King Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon because he saw that the king had the right to marry a woman

[820] See Ronsin 1992, 14.
[821] Merlin & Guyot 1828, 393.
[822] Merlin& Guyot 1828, 395.

he liked after he had produced an heir to the kingdom.[823] Again, it was about the right of the king and he wrote nothing of what the woman might want to do. Clearly the point of view on queenship was a masculine one and the queenship in Merlin's work was defined from the aspect of kingship. The queen had no voice in her own history.

As a comparison to Merlin's theory, one can look at a comprehensive study of the French Middle Ages by Chrysanthe Ovide Des Michels[824] (1793–1866). According to Des Michels, who was a teacher and wrote several school manuals about history, Audovera was a concubine, not a queen. He argued that Galeswinthe was the first legitimate spouse and queen, and Fredegonde was her maid. In order to marry Galeswinthe, Chilperic had deserted Audovera, but not long after the nuptials he was charmed by the beautiful Fredegonde, the maid. And soon after that, according to Des Michels, Galeswinthe, the legitimate spouse, was found strangled in her bed and Fredegonde took her place as a queen. She was "la nouvelle reine" as Des Michels described her.[825] Consequently Des Michels argued that queenship was connected to the nature of the marriage but he denied Audovera's position as a legal wife and as a queen.

Unlike Merlin, Des Michels posited only one queen and spouse at a time. In consequence Des Michels did not say anything about Radegonde's husband Clothar I's famous polygamous affairs or about the mothers of Clothar's sons. Thus Des Michels clearly supported the interpretation of queenship where a king could only have one legal wife at a time and this wife was the queen. He saw early medieval Frankish queenship in the light of nineteenth-century or Old Regime French queenship, extending the rules for queenship of his time back into the early Middle Ages. Merlin, unlike Des Michels, argued that the existence of several queens simultaneously was indeed possible. Still, both of these writers argued strongly that these polygamous marriages concerned only Frankish royals, not the French monarchy: in fact, according to Merlin, this behaviour was "disgusting".[826] Merlin's opinion about the early medieval marriage customs gives a clear example of the way historians and writers did not shy away from making value judgments about history. These judgments become understandable when we bear in mind that one of history's primary functions was to guide the readers on rightful actions and morals. As Peyronnet wrote in 1835:

[823] Merlin& Guyot 1828, 399.
[824] According to Pim Den Boer, Des Michels was one of the first appointed professors of history in France and he was later appointed rector of the Rouen Academy. Den Boer cites a contemporary source which stated that Des Michels was "one of the most harmful historians" of his time because of his inadequate documentary research. Den Boer 1998, 138. Des Michels was a professor of history in college Henry IV and in college Bourbon.
[825] Des Michels 1835 (I), 100-101.
[826] Merlin & Guyot 1828, 396.

"[…] history predicts when it narrates."[827] In the minds of the historians and writers there was no contradiction between claiming objectivity and making judgments, but it was not always clear what the historians wanted to predict with their writings. Perhaps Merlin wanted to predict the legalisation of divorce and a dualist marriage model but there is no way of knowing this for certain.

The Swiss historian Sismondi concluded in his *Histoire de la chute de l'empire romain et du déclin de la civilisation, de l'an 250 à l'an 1000* (1835) that Audovera and Galeswinthe had both been queens. Fredegonde, when becoming Chilperic's third wife, decided to get rid of her competitors.[828] Sismondi continued by saying that Chilperic had also had other queens and concubines.[829] Sismondi clearly suggested that one king could have had several simultaneous queens. "Queen" in Sismondi's interpretation seemed almost a synonym for a king's wife. Like Des Michels, he did not ponder the queen's role or influence in the early Middle Ages, but concentrated largely on describing the kings' military expeditions, and controversially, their love affairs. In the following example from Sismondi's work on the decline of Rome and civilisation, Fredegonde is explicitly given an active role in marrying Chilperic and in the deaths of her rivals:

> But among the women was the all too famous Fredegonde, worthy companion of this monster. Born in an obscure rank, Fredegonde stayed for many years as the mistress of Chilperic before she thought of marrying him; but then she achieved over him an absolute power, and took advantage of this situation in order to get rid of all her rivals; Queen Galeswinthe was strangled, Queen Audovera, after having languished in exile, was sent to her death, and the others were chased away from the palace.[830]

In this imaginary scenario Chilperic has no power and Fredegonde is the driving force behind him.

Representations and interpretations of Fredegonde's marriage, and of her queen-making process, are interesting because they reveal that the flexibility of the notion of Merovingian queenship was problematic for historians who were accustomed to monogamous royal unions. Either the historians

[827] Peyronnet 1835 (I), xv. "[…] elle prédit quand elle raconte."
[828] The title reminds us of Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (started in 1776), although Sismondi did not make any direct references to it in his work. Gibbon's work was translated into French in 1828 by François Guizot, so most likely Sismondi knew it. It was, however, not only Sismondi who used judgemental titles : see, for example, ***Histoire de la barbarie et des lois au moyen âge: de la civilisation et des moeurs des anciens, comparées à celles des modernes, de l'Église et des gouvernements, des conciles et des assemblées nationales chez différents peuples, et particulièrement en France et en Angleterre*** by Eustache Toulotte and Charles Riva, 1829. This last work reveals in the title the implicit method most historians used: comparison between previous times and their own time in order to highlight their level of civilisation.
[829] Sismondi 1835 (I), 371.
[830] Sismondi 1835 (I), 371. "Mais parmi elles se trouvait la trop fameuse Frédégonde, digne compagne de ce monstre. Née dans une condition obscure, Frédégonde demeura plusieurs années la maîtresse de Chilpéric avant qu'elle songeât à l'épouser; mais ensuite elle acquit sur lui un pouvoir absolu, et elle en profita pour se défaire de toutes ses rivales; la reine Galswinthe fut étranglée, la reine Audovère, après avoir langui dans l'exile, fut envoyée au supplice, les autres furent chassées de palais."

denied the existence of polygamy, as Loriquet had done, or used it to prove the Frankish kingdom's "inferiority" compared with their own time, as Sismondi did. Even though some of Sismondi's works came out before the publication of Guizot's theories on European civilisation in the 1820s, he clearly engaged in the progressive hierarchical interpretation of the history of France where the Merovingian period represented the low point of culture between Antiquity and the (later) Middle Ages.[831]

The essential aspect of Fredegonde's queenship in the eyes of the nineteenth-century historians was that she was perceived as *actively* wanting and seeking to become a queen. She was not like Clotilde and Brunehilde who, according to the historians, ended up as queens because of their virtues or their high birth. She was imagined as playing an active role in creating her own queenship, as is apparent in all the above-mentioned examples, and this defined her in a negative way, most likely because the activity was perceived as a *lust for power*. An ideal queen, as noted in some representations of Clotilde, did not want to become a queen. In many nineteenth-century collective biographies women in the public sphere, especially queens, were presented in such a way as to teach how sovereignty and domestic femininity could not be successfully united.[832] This ideal woman, queen or no queen, was submissive and not self-assured or strong, and this obeisance was emphasised in many works aimed at a female audience. Education's religious framework was meant to crush the girls' own will and to make them good and malleable wives.[833] The representations of Fredegonde presented an opposite of these attributes, but I doubt that any young girls were allowed to read much about her history, other than in text books.

The representations of Fredegonde aspiring to gain power become more vivid when they are compared to the way Clotilde was pictured, for example in text books. Renaud de Rouvray, who published a biography of Clotilde in 1841 and of whom almost nothing is known, claimed that after Clovis' death she did not want the regency for her sons but was content to "educate" them. According to Rouvray, Clotilde did not want earthly honours; she had no ambition and she was tired of all the bothersome "pomp".[834] And indeed, this was what the author wanted his female readers to aim for as well. Renaud de Rouvray's work on Clotilde was in the list of approved books

[831] See, for example, Sismondi 1821 (I), 2. He wrote very similarly about civilisation as Guizot would later do.
[832] Booth 2004, 68. Booth is writing about collective biographies written in English, but I think this argument can be applied to French collective biographies as well.
[833] Foley 2004, 31, 33, 36.
[834] Renaud de Rouvray 1841, 107-108. Bathilde acted as a regent, but she was never pictured as *wanting* or *using* the power in devotional historiography because in this genre ideal femininity did not include the idea of using or wanting (direct) power.

for Catholic readers in Brussels and in France, which indicates that Clotilde was yet again made to represent the ideal wife and mother.[835]

This emphasis on women's passivity in certain areas of life was visible in the whole of French society in the nineteenth century, especially in those areas which were perceived as public such as politics, work outside home, and royal power. Historians with their writings and ideas strongly influenced society, yet the very same historians were creations of their society. It is fair to say that the images created of Fredegonde demonstrated that women who created their own (public) space were perceived as undesirable in early nineteenth-century France, especially in a non-religious space.[836]

I have argued elsewhere about Fredegonde that she was perceived almost as a masculine figure in early nineteenth-century historiography. Joséphine Amory de Langerack wrote very explicitly about Fredegonde's masculinity in her 1847 collective biography: "[s]he had accustomed the people to see her as a woman without weaknesses, and she never refuted the high opinions that the people she ruled had conceived about her male courage."[837] What is also interesting in this passage is that Fredegonde was pictured as creating her image among the people, which is quite a rare representation of any women in nineteenth-century historiography. According to Langerack, Fredegonde did not only have masculine qualities, she also knew how to manipulate public opinion. Brunehilde was also given masculine qualities in another work, that of Charles Ignace de Peyronnet, the ultra royalist whose political career the 1830 revolution ended. Peyronnet described with high words Brunehilde's qualities as a ruler who transformed the "monarchy of the Franks": she had a "[…]male genie, a powerful and headstrong character, a strong, cautious, and a dominant spirit."[838] But, as many others had argued of Fredegonde, Brunehilde had too much ambition, which was one reason for her eventual fall.[839] In the historiography of the early nineteenth century ambition in women was always a negative attribute because it invariably caused problems both for them and for others, whereas men profited from having ambition. It was also a paradox: women like Brunehilde needed ambition to reach a position of power but that same ambition was described as leading to her eventual destruction.

[835] The list of approved books included also another work by Renaud de Rouvray entitled *Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth*. See Anon 1843, 135.
[836] On the separate spheres of women and men, see, for example, Kerber 1988, 9-11.
[837] Langerack 1847, 170. "Elle avait accoutumé les peuples à voir en elle une femme sans faiblesse, et elle ne démentit jamais la haute opinion qu'avait concue de son mâle courage, la foule qu'elle gouvernait."
[838] Peyronnet 1835(II), 203-4. "[…] avait un mâle génie; un caractère puissant et opiniâtre, un esprit ferme, réflechi, décisif."This same passage about the Brunehilde was also cited by Hugo in Hugo 1857(II), 173.
[839] Peyronnet 1835 (II), 203-4.

Perceived masculinity in women made them seem unnatural, but at the same time women like Fredegonde gained admiration from certain historians.[840] In Fredegonde's case the masculinity was visible in the active role she was imagined to have taken in her marriage with Chilperic, as, for example, in the passage in Sismondi's work; the husband was pictured in many works as weak and the wife as leading the family, thus turning the "natural" hierarchy upside down. Already in the eighteenth-century revolutionary years the Jacobins had argued that women could not be involved in politics because they could not change their sex and become men.[841] The famous author Germaine de Staël also saw women who were interested in politics as forfeiting their gender.[842] Fredegonde was thus in a sense "masculinised" in historiography because she was perceived to have been involved in politics. Controversially, Fredegonde was seen as the opposite of an ideal queen, but at the same time she surpassed the supposed "feminine weaknesses".

The biographer Laure Prus[843] argued in the introduction to her collective biography (1846) that those women who were born with only the qualities of their own sex lived and died without leaving any trace behind.[844] Indeed, in the nineteenth century "good women" had no history and therefore women who were remembered and written about, especially such as Fredegonde but even saints like Clotilde, did not fit the bourgeois ideal of (invisible) women dedicated to the domestic sphere. This was of course another paradox: even exemplary women were actually doing something wrong by being remembered.[845] But this ideal role of invisible women was very apparent in most historiographical works produced by men, where the people almost always consisted of a mass or of male individuals. Women were erased from such histories.

Women were seen as less capable than men because they were not guided by reason, but by passion. In addition, according to Foley, one argument why the "peuple" was excluded from basic political rights during the July Monarchy was that they were supposedly motivated by passion rather than reason.[846] Despite the association between people and passion, according to Joan Scott,

[840] Aali 2013, 14-40.
[841] Foley 2004, 19.
[842] See Hillman 2011, 20.
[843] Very little is known about Laure Prus; she published in French in London and she was married to a French scientist. Her family was an ardent admirer of the July Monarchy and after the revolution of 1848 she moved, most likely with her brother, to Algeria where she published another work, *A Residence in Algeria*.
[844] Prus 1846 (I), 1.
[845] See, for example, Booth 2004, 61-62.
[846] Foley 2004, 111.

"le peuple" was generally a masculine term, although it could also include women.[847] Fredegonde was often associated with passion, as in Thierry's interpretation, to highlight both her savage nature and gender, and both of these features contributed to her negative image in historiography. Yet from the forgettable "peuple"[848] she rose through the social ranks to join the individuals who were to be remembered by later generations.

The more one reads the historiographical studies, the more one finds variables of one and the same interpretation. In Fredegonde's history there are the same late sixth-century events, murders and intrigues repeated over and over again with new explanations or emphases. The same love affairs and adulteries are to be found in almost all histories. Some historians did not even bother to write her history themselves, but borrowed passages from their contemporary historians, without any references. Fredegonde committed almost all the same murders in every work. In the decades of the Restoration and the July Monarchy she gradually became imagined in historiography both as more and more murderous and as having greater and greater political influence.

There are three things in particular that affected Fredegonde's representations negatively in the early nineteenth century. First there is Gregory of Tours and his original negative depiction of Chilperic and Fredegonde. Second, there is the perception of Fredegonde's active role in creating her own queenship. And third, related to the two points above, is her perceived role in governing on behalf of her son Clothar II. There was no unanimity among the historians on whether she had been a regent or not and what kind of power she had wielded. Because of these uncertainties the representations of her role during ther son's minority vary quite considerably, as will be demonstrated in the next section. The first feature was present in historiography all through the Middle Ages, but the two following features only appeared in the early early modern era because of the changing historiographical traditions and the transformation of social norms.

4.2. Regent and Regency in Historiography

Women have never been able to inherit the throne of France but in certain situations they have been able to concentrate royal power in their hands. Most often this has occurred when the king was

[847] Scott 1999, 63.
[848] On "le peuple", see also Berger 2015, 15 & 119. The Third Estate (Tiers Etat), which included the working class and sometimes, but not always, a bourgeois class, corresponded most closely to "le peuple", which was a popular expression in the context of the Merovingian period in historiography.

absent from the kingdom or when he died and left an under-age (male) heir to the throne. Regency was an institution similar to that of queenship: it was only developed long after the Merovingian period. This, however, did not prevent the nineteenth-century historians from referring to regency when writing about the Merovingian period. One should therefore ask whether the use of the word signified that historians perceived the institution as having existed already in the sixth century, or whether it was simply a matter of necessity when no better word to describe rule by a queen existed.

There had been one female regent in France in the early nineteenth century, even though the constitution of 1791 had prohibited women from becoming regents and this measure had not been reversed afterwards.[849] The regent was Empress Marie Louise, second wife of Napoleon. She was named regent when Napoleon was absent from his kingdom in 1813. According to Merlin (1828), Napoleon himself declared Marie Louise a regent in letters patents while he was away, but it seems that she had no real executive power in the empire.[850] Marie Louise's regency was an exception and does not indicate, taking into consideration the Civil Code, that women were able to use real executive power in early nineteenth-century France.

During the Restoration and July Monarchy the question of regency was brought up, just before the July Revolution when King Charles X was already losing power. In 1830 Charles X abdicated from the throne in favour of his grandson in order to prevent the revolution, but it was too late and Louis Philippe had proclaimed himself king of the French.[851] Had Charles' grandson become king, Charles would have hoped to become a regent himself, but the revolutionary events moved faster than the old king and a new king was appointed.[852] It was not, however, at all clear that Charles could have become a regent, since he had abdicated and since Louis Philippe was also available for the regency. In addition, the mother of the young heir, the duchess of Berry, was also a possible, and even a popular, alternative for the role of regent. The reason this did not happen was not her gender, but the opposition of Charles X, who disapproved of her political views.[853] In 1842 the question of regency was again brought up when the oldest son of the Orléans family, the duc d'Orléans, died in an accident and his young son became the heir to the throne. On the initiative of King Louis Philippe, the law on regency was changed so that the regent would be the closest prince to the

[849] Margadant 2008b, 301. This is also in Merlin's (1828) *Répertoire universel et raisonné de jurisprudence*: women were excluded from the regency. Merlin & Guyot 1828, 314.
[850] Merlin & Guyot 1828, 315.
[851] Brown 2012, 29-30.
[852] See, for example, Larousse "Charles X": http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/personnage/Charles_X/112829, accessed July 27 2015.
[853] Becquet 2009, 141-142.

family, not the mother of the young king.[854] Yet, in February 1848 when the revolution had already broken out and Louis Philippe had abdicated, the oldest son of the late duc d'Orléans was proclaimed king and his mother proclaimed the regent, against the law. This never became a reality, however, before the whole family had to flee France and the French monarchy ceased to exist.[855]

Though not all early nineteenth-century authors applied the concept of regency to the early Middle Ages, this anachronistic use was quite common, in part because there was no better word to describe queens in possession of this kind of power. This is one reason why it is crucial to examine what regency (and its derivatives) meant to the nineteenth-century historians. The word "regent", in French *le/la régent/e*, may refer to a woman or a man, and a regent could be, and often was, someone other than the queen(-mother). I will focus on the female regencies, but one must acknowledge that men, such as King Gontram, were also sometimes described as regents in the context of the Merovingian period. I start by studying the nature of regency and the definitions of the words "regent" and "regency", and then examine how the early nineteenth-century historians and writers applied the notions of regency or regent to the complex construction of the Merovingian dynasty.

I argue that Fredegonde together with the Saint Queen Bathilde represented two (arche)types of regents existing in early nineteenth-century French historiography. Fredegonde represented the bad regent with a lust for power and Bathilde the submissive regent without a desire to rule. Early nineteenth-century historians did blame Brunehilde for the same vices as Fredegonde, but Fredegonde's representations demonstrate better the negative qualities associated with female regency. The representations created of Bathilde's regency function as a point of comparison, although there are fewer references to her in this context than to Fredegonde, and the passages are considerably shorter.

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Of the two words "regent" and "regency", *Régent/e* is the older one and it was, as far as is known, first mentioned in 1261. In that instance it signified *professeur d'université*.[856] The first known use of the word to refer to government as "the one who governs in the minority or absence of the [male]

[854] Price 2007, 311-312.
[855] Price 2007, 362.
[856] The university itself refers to the University of Paris, which was founded in the twelfth century and officialised at the beginning of the thirteenth century by Philippe II Augustus. However, even in 1842 one historian entitled himself "Régent d'Histoire", meaning professor of history. Belin 1842.

sovereign" is from 1316.[857] At the time both Louis X and his infant son Jean I died within a short time and France was left with no ruler. The subsequent king was Louis' brother Philippe V (d. 1322), who had himself crowned in 1316. This period in the history of France was remarkable in the history of queenship as well, because it was then that the principle of the Salic law was forged. Originally the Salic law was assembled at the beginning of the sixth century in the reign of Clovis I. In this period the law included 65 articles and it was later extended by the orders of the Carolingian kings Pepin the Short and Charlemagne. The last version, and the most famous one, ordered by Charlemagne, is known as *Lex Karolina*.[858] The law, or rather a collection of civil and criminal codes was only applied to the Frankish kingdoms and by the year 1000 the law's sphere of influence had diminished to include only the northern parts of modern France. Later, the law was integrated into other legal codes and consequently forgotten.[859]

The best known passage from the Salic law comes from Heading 62 (*De Alode*), Article 6, which states: *De terra vero salica, nulla portio haereditatis mulieri veniat, sed ad virilem sexum tota terræ haereditas perveniat*.[860] The article states that women are not to inherit salic land.[861] The problem is that there has never been a consensus about what is or was "salic land".[862] There was no agreement about the definition either in the fourteenth century, or in the later centuries or in the nineteenth century. The article in question did not make references to the "salic land" in the earliest version of the law written during the reign of Clovis I. The adjective "salic" was added to the article during the Merovingian era but it was not related to the succession to the throne.[863] By the fourteenth century, there were several versions of the law and the article, and since the wordings differed somewhat from one text to another so too did writers' interpretations of what constituted "salic land". When Louis X died in 1316, the question about women's possibility to inherit the French crown was brought up for the first time in the history of France, as Louis had only one surviving child, his daughter Jeanne. The question was avoided by giving the crown to Louis' brothers, first to Philip V, and after him to Charles IV (d. 1328). But Charles eventually died without a male heir and the closest male heir was his nephew, Edward III, who happened to be the king of England. As the

[857] "Régent, -ente":http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/r%C3%A9gent accessed November 25 2011. "[…]celui qui gouverne pendant la minorité ou l'absence du souverain".
[858] Viennot 2006, 26.
[859] Hanley 2003, 3.
[860] Viennot 2006, 35. From the version of *Lex Karolina*.
[861] But it said nothing about the throne of France. See, for example, Dumézil 2013, 69.
[862] CNRTL's definition "terre salique". It is "[…]du patrimoine familial, qui doit être transmise telle quelle à la génération suivante par le chef de famille […]." A woman would transfer the land away from her family. See "salique" in http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/salique, accessed April 11 2011. See Viennot 2006, 36; Hanley 1999, 491-494.
[863] See Viennot 2006, 34. See also, for the earliest version available, *Pactus Legis Salicæ*, 222. See especially Heading 59 (De alodis) Article 5.

crisis continued, the long lost Salic law was discovered in 1358. In this period the (in)famous interpretation of Article 6 (in the citation above) was created. According to that interpretation, salic land could refer to the kingdom of France, i.e. to the inheritance of the king, and therefore women could be excluded from the throne and from transmitting the throne to their male heirs.[864]

The above interpretation of the article was born over a long period and it was not accepted by everyone. The understandingthat women were excluded from the throne was, however, strong in the minds of erudite people in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. The Salic law was seen as the "first law of the French"[865]. However, already in the mid-sixteenth century the philologist and scholar Jean Du Tillet (d. 1572) discovered that the article used as a basis for the famous interpretation was a forgery and that the conclusion that women were excluded from the throne was false. Despite this discovery, the law was still in use in the seventeenth century to justify the exclusion. Afterwards the law was replaced with an idea of the "natural order" of masculine superiority in order to rationalize the exclusion.[866]

According to the medievalist Boureau, the tradition of Salic law was seen as the most important of the principles of government at the end of the sixteenth century. Boureau states that the primacy of the law was due both to resolving political problems during and after the Hundred Years' Wars, and to the fact that it led to the establishment of the male patriarchal order at the same time as the foundation for the nuclear family begun to be established in the fifteenth century. Simultaneously a new ideology regarding the "blood" of the dynastic line was born, and the expression *princes du sang* emerged to signify the sovereign's closest relatives.[867]

Even though many early nineteenth-century historians regarded the link between women's exclusion and Salic law as a thing of the past, the law was often brought up in the context of the Merovingian period as the first law established by Clovis I. Some historians did still consider the law as the basis for the exclusion. One biographer, Jules Dubern was one writer who considered the Salic law to have prevented (female) regents from taking power "since the beginning of this history." In *Revue Britannique* (1838), Dubern's historical vision of Salic law was praised as truthful. The author of the revue is unknown and it was originally published in Great Britain but translated and re-published in France. In the Revue it was also mentioned that Dubern's work coincided well with the opening of

[864] See, for example, Olivier-Martin 1984 [1948], 307-311; Hanley 1999, 491-494; Viennot 2006, 15-17, 348 & passim.
[865] Viennot 2006, 570.
[866] Hanley 2003, 10-11. The Salic law I used, from Viennot's (2006) study, is not the forged one - a different version was used in the fourteenth century.
[867] Boureau 2001, 211.

the Museum of History of France in Versailles, because the work could "translate and explain so many scenes and portraits […]" there.[868] I understand that the author intended Dubern's work to give historical background to the objects in the museum and enable the visitors to know more about them. In general, however, as we saw in the previous section, by the 1830s and 1840s the law was no longer perceived as the basis for women's exclusion from the throne. Though the Salic law had no legal bearing any more in the early nineteenth century because the interpretation made in the fourteenth century had been conclusively proven to be false, it remained an essential factor in the imagining and justifying of women's exclusion from the throne and from the executive power.[869]

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In the early modern period the kingdom of France saw several powerful female regents such as Catherine de' Medici and Marie de' Medici.[870] The expression *Reine Régente* was born in the seventeenth century, although there had been female regents earlier. With a majuscule, *le Régent* refers to the duke of Orléans who acted as a regent during the minority of Louis XV, from 1715 to 1723. *Regency* included an idea of a certain official institute and therefore applying it to the early Middle Ages is controversial. The French *régence* is a latter derivative from *régent/e* and the first mention of regency (*régence*) is from 1403, when it signified "government of a state in the minority or absence of the [male] sovereign".[871]

During the years of the Restoration and July Monarchy regency was only occasionally a question. Louis Philippe had so many male heirs that I doubt the question was raised at all after 1830. Even though *regency* and *regent* are clearly applicable only to the late medieval and early modern periods, the nineteenth-century historians and writers sometimes used them in the context of the early medieval period to indicate the government during the king's minority. There were no cases in the Merovingian period when a queen would have been named a regent (even had the position existed then) due to a king's absence from his kingdom, as was done later in the case of Blanche of

[868] Dubern 1837 (I), ii. "Dès le commencement de cette histoire […]". About the *Revue*, see Philarète Chasles 1838, 399. "traduire et expliquer tant de scenes et de portraits […]."
[869] See, for example, Becquet 2009, 139.
[870] Fanny Cosandey suggests that the existence of powerful and successful regents in the early modern period is paradox in the history of French queenship: women were not perceived as intelligent or strong enough to inherit the throne, yet they could use the supreme power as regents. Cosandey 2000, 32.
[871] "Régence": http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/regence accessed November 25 2011. The term *regency* has other significations as well, but they are not directly linked to queenship. "gouvernement d'un État pendant la minorité ou l'absence du souverain".

Castile, who became a regent during her son Louis IX's minority in 1226 and again when he went on crusade in 1248.[872]

It is noteworthy that *regency*, signifying the institution, exists in the French language although queenship does not. What are we to conclude from the existence of the word? No early nineteenth-century historians pondered the question, which suggests that it was not perceived as very important regarding French history. Possibly this is because regency was usually a masculine institution and not just for women, as is seen in the case of the duke of Orléans, who governed in the eighteenth century. In addition, as noted, regency did not refer only to ruling France but to a university position in its original signification. In its original meaning the word thus referred solely to a masculine position.

I have analysed several cases from the early nineteenth-century historiography where historians have applied directly the words *regent* or *regency* to the Merovingian period. The results vary considerably. According to Jean Marie Félicité Frantin, who published *Annales du Moyen Age* in 1825, Bathilde's regency was a revolution in the way queens were perceived as using power in the Frankish kingdoms. The queens were "loved and respected", especially Bathilde and Dagobert's wife Nantilde. Frantin wrote:

> One can believe that this was a result of the governments of Fredegonde and Brunehilde which, even though they had been seized and ruled with violence, hated by the people and the Grands (magnates) and showed their revenge, had increased the dignity of queens and made their respect easy and natural. […] This is how Brunehilde started the regency of the queens; […]. But never had the power been trusted in more pure hands than those of Bathilde. This queen, who had been pulled out of servitude, was modest on the throne, and her virtues made her dear to the nation. Submitted to the orders of her husband the king, kind and gentle to all her subjects, full of regard towards the Grands, respectful of the bishops, she made her greatness known only through the good works she did in all places. She fed the poor, distributed clothes and concentrated on the most humble duties of Christian charity. [873]

[872] One should remember that the frontiers of the Merovingian kingdoms were not stable, non-existent in anything like the modern sense, and therefore it was often impossible to define whether a king was absent from his kingdom or not.

[873] Frantin 1825 (V), 209-210. "On peut croire aussi que c'étoit l'effet du gouvernement de Frédégonde et de Brunehaut qui, bien qu'usurpé et exercé avec violence, détesté du peuple et des Grands et signalé par leurs vengeances, avoit, pour ainsi dire, élevé la dignité des reines et rendu leur crédit facile et naturel. […] C'est ainsi que Brunehaut fonda la régence des reines ; […]. Mais cette fois jamais le pouvoir ne fut confié à des mains plus pures qu'à celles de Bathilde. Cette reine tirée de la servitude fut modeste sur le trône, et ses vertus la rendirent chère à la nation. Soumise aux ordres du roi son époux, douce et affable à tous les sujets, pleine d'égards pour les Grands, de vénération pour les évêques, elle n'avoit fait connoître sa grandeur que par les bienfaits qu'elle répandoit en tous lieux. Elle nourrissoit les pauvres, leur distribuoit des vêtemens et vaquoit aux offices les plus humbles de la charité chrétienne."

According to Frantin, Brunehilde was the first woman to have been a regent but Bathilde had been a model of an ideal (female) regent. In fact, Frantin did not picture Bathilde as using direct power but as submitting to the men governing the kingdom. Frantin may have thought that in an ideal situation a queen regent used no real power but merely acted as a figurehead; a *reine regente*'s task was to do charitable works, not to meddle in politics. Charity was not only associated with saints but was one of the responsibilities of "social" motherhood of elite women in the nineteenth century.[874] It is therefore clear that Frantin created an ideal image of a regent, very different from the institution established in the early modern period. Frantin wrote earlier in his work that Brunehilde and Fredegonde had tried to have "public power" [l'autorité publique], from which they were excluded according to the "customs of the nation". Frantin therefore thought that women had been excluded from political (public) power already in the sixth century and that the exclusion was desired by the "nation".[875] For Frantin the regency was not automatically a public role, nor did it automatically include public power. In addition, there was a gender difference - women were excluded in all roles from the public "autorité". One should keep in mind that Laboulaye also emphasised that women as rulers were at best without any real power.[876]

It is difficult to know whether Frantin's own political or religious views affected his interpretations as we know little about them. However, his work was mentioned in 1845 in the catalogue of the Saint Thomas Aquinas' Library in Paris.[877] This is significant because the purpose of the catalogue was to signal safe and appropriate reading for good (Christian) citizens. A work needed to have an "orthodox" point of view, in this case of French history, to be included there.[878] Apparently Frantin had some sort of Catholic background, as his work would not otherwise have been included in the catalogue. The Catholic background was highlighted by the way Frantin emphasised Bathilde's religious virtues, her saintly and submissive nature, in the same way as Clotilde was often described. The image of Bathilde being taken out of servitude and then ending up as a saint is almost a *topos.* Janet Nelson has argued that this *topos* in Bathilde's *Vita* has its foundation in the

[874] Foley 2004, 50-51. Of course charity had been emphasised throughout Christian history, but interestingly in the nineteenth century charity was not associated with the "public" sphere but with a "domestic" sphere accessible, and acceptable, to women.
[875] Frantin (IV), 1825, 21. "l'autorité publique" , "moeurs de la nation".
[876] See, for example, Laboulaye 1843, 520-521.
[877] *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de Saint Thomas d'Aquin* 1845, 3. Frantin also had another work in the catalogue: *Louis le Pieux et son siècle* (2 vols.). In addition, in Gallica there is one work from 1851. The rather short 50-page work was entitled *Monarchie et césarisme, ou l'Ére des Pisistratides*.
[878] Catalogue 1845, v-viii. None of Thierry's, Sismondi's, Guizot's or Michelet's works were included there. The introduction of the catalogue demonstrates very well how dangerous "wrong" readings were considered to be for "simple spirits". Some books were considered corruptive and therefore the "learned" (= clergymen) were expected to protect the people from such works. It seems all works criticising religion and the Catholic Church were considered such.

Bible. [879] Bathilde's *Vita* was written immediately after her death in the late seventh century.[880] Most likely Frantin took the image of Bathilde directly or indirectly from her *Vita*, and he did not seem to doubt the narrative's truthfulness. But of course, the *topos* of low birth as a merit only applied to saints; for Fredegonde, as I will show in detail, low birth gave almost no advantages.

Sylvie Joye has argued very convincingly in her article *Marâtres Mérovingiennes*, "Merovingian stepmothers", (2009) that by the 1880s another field of representations had emerged in connection with Bathilde's history. No longer was she uniquely perceived as a saint queen and a mother, as Frantin described her, but as a *marâtre*, as an evil (step)mother.[881] According to Robert Folz, the Life of Saint Wilfrid, a seventh-century bishop, presented Bathilde in a very negative light, accusing her of killing several clergymen.[882] This text was known in the nineteenth century. A well known historian, Henri Martin, referred to it in his *Histoire de France* from 1834.[883] Yet Martin did not picture Bathilde in a negative way and he only wrote that Clovis II married this "anglo-saxon slave" for her beauty. Neither did he refer to her sanctity or to any possible accusations of murder.[884]

Joye's article, however, focuses on the Merovingian period and does not explain why a group of authors from the mid-nineteenth century onwards created negative representations of Bathilde. [885] Perhaps they were influenced by a certain painting mentioned by Joye, *Les Énervés de Jumièges* (1880) by Évariste-Vital Luminais, which depicted Bathilde's mutilated sons or stepsons lying on a bed floating in a river.[886] According to the legend that was the basis for the painting, Bathilde had instigated the mutilation because the boys had rebelled against their father, Bathilde's husband Clovis II.[887] The tale is fictional and no historian even referred to it in the first half of the nineteenth century in their narratives of Bathilde's life and regency.[888] Intriguingly, in the story Bathilde is

[879] Nelson 1986, 17. The author of Bathilde's *Vita* thus used a common *topos* from the Bible related to low-born holy people.
[880] McNamara & al 1992, 264.
[881] Joye 2009, 39-40.
[882] Folz 1992, 35.
[883] Martin 1834, 439.
[884] Martin 1834, 336.
[885] Bathilde was a controversial figure already in her own time, as Joye, McNamara and Nelson have shown in their works. Any negative features were "cleaned up" by the 1820s. On the seventh century, see, for example, McNamara & al 1992, 265-266. The creation or re-discovery of Bathilde's saintly nature went hand in hand with the restoration and the will to sanctify the origins of the French monarchy.
[886] On the painting, see also Avezou 2013b, 51-2; Effros 2012, 25; Effros 2009, 72.
[887] Joye 2009, 39. According to Joye, the story was born at the earliest in the twelfth century.
[888] The difference between Clotilde and Bathilde is that Clotilde was not venerated as a saint before the tenth century (as far as we know), when her *Vita* was produced, whereas Bathilde's *Vita Bathildeis* was written straight after her death (680s) and she was sanctified in 833. Though in many cases the nineteenth-century historians questioned the value of *vitas* as historical evidence, Bathilde's *Vita* was only rarely questioned. Her role as one of the sanctifiers of the French

given certain negative attributes that are also in the representations of Fredegonde, for example a violent nature and vindictiveness, strongly suggesting that these features were regularly seized upon by historians to criticise queens they did not like. [889]

Joye says that Jules Michelet used the story of the Jumièges as an example of Merovingian decadence.[890] Michelet did indeed briefly mention the destiny of the young princes in his work *Histoire de France,* which was published almost 50 years before the painting. He did not question the truthfulness of what happened to the young princes, but neither did he refer to Bathilde in connection with the story or in connection to the decadence of the Merovingians. Instead, he only mentioned her very briefly and described her sainthood in positive terms. Michelet described Bathilde as a Saxon slave whom Clovis II had made a queen, and whose name and holiness helped the mayors of the palace to rule on behalf of the underaged king.[891] Given that Michelet mentioned the princes of Jumièges on a very general level and briefly, he may have seen their story merely as representing the decadence of the Merovingian dynasty on a symbolic level and not as an actual, historical event. Most importantly, he did not associate Bathilde with what happened to the young princes.

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Philippe Antoine Merlin reflected on the use and meaning of regency in the context of Merovingian history in his dictionary (1828). He noted that there had not been any established practice of regency but circumstances determined who should govern on behalf of the young king. According to Merlin, the only widely accepted principle was that an infant king could not rule alone.[892] This conclusion did not prevent Merlin from defining early medieval queens as regents. He stated that in the Merovingian period only Brunehilde and Bathilde were genuine regents, Brunehilde for her grandson Theudebert and Bathilde for her own son. Abel Hugo too accounted Bathilde among the regents but he gave quite a different picture of her than Frantin. Hugo wrote that she had to constantly struggle with the mayor of the palace, and eventually, when she had lost two of her counsellors, she could not continue the struggle and retired voluntarily to the monastery despite the

monarchy was stable. Folz 1975, 396-370, 375. In a later study Folz mentions that Bathilde was indeed accused in one contemporary source of ordering a murder of a man. Folz himself does not believe Bathilde would have committed such an act, arguing that the accusation was due to dissatisfaction with Bathilde's ecclesiastical politics. In addition, Folz says that Bathilde did not retire to the convent voluntarily but was forced to retire there. Folz 1992, 35, 37.

[889] There were also other works where Bathilde was pictured as a less saintly way, such as Julie Candeille's *Bathilde, reine des Francs,* from 1814.

[890] Joye 2009, 39.

[891] Michelet 1833 (I), about Bathilde, 274; about Jumièges, 281.

[892] Merlin et Guyot 1828, 295.

pleading of her servants.[893] Even though, according to Hugo, Bathilde's regency was not disputed, her position in power was far from stable. Hugo did not make any references to Bathilde's gender but he did picture her as a slightly passive figure amongst the men who fought for power: her counsellors and the mayor of palace. Yet again the men were pictured as the active agents of history and a queen (regent) almost at the mercy of the men surrounding her.

Merlin was conscious of the difficulties concerning the use of words such as regent and conscious of their historical evolution, but he did not explain what he meant with *régent/e* or *regency* in the context of the early medieval Frankish kingdoms. Merlin distinguished *régence* from *tutelle.* For him, Fredegonde and Brunehilde were not regents for their own sons but the young kings' sole regent was Guntram, their uncle. Discussing the limits of the regents' power, Merlin stated that Guntram had used almost unrestricted power while governing for Clothar II and Childebert II. He nevertheless referred to Guntram as *tutelle,* who used power "comme Régent" (as a regent, not like a regent).[894] Though he did not explain the difference between the two words, it seems that the difference was connected to the exercise of power - regents had more power than *tutelle*.[895] Neither did he explain whether Brunehilde and Bathilde, when acting as regents, had used similar "unrestricted power" to Guntram, or whether their power was more limited as "sometimes was customary".[896] He argued that Clotilde had had her grandsons' *tutelle* in the 520s in the same way as Nantilde, wife of Dagobert I, had her son's *tutelle* approximately a hundred years later. Thus they were carers, not governing regents.[897] Is it possible that the historian saw female regents' use of power as equivalent to masculine regents' use of power, or was there a gender-related differences, as in Frantin's depiction of Bathilde's regency? Merlin did not mention that Brunehilde or Bathilde would have shared power with counsellors. On the contrary, they were depicted as governing on their own.

In Merlin's work the challenges of using these words in different contexts and making historical episodes understandable for readers are clearly evident. In the French language there are very few terms to describe the situation where a person governs on behalf of an underage king, so that in many cases *régent/e* or *régence* are the only options.[898] Complications were created when these

[893] Hugo 1857 (II), 200-1.
[894] Merlin et Guyot 1828, 324-5.
[895] Power in Merlin's work refers primary to military power.
[896] Merlin et Guyot 1828, 324-5.
[897] Merlin et Guyot 1828, 295.
[898] Eliane Viennot criticises twenty-first-century historians that still use concepts such as *regent* in the context of the Merovingian period, even though these concepts did not exist then. Viennot 2006, 56.

were used in an unhistorical manner, as was done by many writers in the first half of the nineteenth century. Using *regent/ regency* in the context of the Merovingian period inevitably led the reader to associate the practice with the early modern institution of French government. One can ask if in fact the nineteenth-century historians used *regency* to refer to two different concepts, or two different kinds of regencies: regency in the early Middle Ages and regency as an institution established in the late Middle Ages and still functioning in the early modern period. Perhaps most historians, despite using the same word in various contexts, did not intend to imply that it was more or less the same throughout the ages and considered there to have been at least some degree of variations.

Ultra-royalist and politically active in the 1820s, Peyronnet[899] applied without further consideration the *régence* to the early Middle Ages in his work *Histoire des Francs*. Peyronnet wrote the work while a prisoner in the castle of Ham, in northern France, sent there by the supporters of the July Monarchy in 1830. Peyronnet was in fact the minister of justice, *le garde des sceaux*, from 1821 until 1828 when the Prime Minister Jean-Baptiste de Villèle left him out of the government because of his unpopularity with the people.[900] Peyronnet was one of the men behind the much criticised laws restricting the freedom of the press in 1826.[901] He was thus one of many politicians who turned historian after their *carrière* in politics ended. Bitterness at his political defeat was clear in Peyronnet's study, as he stated in the dedication of the work that "[a]fter serving long years the passing generation, it gives me a prison for reward."[902]

Peyronnet argued that exceptions and revolutions, like the one started in 1789 or any previous attempt to overthrow rulers, did not change the basic rules.[903] B**y** the basic rules, he referred to the rules of succession to the throne of France, and he was right; these rules did not change along with the Revolution, even if the norms of queenship did change. Peyronnet had chosen the early Middle Ages as his theme because he wanted to find out the reasons that led to the rapid rise and fall of so many kings. He wanted to know how one monarch rose to power at one moment and the next

[899] Pierre Denis or Charles Ignace, same man.
[900] Capefigue 1837, 353. The book *Histoire de la Restauration et des causes qui ont amené la chute de la branche ainée des bourbons* was by no means an objective study of the Restoration period, but it gives a contemporaneous insight into the politics of the 1820s. The writer was a right wing supporter himself, so there is no need to suspect him of mere political slandering of Peyronnet.
[901] Rémond 1965, 374.
[902] Peyronnet 1835 (I), vi. "Après que j'eus servi de longues années la génération qui s'en va, elle me donna une prison pour salaire."
[903] Peyronnet 1835 (I), 112.

moment fell.[904] No doubt the motivation to study such a theme was in Peyronnet's own fall from power following the 1830 revolution.

According to Peyronnet, even though there had been female regents in the early Middle Ages, the throne itself could not have been transmitted to a female. He only associated regency with two early medieval queens, Brunehilde and Bathilde. This is where he agreed with Merlin's view. According to Peyronnet, Brunehilde was not in a regency during her son's minority. During Childebert's minority, the regency was held by "les Grands", the aristocratic landowners.[905] Only later did she become a regent, during her grandsons' minority. Peyronnet wrote that Brunehilde had the "guardianship ["tutrice"] of both of them, and ruled with an equal authority in both kingdoms."[906] Later, however, he used the expression "la Régence de Brunehault", as if he had drawn a parallel between the words *régence* and *tutrice.*[907]

Peyronnet did not ponder the concept(s) associated with these words any further, but he seemed to picture Brunehilde ruling alone, without the help of counsellors, almost like a king. He did not, however, specify any limits on the power of the sixth-century sovereign or regent. Édouard Laboulaye wrote in his *Recherche sur la condition civile et politique des femmes* that only from the rule of Marie de' Medici could regents use public power as sovereigns. According to Laboulaye, before Marie de' Medici a regent's role had been under constant dispute and had not included untrammelled power. Laboulaye opposed women as regents, and in all positions that included holding any power, because he saw them as too weak for the position and "at the mercy of their ministers".[908] So, although he gave some historical perspective to the concept, his primary motivation was seemingly to prove women incapable of ruling or, in general, of acting independently from men.

Fredegonde was not depicted as a regent in Peyronnet's work because her son Clothar II was pictured to have been under Guntram's "protection".[909] The writer did not explain why neither Fredegonde nor Brunehilde were regents during their own sons' minorities. It is interesting that

[904] Peyronnet 1835 (1), xvii.
[905] Peyronnet 1835 (I), 294-5.
[906] Peyronnet 1835 (II), 142. See also id, 145. "tutrice de l'un et de l'autre, gouverna d'une égale autorité les deux royaumes."
[907] *Tutrice* is the feminine of *tuteur*, which has the same origin as *tutelle*. According to Peyronnet, Clotilde took her son Clodomir's sons "en sa tutelle" and this did not include the power over the estates that the boys had inherited from their father. Peyronnet 1835 (I), 130. See also about Clotilde's "tutelle", Renaud de Rouvray 1841, 107-108.
[908] Laboulaye 1843, 524-5, 520-1.
[909] Laboulaye 1843, 8-12.

Peyronnet portrayed the historical events quite carefully, following Gregory of Tours' narration, but he did not try to explain, analyse or justify them**.** Bathilde was pictured as a regent, and a very good one too, which was, according to the historian, due to her humble and pious nature. Nobody disputed her regency, even if this could have been the case, according to Peyronnet. The regency ended when she, as Peyronnet put it, happily retired to the monastery.[910] He stated at the beginning of his study that the historical system he used was the one (the Christian) God had created and he was simply examining "facts" and not creating them.[911] For Peyronnet history was not man-made but made by God and he was only relating it in his study. He diminished his own role as a historian and even made himself a mere describer of history, because he did not wish to be seen as creating it.[912] Apparently God had directed Peyronnet to picture Bathilde only in positive terms because she was a saint and accordingly in Peyronnet's historical thinking had a role in God-made history.

Abel Hugo, who knew Peyronnet's work well, used almost the same words as Peyronnet to describe Brunehilde's regency during her grandsons' minority: "Brunehilde, grandmother and caretaker of the two kings, practised regency in their name and governed the two kingdoms with an equal power."[913] No wonder Hugo readily cited Peyronnet's view of Brunehilde as he stated a few pages later that no other historian besides Peyronnet had pictured her with "more warmth and practice".[914] Hugo did not, however, follow Peyronnet's ideas concerning the other early medieval queens. Hugo even speculated, unlike his contemporary writers, that Clotilde had been a regent during her grandsons' minority.[915] In addition, unlike Peyronnet, he did not present his interpretation of Clotilde's position as a "fact", but stated that according to the original sources, such as the chronicle of Gregory of Tours, it was possible to come to a similar conclusion. This was peculiar to Hugo's work: he discussed his sources and compared the sources. In Brunehilde's history he compared Peyronnet's interpretation to Montesquieu's to find the most accurate one. Hugo did not so much criticise Montesquieu's picture of Brunehilde as his definition of nation: he complained that Montesquieu only defined the conquerors, Austrasian and Burgundian aristocracy in this context, as a nation, and that this nation caused Brunehilde's death.[916] Nevertheless, he did not define the concept of regency, but depicted it as an unstable position and as a constant struggle for power,

[910] Peyronnet 1835 (III), 38-49.
[911] Peyronnet 1835 (I), xiii.
[912] Peyronnet's vision of history suggests determinism. For a discussion of determinism, see, for example, Leduc 2010, 711-719.
[913] Hugo 1857(II), 163. "Brunehaut, aïeule et tutrice des deux rois, exerca la régence en leur nom, et gouverna les deux royaumes avec une égale autorité."
[914] Hugo 1857(II), 173. "plus de chaleur et d'entraïnement".
[915] Hugo 1857(II), 73.
[916] Hugo 1857(II), 173.

similar to the way in which Édouard Laboulaye, who also discussed Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* in his own work, presented regency in his 1843 work *Recherche sur la condition civile et politique des femmes*.

In the 1820s Lacépède, zoologist, politician, and member of numerous learned societies all around Europe, named Fredegonde, Brunehilde and Bathilde as regents. His posthumously published historiographical work from 1826 was probably composed in the reign of Louis XVIII (which ended in 1824) and it resembled Anquetil's work more than Frantin's, especially in its lack of discussion about the sources. The author used the words *tutelle* and *régence* almost as synonyms, exactly as Peyronnet would do later.[917] In this work the role of *tutelle* seemed to include some administrative power, as the writer represented Brunehilde's son Childebert II as exercising "une sorte de tutelle" in Neustria during Clothar II's infancy in Guntram's name. Furthermore, it seems that in Lacépède's historical chronology Fredegonde only became a regent for her son after Childebert II died (Guntram had died earlier) when there were no other male pretenders for power left. Thus, in Lacépède's interpretation, a queen(-mother) was not the first but the last choice for regency. Then and only then, a regent, a queen, "held the reins of French monarchy".[918] When comparing the two samples, Lacépède's and Peyronnet's, it seems that both historians were ambivalent about how much power the early medieval "regents" had.

Not all early nineteenth-century writers used the words *régence* or *régent/e* in the context of the early Middle Ages. A good example is Jules Michelet, who avoided these words in describing the Merovingian period in his famous *Histoire de France*. He wrote of Brunehilde's position after the death of Childebert II, when the kingdom was divided between his young sons, as follows: "[o]ld Brunehilde thought she could rule under Theudebert, her grandson, by intoxicating him with pleasures."[919] So according to Michelet, Brunehilde did not have any "official" position, but she was, or aspired to be, the power behind the throne. Neither was Bathilde a regent in Michelet's interpretation because he saw the mayors of the palace *(majordomo)* as ruling in her name.[920] Still,

[917] Lacépède 1826a (I), 331, 335. Also, for example, in *Répertoire général* it stated that Brunehilde was "régente et tutrice" without explaining the difference. The unknown author interestingly named Brunehilde regent during minority of her *great-grandsons. Répertoire général* 1834, 397.
[918] Lacépède 1826a (I), 331. "[…] tenaient les rênes de la monarchie francaise: […]". Writers such as Amory de Langerack and Laure de Saint-Ouen also presented Fredegonde as a regent in her son's minority. Langerack presented Brunehilde and Bathilde as regents, as did many of her contemporary writers. Langerack 1847, 166-7, 168, 199. Saint-Ouen 1830, 23.
[919] Michelet 1835(I), 244. "La vieille Brunehaut avait cru régner sous Théodebert, son petit-fils, en l'enivrant par les plaisirs"
[920] Michelet 1835(I), 273-4.

it is impossible to know whether he avoided the difficult words deliberately or simply did not interpret the queens as having been regents.[921]

It is time to focus on a historian who explicitly gave Fredegonde the title of regent. The man in question was Jules Dubern. In his biographical work about French queens and female rulers published in 1837 he named Fredegonde a regent, *régente*.[922] Dubern did not explain why he gave Fredegonde the title, even though he did argue in the same way as many of his contemporary writers that Clothar II was under Guntram's protection. Furthermore, Dubern claimed, as did Lacépède, that Fredegonde was able to exercise power only after Guntram had died. Therefore, as a regent she did not have any real power. It seems, indeed, that *régente* for Dubern was quite similar to *tutelle* in Merlin's interpretation, as it did not include power nor would it guarantee a position as the head of the kingdom. He named Brunehilde a regent during her grandsons' minority, despite the fact that he did not perceive Brunehilde as important enough to dedicate an entire biography to her.[923] The reason was most likely that he did not perceive Brunehilde (or rather her husband) to have ruled in "France".

Dubern's ideas about women in power were quite similar to the ideas Édouard Laboulaye would express approximately six years later. Regarding the Salic law, Dubern stated that it had one remarkable consequence: women's exclusion from the throne of France. According to Dubern, even though many women were highly talented, they could only use their power as a tool for their passions.[924] Dubern claimed it was in the "nature" of women that they were incapable of ruling and using public power.[925] It appears that the basic idea in Dubern's study was not, however, to criticize women who used power or took part in politics, but to criticise the whole pre-1789 regime, the Old Regime. Dubern especially criticized the foreign background of the Old Regime queens; Catherine

[921] Like Michelet, Claude Fauriel, the professor of literature, in his *Histoire de la Gaule Méridionale sous la domination des conquérants germains* (1836) "History of Meridional Gaul under the Domination of German Conquerors" did not find any regents in the early Middle Ages. He did, however, write about Fredegonde's use of power, which he described in a positive tone. He depicted the difficult situation in Neustria after Chilperic's death in this way: "[i]t was not Fredegonde's fault; this extraordinary woman exercised energetically the royal authority in the name of her son Clothar and opposed with equal persistence and competence Guntram's ambitious plans for Neustria." Instead of writing about regency, Fauriel referred to royal authority, which clearly indicates that he saw Fredegonde as using legitimate power in the kingdom. Fauriel 1836, 311. "Ce n'était pas la faute de Frédégonde ; cette femme extraordinaire exercait énergiquement le pouvoir royal au nom de son fils Clotaire et s'opposait avec autant de persévérance que d'habileté aux vues ambitieuses de Gontran sur la Neustrie."

[922] Dubern 1837 (I), 21. Also Nantilde, the wife of Dagobert I, and Bathilde were regents in his narrative of French history. Dubern did not mention any early medieval sources, only second hand works.

[923] Dubern 1837 (I), 36. Laure Prus did not include Brunehilde either in her collective biography of famous women in 1846. Most likely they did not perceive Brunehilde as ruling in "France".

[924] Passion was very negative feature when associated with women in the early nineteenth century.

[925] Dubern 1837 (I), i-iv.

for being too Italian and Anne for being inclined to advocate the Austrian cause.[926] By emphasising the queens' foreign backgrounds he highlighted their threat, the threat of foreign monarchies, to France. This threat seems to have been eliminated, according to Dubern, by the July Revolution and by the Orléans royal family because he perceived them as superior to all previous regimes and royal families. Against this background it is understandable that he wanted to highlight Fredegonde's power, as it effectively highlighted the inferiority of the Old Regime: by turning the nineteenth-century gender roles upside down he wanted to emphasise the perversity of all earlier regimes.

According to Susan K. Foley, attributing power to historical women that the historian wanted to discredit was one way of re-organising the power structures in French society after the Revolution of 1789.[927] Indeed, it was not so much that historians like Dubern wanted to discredit only the Merovingians or the Merovingian queens, but the whole power structure that allowed women, according to Dubern's historical thinking, to wield (excessive) power, even though women's access to power was always different from men's. It appears, however, that it did not matter if the women's use of power was direct or indirect, as it was for regents: to authors such as Dubern, it was equally reprehensible. Apparently Dubern saw that during the Old Regime women had had too much power and only now had the natural order been restored so that men held the supreme power in France.

I have given considerable space in this chapter to Queen Bathilde because the representations of her history provide an interesting point of comparison to the representations of Fredegonde. Both of them came from obscure backgrounds, yet they were perceived as complete opposites in early nineteenth-century historiography. No one linked Bathilde's nature or actions to her background. All her good deeds came from her saintly nature, which according to the historians of the early nineteenth century, was not due to her origins, whatever those might be. Historians did not relate her origins to her level of civilisation because no education was ever mentioned in her history. Civilisation was indeed often associated with education and with written sources as in Brunehilde's history. Whereas for Fredegonde being a Frank, German or a barbarian were often explanatory notions for her actions, Bathilde's sainthood exceeded all other factors and explanations. It is interesting how the two women, almost contemporaries, were judged so differently by the early nineteenth-century historians. In fact, Bathilde was not judged in anything like the same way as Fredegonde was. Perhaps this was because Bathilde was clearly perceived in many of the works I have examined as a less important figure than Fredegonde and because Gregory of Tours had

[926] Dubern 1837 (I) 310-314; (II) 101.
[927] Foley 2004, 3.

written so negatively about Fredegonde while no comparable author had written about Bathilde. Bathilde was a saint and an ally of the Catholic Church, she sponsored the monastery of Chelles where she would spend the last days of her life, and she performed many charitable acts throughout her mature years. There was also a weaker historiographical tradition of imagining Bathilde as a bad ruler than there was in Fredegonde's case.

I asked at the beginning of this section if the use of the word "regent" signified that the early nineteenth-century historians perceived the institution as having existed in the sixth century. I have only examined in this section the cases where regency was explicitly indicated by the use of the word, but the concept could exist without it. There were, however, several historians who did not use the word "regent" in their works, even though the act of using power was present, like Michelet. The biggest difference was whether Fredegonde used rightfully established power or indirect power through male rulers. Yet, it is clear that the concepts of regency and regent were not unequivocal for early nineteenth-century historians. One of the reasons for the varying interpretations was that there were no corresponding words in early medieval sources.[928] So the justification for the use of the word had to come from the writers' own time and from their views on regents of the Old Regime. This is why the definition variances regarding the limits of regent's power were so clearly visible. Historians had to choose whether the early medieval queens were ruling, or rather tutoring, on behalf of their male heirs or whether they were regents using legitimate sovereign power. Even though there were as many interpretations as there are historians and readers, the negative attitudes towards women using public power appeared to grow towards the end of the period, towards 1848, and many historians did not hesitate to reflect this attitude in their narratives of historical figures.

4.3. Fredegonde, a Notorious Queen of France?

In collective biographies[929] notorious women were often presented as negative, warning examples to female readers but they could also function as a promise for entertainment. No doubt, as today, scandalous love affairs attracted many readers, even if this sort of literature was publicly condemned as unsuitable reading.[930] The image of Fredegonde as an "evil queen" was reinforced by Augustin Thierry with his highly popular *Récits des temps merovingiens* published in 1830s as short

[928] For example, François Guizot (1823) did not use the term in his French translations of the chronicles of Gregory of Tours and Fredegar, or in the life of Dagobert. But from the poems of Fortunatus 1887, we find the French term "tutelle" from Latin "tutela". Venance Fortunat 1887, 244.
[929] On the popularity of the collective biographies, see Smith 1984, 714.
[930] Booth 2004, 73.

stories in *Revue des deux mondes*. Thierry presented Fredegonde as an archetype of a passionate Frankish woman and this image was transmitted to many other historiographical works, paintings and even to operas.[931] For example, Thierry wrote of Fredegonde that she was "[…] in charge of all the bad that had taken place in her husband's reign"[932], and that she was "[…] less limited [than Chilperic] in her passion in the interest of the moment, [and] had taken against the bishop [Pretextat] a profound hatred, one of these hatreds that, for her, only ended with the death of the person who had had the misfortune to provoke the hatred."[933] In addition, Thierry described her as "[…]the epitomy of primal barbarity, without the conscience of good and evil […]"[934]and that she was a remarkable beauty and as cunning as she was ambitious.[935] Thierry created of Fredegonde a prototype of a scheming and powerful queen who was as dangerous as she was beautiful. A figure of whom many doubtlessly disapproved in public yet secretly admired.

There are no *reines regnantes* in the history of France, but there have been several famous regents and queens who have used considerable power, or were imagined to have used such power. I next examine the role(s) Fredegonde was given in relation to other later regents and notorious queens in early nineteenth-century historiography. The word "regency" transmitted to historiography the memory of early modern rulers such as Marie de' Medici, Anne of Austria and Catherine de' Medici. In the minds of nineteenth-century readers use of the word "regent" in the early medieval context was very likely seen as an allusion to early modern governments. In some cases the allusion could be created even without giving a word such as regent as a clue.

In the first section I wrote that Fredegonde and to some extent Brunehilde, in a role of "reine maudite", were often compared to other notorius queens. According to Katherine Crawford, Fredegonde was paralleled to queens such as Catherine de' Medici, and in the pamphlets written in the late eighteenth century, to Marie Antoinette. However, it is interesting that these comparisons are missing from early nineteenth-century historiography, at least from the narratives about the

[931] Effros 2009, 78. According to Ian Wood, the influence of Thierry's work is also visible in the paintings of Panthéon. Wood 2009, 99.
[932] Thierry 1851b, 83. "[…] chargée de tout le mal qui s'était fait sous le règne de son mari […]".
[933] Thierry 1851b, 57-58. "[…]moins bornée dans ses passions à l'éntérêt du moment, s'était prise contre l'évêque d'une haine profonde, d'une de ces haines qui, pour elle, ne finissaient qu'avec la vie de celui qui avait eu le malheur de les exciter."
[934] Thierry 1842a, 13. "[…] l'idéal de la barbarie élémentaire, sans conscience du bien et du mal[…]".
[935] Thierry 1842a, 379.

Merovingian period. After going through several works, it is obvious that the two queens, Catherine and Fredegonde, were not paralleled or compared.[936]

The intertextual comparisons found in early nineteenth-century historiography were mostly those already presented by Gregory of Tours (Chilperic was "Herod et Nero"). Comparisons with people of the historians' own time were rare, and comparisons were almost always with people of Antiquity or Biblical figures.[937] It is difficult to determine why comparisons between the queens were missing when they had been made in previous works such as in the anonymous short pamphlet *Antoinette d'Autriche ou Dialogue entre Catherine de Medicis et Frédégonde, reines de France, aux enfers* (1789), which must have been available to at least some early nineteenth-century authors. Another work by Louise Félicité Guinement de Keralio Robert's (d.1822), published in 1791, on crimes of the queens, was not wholly unknown in the first half of the nineteenth century either.[938] The short pamphlet from 1789 was, as the name indicated, a dialogue between the three queens in Hell, where they discussed their crimes against the people and against France. It was because of revolutionary pamphlets such as this that Fredegonde became known to the French people after centuries of oblivion, so I find it strange that no similar comparisons were made between the queens in my material.

In the late eighteenth century there were even more examples of comparison between the so called "reines maudites". The prosecutor of Marie-Antoinette in 1793 declared that the queen was similar to "Messalinas" who were, according to him, Brunehilde, Fredegonde and de' Medici. [939] A universal image of a "bad" queen was in use here. In fact, it seems that there were two items that defined and united the representations of these women: perceived misuse of power (as regents or otherwise) and sexual promiscuity. The sexual promiscuity could refer in Fredegonde's history to alleged adultery that would have led to the murder of Chilperic, or in Brunehilde's history to young lovers after the death of her grandsons. The promiscuity could also refer to various forms of incest. Brunehilde was also often pictured in her execution scenes, as in the picture in Chapter III, as a

[936] I went through sections that either focused on Fredegonde or Cathérine de' Medici, and they were not mentioned in connection with each other: for example, in the works of Jules Michelet, Augustin Thierry, Simonde de Sismondi, Adélaïde Celliez, Joséphine Amory de Langerack, Pierre Denis de Peyronnet, Théophile Lavallée, comte de Lacépède and Abel Hugo. Of course there are other queens as well that could be examined, such as Marie Antoinette.
[937] There were intertextual references in the histories of other Merovingian queens as well. Clotilde and Bathilde were compared to the biblical Ester: about Bathilde, see Bonaparte 1820, 16; and about Clotilde Marchangy 1819 (I), 357.
[938] *Les crimes des reines de France depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie-Antoinette*, published in 1791 by Louise Félicité Guinement de Keralio Robert.
[939] Hunt 1992, 92, 107. Messalina (c.17/20 - 48) was the wife of the Roman Emperor Claudius and had a reputation for promiscuity among both her contemporaries and later historians. She was executed together with her lover with whom she tried to dethrone her husband.

young woman, and often naked from the waist up. In these types of images, many of them from the nineteenth century, there is clearly an element of titillation.

At the beginning of the 1790s there were two works published that focused on the crimes of the French royal family, one written by Louis Lavicomterie de Saint-Samson (d.1809) and focusing on the kings and the other written by the already mentioned de Keralio Robert and focusing on the queens.[940] The basic idea in both works was to argue that the French monarchy and royals had been corrupt and evil ever since the Merovingian period. Neither of the works focused especially on Fredegonde or on the Merovingians, even though the early royals were closely associated with the subsequent French monarchy. This kind of rhetoric about the crimes of the French kings and queens was obviously hidden following the Restoration and the reign of Louis XVI's brothers. Despite this, in 1831, after yet another revolution, a two-part work whose first part was entitled *Les crimes, les forfaits et les turpitudes des rois de France, depuis Pharamond jusques et y compris Charles X, d'après les anciennes chroniques... et les mémoires du temps* was anonymously published. The second part was *Crimes, scélératesses et turpitudes des reines de France, depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusques et y compris Marie-Antoinette.*[941] The first part focused on the crimes of the kings and the second on the crimes of the queens.

This second part of the 1831 published work, focusing on crimes of the queens, is obviously an abridged version of Robert's work on the same theme, but the part focusing on the kings is not so directly based on Lavicomterie's work. It is apparent that the collective biography from 1831 was not just a reprint of the 1790s work, because it included short biographies of Louis XVIII and Charles X. The work criticised heavily the Restoration and presented the two kings as weak. The author emphasised that during the Restoration the king together with Jesuits and the clergy wanted to destroy the charter and the liberties granted to the people. According to the author, France was being taken slowly back to the Middle Ages.[942] It seems that the author was against all regimes that threatened the "freedom of the people", but he did not declare himself a supporter or opponent of the July Revolution.

[940] *Les crimes des rois de France, depuis Clovis jusqu'à Louis XVI* by Louis Lavicomterie de Saint-Samson (1792) and *Les crimes des reines de France, depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie-Antoinette* by Louise-Félicité Guinement de Keralio Robert and published by Louis-Marie Prudhomme (1791 Paris, 1792 London).
[941] "The crimes, infamies and turpitudes of the kings of France, from Faramond to and including Charles X, following the old chronicles and memories of times" "Crimes, villainies and turpitudes of the queens of France, from the beginning of the monarchy to and including Marie-Antoinette".
[942] Anon 1831, 126.

In the part concerning the kings, there are some remarkable differences between the 1792 published work and the 1831 work. For example, the earlier work started with Clovis as the first king of France but the later started with Pharamond as the first king of France. This is interesting because Pharamond's existence had already been questioned by Anquetil in 1805, and by the 1820s he was no longer included even in the list of the Frankish kings.[943] Because of Pharamond's inclusion, the list of kings was different in the 1831 work than in the earlier work. In this respect the earlier work seems more historiographically "up-to-date" than the one published 40 years later.

In the part concerning the queens, the 1831 author emphasised, unlike many of his or her contemporaries, the value of the Salic law in excluding women from the throne. According to the introduction of the work, there was nothing good in queens and it was only the Salic law that saved the kingdom of France from falling to its knees, which is what would happen if queens could rule like kings.[944] But like the contemporary historiographical works, the 1831 work left out the comparison between Fredegonde and Catherine de' Medici made in the 1791 work about the crimes of the queens.[945] The 1831 work on the crimes of the kings and queens was very peculiar in its time, one might almost say outdated. Although one might expectthat the work would be written to promote the July Monarchy given its date, nothing in it gives any reason to assume this. The work did not include any republican vocabulary either, such as reference to revolutions[946] taking place in the late sixth century. This kind of vocabulary was used in the 1790s works.[947] It could be that the most obvious signs of republican tendencies were removed to get the work published in the first place. Given its differences from contemporary works it is hard to believe that it would have been very popular in the 1830s.

There were not many historians or authors writing about history who would have excluded a queen from her/his work because of her evil nature. [948] One such author was Gabrielle de Paban, who most probably left Brunehilde out of her works in the early 1820s (*Année des Dames*, *Almanach des Femmes célèbres*) for exactly this reason. Was it more of an early modern phenomenon to compare queens with each other, something that was not done after the Restoration? Or was it perhaps that

[943] Anquetil 1825 (I), 264. For example, Sismondi in 1821 points out that Gregory of Tours did not mention Pharamond even though some other sources, such as Prosper of Aquitaine (390-455), do mention him. Sismondi 1821 (I), 176-177.
[944] Anon 1831 (II), V-VIII.
[945] Robert 1791, 1.
[946] "Revolution", the concept, did not mean the same in the late eighteenth century as today. Then it meant a "sudden, drastic change of policy" rather than "violent overthrow of a regime". Darnton 1996, 149. Today it has multiple significations.
[947] Robert 1791, 11. According to Robert, Sigebert's death in 575 sparked a revolution.
[948] Many nineteenth-century historians such as Philipp le Bas mentioned Fredegonde as one of the most famous queens but he did not include her in any larger group of "notorious queens" or "reines maudites". Le Bas 1842 (VIII), 483-486.

the historians who wrote in the 1820s, ’30s or ’40s did not want to defame the queens of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because they wanted to avoid tarnishing the newly restored monarchy's reputation by association with relatively recent misdeeds?

Édouard Laboulaye, whose rather hostile views on women's public role I have already examined, did not link the early medieval and early modern queens. He did not approve of women acting as regents, but he did not make any comparisons between the queens. Was it that Laboulaye wanted to establish a clear separation between the Merovingians and the French monarchy? Or was it that he did not perceive similarities between Fredegonde and the later queens who ruled within the established institution of queenship and regency? Intriguingly, another rather hostile author to female rulers, Jules Dubern, did compare Catherine de Medici to Brunehilde, saying that Catherine was less guilty of corrupting her sons than Brunehilde, who Dubern saw as guilty of corrupting her grandsons with vices. [949] He did, however, also compare Fredegonde with the Russian empress Catherine the Great who, according to Dubern, was also from a modest background and became a powerful queen. Catherine had used more “noble” means than Fredegonde to get to her ends, but both of them first saved their husbands and then had them killed. [950]

The question is historiographical too. I have explained that the comparisons between the queens Fredegonde and Catherine de Medici were made in the works written between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a tendency to dismiss the early modern sources from the study of the early medieval period, and this discrediting may have prevented the perceptions of the early modern historians about the queens from finding their way into early nineteenth-century historiographical treatises. This is not to say that the association between the queens would not have been known to historians - it was just not mentioned or a current issue.

There were negative representations of other French queens as well as those brought up so far. Michael R. Evans has studied the representations of Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine (1124–1204) and he argues that the accusations against Eleanor, such as that she was an adulteress, a murderer, or even a demon, were based on both medieval and early modern sources, and reinforced in the nineteenth century. For example, Michelet associated her with Mélusine, a monstrous female figure first mentioned in the late fourteenth century, who appeared as a half serpent on Saturdays. Themes

[949] Dubern 1837 (I), 310.
[950] See also Dubern 1837 (I), 27.

that relate these two female figures are the representations of female authority and broken trust. In addition, Eleanor was pictured as vindictive in the early nineteenth century, exactly as Fredegonde and Brunehilde were. Furthermore, Eleanor was named by Michelet as a Jezebel, again like Brunehilde.[951] The representations of Eleanor demonstrate that the negative imagery associated with queens who (supposedly) exercised power was universal, no matter when or where the queen lived.

There was, however, one "Messalina" in the early nineteenth century who was accused of many of the same crimes as Fredegonde, Marie Antoinette and Catherine were: sexual perversity, incest and lust for power. She was the sister of Louis Philippe, Madame Adélaïde, of whom very little has been written even though she weilded considerable power through her brother. She remained unmarried and had no children, and she acted for a long time as Louis Philippe's most trustworthy counsellor. She was especially active during the 1830 Revolution and, according to historian Munro Price, she was the one who secured the crown for her brother during this revolution by accepting on his behalf when he was absent that he would become the Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom. This act soon led Louis Philippe to formally accept the offer.[952] Adélaïde was well acquainted with diplomacy and foreign politics, and two of the French ambassadors in Great Britain in the 1840s were her friends with whom she corresponded actively while they were in London.[953] She could, however, use power only through her brother, and through the letters that she sent in his name to the French ambassadors, and it was this unofficial position that led political satirists and journalists to mock and criticise her.[954] Yet, according to Price, she was not mocked so much because of her gender, or for entering the masculine-only "public" sphere, but because of her politics, which the journals and journalists disliked. Sexual slander was especially used to discredit her in legitimist journals that promoted the elder Bourbons' right to the throne over that of the Orléans family. Adélaïde was known to dislike very much this elder branch of the dynasty after her earlier experiences during the late eighteenth-century revolutionary years when she was forced into exile from France. Price emphasises, however, that her aunt, Marie Antoinette, was seriously attacked in pamphlets and cartoons only after 1789, when she adopted an unpopular position against the Revolution.[955] Adélaïde did not withdraw in the face of the accusations but remained by her brother's side until her death, just before the February 1848 revolution.

[951] Evans 2014, 19, 33-34, 51. Bruno Dumézil also points out that Brunehilde was described as a "second Jezebel" after her death in the seventh century. See Dumézil 2008, 398.
[952] Price 2007, 126, 167-8; see also Brown 2012, 4-5.
[953] Price 2007, 201.
[954] Price 2009, 158-171.
[955] Price 2007, 290-292.

The difference between Adélaïde and her sister-in-law Marie Amelie was striking, as the queen was not involved in politics and therefore did not receive a similar critique as Adélaïde did. Yet, the two were on good terms and lived practically all the time in the same house. According to Price, Queen Victoria, who visited the French royal family in France in 1843, noted that nobody did anything without Adélaïde's permission and that she had almost taken the role of a queen.[956] Price also presented in his study *The Perilous Crown: France between Revolutions, 1814 – 1848* (2007) an interesting theory that in many European monarchies responsibility for necessary (political) measures in times of crisis rested on the shoulders of the women to shield the male head of the house, as in the case of Adélaïde in 1830 or Marie Antoinette after 1789.[957] As Price wrote, this is difficult to prove but an interesting idea, which has at least one example in the Merovingian times as well, often repeated in the nineteenth-century historiography, namely that of Fredegonde having King Sigebert assassinated in order to save her husband and the whole family. It is, obviously, difficult to know whether Adélaïde could have changed the course of the 1848 revolution had she lived and counselled her brother.

I have not found any explicit comparisons between Adélaïde and Fredegonde, but these two women were both described with the same negative imagery, one could even say misogynist imagery that was often applied to women using "illegitimate" power in France. The fundamental reason why their power was seen as "illegitimate" was that they were of the wrong sex to rule. It was an open secret that Adélaïde influenced the decisions her brother took in many difficult political matters. In fact, any power used by women could be defined as "illegitimate", and therefore any woman was susceptible to becoming a "Messalina" in early nineteenth-century France. This intertextual device of referring in historiography to women figures from classical literature was evidently still popular and their appearances outnumbered the references to early modern queens.

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For the early nineteenth-century historians the rivalry between the two queens, Fredegonde and Brunehilde, and the two kingdoms, Neustria and Austrasia, was a central theme in the history of the late sixth century. Besides Clovis I's conversion and reign, the perceived conflict between the two queens and the civil war that was seen as following it constructed the heart of Merovingian history. François René de Chateaubriand wrote that

> The disputes and furies of these two beautiful women led to civil wars, poisonings and murders and dominated the disorganized reigns of Charibert, Guntram, Sigebert I,

[956] Price 2007, 292.
[957] Price 2007, 167-168.

> Chilperic I, Childebert I, Clothar II, Theuderic II and Theudebert II. Only Clothar II found himself the sole ruler of the Frankish kingdoms in 613.[958]

Philippe le Bas wrote similarly that: "[t]he death of Galeswinthe sparked a hatred between Fredegonde and Brunehilde which combined with the nascent rivalry between Neustria and Austrasia and gave birth to the civil war so fatal for Merovingian power."[959] The history of the Merovingian period in the nineteenth century was constructed through individual actors, and two special individuals, Brunehilde and Fredegonde, were perceived to have dominated the late sixth century. The popularity of biographies demonstrates how the nineteenth-century historical imagination attributed enormous importance to individual actions of famous men and women. They were always simultaneously exceptional and typical figures - exceptional among their contemporaries and typical of their time.

In the early 1820s Gabrielle de Paban's collective biography was published and there Fredegonde was named queen of France.[960] It is not surprising that de Paban said nothing else of Fredegonde besides the title, her husband and son's names and the year of her death, because she wanted to minimise the space given to "méchantes" women.[961] It is noteworthy that de Paban referred to queens with low background with the title "queen of France". Bathilde and Fredegonde were "awarded" the queenship via their husbands, whereas Radegonde and Clotilde got the title from their fathers, the king of Thuringia and the king of Burgundy. This was also the case with Nantilde, one of Dagobert I's wives, who was similarly defined as the queen of France. The writer did not say anything about her family.[962] Perhaps de Paban used the French queenship to promote those women who otherwise, according to her, would not have belonged to the ruling class from birth. Naming them queens of France affirmed their place among the famous women of French history.

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[958] Chateaubriand 1861, 2. "Les démêles et les fureurs de ces deux belles femmes amènent des guerres civiles, des empoisonnements, des meurtres, et occupent les règnes confus de Caribert, de Gontran, de Sigebert Ier, de Khilpérik Ier, de Khildebert II, de Clotaire II, de Thierry Ier, de Théodebert II. Clotaire II se trouve enfin seul maître du royaume des Franks, en 613."

[959] La Bas 1842 (VIII), 484. "La mort de Galeswinthe fit éclater, entre Frédegonde et Brunehaut, une haine qui, se confondant avec la rivalité naissante de la Naustrie et de l'Austrasie, alluma cette guerre civile qui fut si fatale à la puissance mérovingienne."

[960] In her *Galerie des femmes célèbres* (1847), the biographer Joséphine Amory de Langerack first named Fredegonde queen of France, then her husband was defined as a Frankish king, then Fredegonde was named princess, then she was queen of Neustria and sometimes queen of Soissons (which was the "capital" of Neustria in many occasions). Apparently Langerack saw no conflict in these definitions. She named Fredegonde a queen of France but the title was strictly bound to her husband's and to his kingdom's position in the Merovingian kingdoms. The title had no religious dimensions, as it had in Clotilde's biography. Langerack 1847, 175, 177, 190-192.

[961] Paban 1820 (I), vij. This is interesting, because de Paban said that Clotilde had "un penchant pour la vengeance", a penchant for vengeance. Paban 1820 (I), 218.

[962] Paban 1820 (I), 42, 86, 218. Paban 1820 (II), 63 & 199-200.

By using the attribute "queen of France", de Paban created a coherent picture of the history of France where monarchy, as it was known in 1820, existed already in the Merovingian period. She depicted the early medieval succession of crown and marriage as identical in form to later centuries. The queens and their husbands formed a neat chronological chain (the husband in parentheses): Clotilde (Clovis I, who was identified as king of France), Radegonde (Clovis' son Clothar I), Fredegonde (Clothar's son Chilperic), Nantilde (Dagobert I, who was the son of Clothar II, who in turn was identified in Fredegonde's biography as her son) and Bathilde (Clovis II, who in Nantilde's biography was identified as Dagobert's son). The author did not mention the kings' polygamy or that there had often been several kings ruling at the same time. In other words, de Paban implicitly presented the Merovingian monarchy as identical to the Old Regime monarchy by eliminating certain crucial elements that distinguished the two. By extending conceptually the kings and queens of France back into the Merovingian period, she connected the period to a larger entity called the history of France. In de Paban's work one of the biggest challenges of identifying French queenship in the Merovingian period was clearly visible; the idea of uniqueness. Two persons could not simultaneously be queens of France (or kings of France) so the writer had to choose, if she wanted to apply the concept, who was the one queen of France at a given time in the Merovingian period.

The desire to present history as a chronological ensemble might have been another reason why Brunehilde was not included in the work and Fredegonde was, even though de Paban had nothing good to say about her. It seems that Brunehilde's exclusion was due to her husbands' and kingdom's position in addition to her reputation as a "méchante" woman. In works where Merovingian kings were listed in chronological order, as in the later medieval and early modern periods, Chilperic was often named king of France because he held Paris. The tradition of naming the king holding Paris as the king of France was still quite common at the beginning of the Restoration period, as it solved the problem of several simultaneous kings. This anachronistic interpretation of history was especially popular in school manuals and educational books, even when it was disappearing from academic history discourse in the early nineteenth century. [963]

Following the above line of deduction, the queen of France had to be Fredegonde. There are no other explanations why she was included in the work, especially taking into consideration what de

[963] See also, for example, Loriquet 1836, 5-13; Saint-Ouen 1830, 11-12; Gaultier 1827, 5-19; Serieys 1819, 16. The one who held Paris was named king of France. This practice is an anachronism, including the idea of a capital as a heart of the kingdom. Equating the king of Paris to the king of France was criticized in the Restoration by some historians. See, for example, Burette 1843 (I), 87-89.

Paban wrote in the introduction of her work: "[e]ven though the number of evil women is not very great, they have been removed whenever it has been possible in order to preserve only the good and graceful memories."[964] This can be interpreted to mean that according to de Paban, there was nothing else "honourable" or "gracious" in Fredegonde than her position as Chilperic's wife and as a queen of France. Leaving her out would have meant breaking the chronological order.

It is obvious, even on the basis of the few available sources, that the idea of queen of France associated with Fredegonde was different from the queenship associated with Clotilde. In French historiography, God only guided saints like Clotilde, not queens like Brunehilde and Fredegonde. Joséphine Amory de Langerack used in her work expressions like "this haughty queen"[965], "this proud spouse of Neustria's tyrant"[966], "this unfaithful spouse"[967], "this Amazon"[968] and "this detestable stepmother"[969] to describe Fredegonde, but she also found her an important role as a queen of France. According to Langerack, one could see a fleur-de-lis on her tomb, which proved that the flower had symbolised the French throne since the beginning of the monarchy and decorated "notre couronne"[970]. But the fleur-de-lis was hardly the only reason why Fredegonde was the queen of France and Brunehilde was not. Only one queen could hold the title and as the mother of Clothar II Fredegonde was a good choice both for Langerack and for de Paban.

In early nineteenth-century collective biographies written in the Restoration and the July Monarchy eras there were two attributes applied almost uniquely to Brunehilde and Fredegonde. These were "queen of Austrasia" and "queen of Neustria" respectively.[971] It is noteworthy that though Brunehilde was best known as a queen of Austrasia, the early nineteenth-century historians never defined her as an Austrasian and neither did Gregory of Tours in the sixth century.[972] In Clotilde's,

[964] Paban 1820 (I), vij. On this citation see also the citation: Ernot 2006, 72-73. "Quoique le nombre des méchantes femmes ne soit pas très-grand, on les a supprimées toutes les fois qu'on l'a pu, pour ne conserver que des souvenirs honorables ou gracieux."
[965] Langerack 1847, 185. "cette reine orgueilleuse"
[966] Langerack 1847, 185. "cette fière épouse du tyran de la Neustrie"
[967] Langerack 1847, 192. "cette épouse infidèle"
[968] Langerack 1847, 195. "cette amazone"
[969] Langerack 1847, 185. "Odieuse marâtre" can also be translated as a "detestable, bad mother". French "marâtre" is a very negative term often associated with Fredegonde.
[970] Langerack 1847, 197. According to the French historian Colette Beaune, already in the mid-fourteenth century was born a theory of the fleur-de-lis being used in Clovis I's reign. Originally the fleur-de-lis symbolised the union between faith, Catholic Church and chivalry. Beaune 1985, 317-318.
[971] Bathilde was also associated with Neustria.
[972] The kingdoms of Austrasia and Neustria were first created after the death of Clovis I in 511 when his Frankish kingdom was divided between his heirs. The kingdoms were re-united under the rule of Clothar I but they were divided again after his death in 561. His four sons divided the lands, and Chilperic got Neustria and Sigebert Austrasia. These kingdoms were far from stable entities. Quite the contrary, their borders, power and influence were constantly changing. As the names indicate, Neustria was mostly in the west of the region that is now France, whereas Austrasia often

Radegonde's and Bathilde's case unique titles such as queen of France could occasionally be used in the nineteenth century as they were depicted as "ruling" as sole queens in the Merovingian era. This was not often the case with Brunehilde and Fredegonde, who were contemporaries.

Picture II. Kingdoms of Neustria and Austrasia. Possibly by Thomas Bulfinch (1796-1867). In H.G. Wells: *A Short History of the World*. London, 1922.

The biographer Laure Prus separated the two women in 1846 by naming Brunehilde the queen of Austrasia and Fredegonde queen of Neustria.[973] She stated that she had included Brunehilde in her work only because she was so closely attached to Fredegonde's history. According to Prus, Brunehilde never governed France.[974] Despite presenting Fredegonde as a queen of France, she consistently called her a queen of Neustria. In other words, Prus saw Neustria as France and Austrasia as a separate, individual part - "a part of Germany"[975]. According to her interpretation, France was not divided into two parts, but Austrasia was a separate kingdom. In Prus' work Brunehilde was not the only named queen of Austrasia because her grandson's wife Bilichilde was also named a queen of Austrasia.[976] This means that Prus saw two queens ruling simultaneously in

included large parts of what is now Germany and the Low Countries. The third kingdom of the area was Burgundy which was controlled by Guntram, Clothar I's third son. The kingdoms were momentarily united in 613 when Clothar II, the king of Neustria, had Brunehilde executed, got rid of her male heirs, and took Austrasia and Burgundy into his possession.

[973] Prus 1846 (I), 34-74.

[974] Prus 1846 (I), 56. The same type of description is offered by Langerack, who classified the kingdoms of the late sixth century as "France" or Neustria, and Austrasia. See Langerack 1847, 153 & 175.

[975] Prus 1846 (I), 56. "partie d'Allemagne".

[976] Prus 1846 (I), 77.

Austrasia because Bilichilde died in 610, two years *before* Brunehilde.[977] In this work Fredegonde was the only one carrying the title of queen of Neustria.

Prus' views were guided by contemporary interpretations of France's borders and limits. In the nineteenth century the state of France was a geographical area whereas in the early Middle Ages kings and queens ruled people rather than geographical areas. Into this nineteenth-century interpretation she fitted the early medieval kingdoms of Neustria and Austrasia, and deduced which one was more French. It is noteworthy that even though the defining concept varied for other queens, Brunehilde was almost always a queen of Austrasia rather than a queen of the Franks or a queen of France; the reason lies in Austrasia's eastern, thus more Germanic, position in the Frankish kingdom. [978] Austrasia could be seen as a detached part of the Frankish kingdoms but it could be seen as equal to Neustria as well. Henri Martin did not position Neustria and Austrasia in a hierarchical relationship but considered them side by side.[979] He referred almost equally with these titles, queen of Neustria/Austrasia, to Fredegonde and Brunehilde.[980] In his work, Austrasia was not presented as a separate part of the large Frankish kingdom, whose ruler should be defined apart from other rulers, but as a kingdom equal to Neustria. Also Sismondi in his *Histoire des Français* (1821) presented Neustria and Austrasia as equal Frankish kingdoms, and as together forming early medieval "France".[981]

Historians, both popular and "serious", referred to the queen of Neustria and the queen of Austrasia frequently because they acted as a vehicle for the attributes described above. The queens as described answered the growing desire, especially of the 1820s generation, to separate the early Merovingian kingdom from France.[982] The same characteristics had, however, already been given

[977] Bilichilde was murdered by her husband Theudebert II, most likely to replace her with another woman. See Dumézil 2008, 369. Why a polygamous king had to kill the first wife to have another, I do not know. Also Sismondi called Bilichilde a queen of Austrasia. Sismondi 1821 (I), 431.
[978] See, for example, Gaultier 1832, 23; Michelet 1835 (I), 249; Lacépède 1826a (I), 371; Capo de Feuillide 1844, 226; Marlès 1837, 23, 31.
[979] Martin 1834, 248-9.
[980] Martin 1834, 74, 78, 108, 125, 185.
[981] Sismondi 1821 (I), 304-305. According to Sismondi, there were several "capitals" in the Merovingian kingdoms, and only one of them, Reims, was in Austrasia, in the mid-sixth century. The capital could be changed according to the needs of the ruler. It seems that Sismondi did not perceive the capitals of the sixth century as having the same signification that they had in the nineteenth century.
[982] Constitutional monarchist Pierre Marie François Massey de Tyronne in his work *Histoire des Reines, Régentes et Impératrices de France* "History of Queens, Regents and Empresses of France" (1827) did not mention Neustria, but referred to Chilperic as the king of Soissons, which would make Fredegonde the queen of Soissons, as she was named in Langerack's work. Brunehilde was still queen of Austrasia. Even though the "capital" of Austrasia was sometimes Metz, she was never referred to as the queen of Metz and neither was Sigebert ever referred to as the king of Metz. Theudebert, the grandson of Clovis I, however, was sometimes called by this title even though he practically controlled the same area as Sigebert a couple of decades later. (See, for example, Prudhomme 1830 (II), 239). One should

to the queens and used in a similar way in Anquetil's *Histoire de France*, and even before that. At the end of the seventeenth century the highly popular and influential historian François Mézeray wrote about Austrasia and Neustria in the context of Brunehilde's and Fredegonde's histories.[983] Bit by bit these kingdoms were no longer seen as a part of France but as kingdoms preceding France. Yes, there were still historians who saw France as existing in the Merovingian period, but the period 1815–1848 was a transition period in historiography from representations of a French Merovingian period to representations of a Frankish Merovingian period. The transition stage was, for example, visible in Peyronnet's 1835 work, entitled *Histoire des Francs*, which was located in a France inhabited by the Franks.[984] Peyronnet, a fervent royalist, found the roots of the French monarchy in the conquests of Clovis.[985]

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Fredegonde was a unique queen in the early nineteenth-century historiographical construction of the history of France and the history of the Merovingian period. Many historians disapproved of her actions and associated her with events that sprung from their own or their predecessors' imagination rather than from reliable sources. Yet her actions and motives, some more imaginary than others, did not affect her royal status because it was defined by the historian's perspectives on the early medieval kingdoms and not on her moral state. The variety of concepts used to describe her royal status demonstrates well the turning point at which French historiography found itself during the first half of the nineteenth century. There were no established definitions for the early medieval royals, which is visible in a certain ambiguity in the categorisation of the queens.

4.4. The Social Background of the Queens

Queens were royals and royals had a social standing of their own. They were not working class, bourgeois, or aristocrats. But queens were not necessarily born royals, although most of them did originate from an aristocratic or noble family. According to Chrysanthe Ovide Des Michels's

remember, as already noted, that Paris often represented the whole of early medieval France and paralleling capital with kingdom was somewhat comprehensible since the borders of the kingdoms were constantly changing - sometimes the "capital" was the only area the king truly controlled. Massey de Tyronne 1827, 27. About Massey de Tyronne's political activity, see his pamphlet *Quelques lignes aux ultra*, "Some lines to Ultras", from 1819. The pamphlet was directed against the Ultras.

[983] See Mézeray 1698, 106 & passim.

[984] See Peyronnet 1835 (I), 74, 118, 229.

[985] Just like Langerack, he saw the fleur-de-lys as originating in the Merovingian period, not from Fredegonde but from Clovis' conversion. His source dates from the reign of Charles V. See Peyronnet 1835 (I), 57-58.

Histoire Générale du Moyen Age (1835), royals were the enemies of aristocrats. They were a "race" of their own, "la race royale".[986] This "royal race" was more clearly than other races connected to social class and the only one into which the early queens fitted. The "royal race" seemed to be, in the nineteenth century, a race into which a woman might be admitted: she did not have to be born there, as Fredegonde's and Bathilde's cases demonstrate. Social class was far more important for nineteenth-century queenship than for sixth-century queenship.[987] According to Susan K. Foley, social origins were more important and defined persons more than gender in the Old Regime.[988] Even though the French monarchy went through several changes due to the Revolution, the importance of social origins, even in historiography, had not vanished completely within a few decades.

Fredegonde's humble social standing is something historians rarely failed to bring up in their narratives about the late sixth century. Théophile Lavallée wrote in 1838 that "Chilpéric, […], lived with a woman of low birth, called Fredegonde, [who was] untamed, cruel and savage […]."[989] As I have deduced in previous sections, Fredegonde was used to represent the Germanic nature in nineteenth-century historiography, but I have to add that the picture was even more complicated because of her family background. One should therefore ask if the historians saw this low birth as a factor that affected her behaviour. Her humble birth most certainly affected the way historians interpreted her actions because it made them more critical of her. Bathilde, whom some nineteenth-century historians also saw as having had a low birth, was not mentioned at all in Lavallée's work. The seventh century for Lavallée was all about men fighting and scheming, a struggle between the two races of Austrasians and Neustrians, and between the aristocracy and the monarchy.[990]

Birth is a factor that separates Fredegonde from Clotilde, Radegonde and Brunehilde, who were, in a sense, all similar figures - they were kings' daughters.[991] Pierre Marie François Massey de Tyronne, monarchist politician and author of various biographies, did not classify these women by

[986] Des Michels 1835 (I), 97, 309, 322. The same idea of kings and queens as natural opponents of aristocrats was presented by Jules Belin de Launay in 1843, 45-6.
[987] Even though I write "sixth-century queenship" I am aware that no institution existed then. Déborah Cohen has argued that the term "class" was already in use in the late seventeenth-century France along with estates. Cohen 2010, 1148-9.
[988] Foley 2004, 3.
[989] Lavallée 1838 (I), 124.
[990] Lavallée 1838 (I), 148. Lavallée saw that there were two struggles in tandem: the struggle between the races and the struggle between the aristocracy and the monarchy.
[991] They became queens because they were kings' daughters. In the later historiography, however, the roles have changed. Dumézil has noted that in Brunehilde's case her father Athanagilde is only known in historiography *because* he was Brunehilde's father. Dumézil 2008, 69. In my opinion this applies to Clotilde's and Radegonde's fathers also - it is the daughters that made their fathers famous, not the reverse. Brunehilde: le Bas 1842 (III), 443. Clotilde: Le Bas 1840 (I), 22.

their ethnic background, race or nationality but by their birth in his work *Histoire des Reines, Régentes et Impératrices de France*[992](1827). For him, high or humble background was more significant for a woman's character than nationality or race. His emphasis on the woman's social class would indicate that he drew his influences from the Old Regime perceptions on the importance of social class, but his year of birth is unknown.[993] Massey de Tyronne was less judgemental towards Fredegonde than many of his contemporaries, and not once did he call her a barbarian despite giving a lot of space to her "crimes". One should keep in mind that in the nineteenth century a historian was expected to take a moral stance on historical events and on persons' actions. Massey de Tyronne, however, said at the very beginning of his work that nothing was known about Fredegonde's parents, "no class or name".[994] Social class was an issue only when it was considered too low, as in the case of Fredegonde.[995] I have also argued that the obscure background of the Merovingian queens and wives was seen by the nineteenth-century historians as a sign for general degeneration and for kings' low morale. These unions of degenerate kings were very suitable for historical thinking that highlighted the inferiority of the early medieval period compared to the nineteenth century, and this was one reason why the early nineteenth-century historians were so eager to emphasis the lack of noble background of certain early medieval queens such as Fredegonde.

Massey de Tyronne did not clearly indicate what the background of Bathilde was and he certainly did not imply that it would have been royal. The author had nothing negative to say about Bathilde but rather highlighted how, resulting from her humble birth, she wanted to help other slaves to become free. Bathilde had kindness, graces, spirit and beauty and she behaved wisely, according to Massey de Tyronne.[996] The author clearly indicated that Bathilde was so humble because of her low background, which made her a good queen and a regent. As noted, for Bathilde the humble background was used as an advantage whereas for Fredegonde it was a disadvantage. In Bathilde incarnated the positive qualities of a simple mind in women, whereas Fredegonde was made to represent the negative qualities of an ignorant social climber.

[992] "History of Queens, Regents and Empresses of France"
[993] In the BnF his works are from the period between 1819 and 1830.
[994] Massey de Tyronne 1827, 27. "ni l'état, ni le nom"
[995] The representations of Fredegonde's humble background have similarities with a certain biography, or perhaps political slander would be a more accurate term, written about Madame du Barry in the eighteenth century and examined by Robert Darnton in his study *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (1996). According to Darnton, du Barry was also attacked in the "biography" for her low birth and vulgarity, though she was not depicted as having a lust for power like Fredegonde, but rather as a bit naïve. Nevertheless, the similarities demonstrate that certain characteristics were repeatedly used against women in "public" positions. See Darnton 1996, 143, 163, 337-389.
[996] Massey de Tyronne 1827, 47.

The fervent Catholic Henrion stated his work about history of France by saying that "[w]e cannot refuse Fredegonde […] the glory to have had courage and a spirit above her sex and position […]".[997] Henrion revealed here that he saw both gender and social class as determining at least partially a person's nature, mind and intelligence. He most likely saw, like most of his contemporaries, that social classes were organised hierarchically in the same way as gender relations. Just as one could rise from one social class to another, Fredegonde could rise from one gender to another. Fredegonde received Henrion's (partial) admiration for being able to cross the boundaries of both gender and class; according to Henrion, she had exceeded the expectations connected to her humble birth. Yet, Henrion did not only describe this male power as a positive one and he did criticise Fredegonde for many crimes and vices.[998] Like many other historians, he described Fredegonde as quite similar throughout her life, corrupted by vices, whereas Brunehilde in many narratives "developed" from an ideal young queen into a negative figure, a power-hungry queen similar to Fredegonde. As noted, the sources constructed this image of the queens and not many historians doubted them, for the image of the two raging and vengeful queens seemed only too fitting for the degenerated Merovingian period. Henrion, however, did not explicitly define the boundaries between genders. As already noted in this section, this idea of women changing gender was not unique to Henrion. The same idea was presented in the 1831 anonymous work on the crimes of the queens.[999] In this work the author saw the power related to queenship as a corrupting force that made women become men. In this sense the changing of gender was by no means a positive quality, but for Henrion this was praise for Fredegonde.

Another Catholic author, Joséphine Amory de Langerack, implied in her *Galerie des femmes celebres* (1847) on several occasions that Fredegonde was a barbarian and stated that she was from "an inferior social standing".[1000] Langerack's interpretation supports the idea that gender and class were closely associated in the representations of Fredegonde, and Henrion similarly drew implicit parallels between gender and class. Langerack, for example, stated that Fredegonde had had "manly force" in the breast milk she drank, which later made her a tyrant.[1001] In other words, Langerack interpreted Fredegonde's birth in the light of her later actions and saw her cruelty as a result of her humble background. Langerack indicated that surpassing the "natural" gender limits would turn a

[997] Henrion 1837, 50. "On ne peut refuser à Frédégonde […] la gloire d'avoir eu un courage et un esprit au-dessus de son sexe et son condition […]." Henrion's works are a good example of politically motivated historiography. Even in the Catholic Encyclopedia his works are said to be "biased by his religious and political affiliations." Nainfa 1910.
[998] See for example Henrion 1837, 60, 63.
[999] Anon 1831 (II), V.
[1000] Langerack 1847, 175, 156, 160. "dans une condition inférieure"
[1001] Langerack 1847, 175, 156, 160.

woman to tyranny, cruelty and violence, into an unnatural woman. Unlike gender, which restricted women more than men, social class was a slightly different mechanism of categorisation in historiography, because it was used to define both males and females. Surpassing the gender boundaries was a danger often associated with women, and it seems that moving "upwards", from female to male; from middle class to upper class, was perceived as very dangerous even though a downgrading transition could often be ridiculed, for example in literature. [1002]

Noble birth made individuals, both women and men, important and noteworthy, but it did not always suffice to make them remembered, even if they lived to adulthood. Laure Prus, the biographer from the 1840s, stated that even though a number of other names who were "illustrious by their birth" had fallen into oblivion, Fredegonde, who was born "au milieu du peuple", was still as famous as ever.[1003] Fredegonde did not remain among "le peuple" because she was a named individual,[1004] and she was often pictured as oppressing "le peuple". Fredegonde was not described in the early nineteenth century as one of the "people" but she was seen as being born there.

As mentioned in the introduction, Pim Den Boer has argued that "[h]istoriography proper was and is largely the work of a literate (and hence) elitist culture."[1005] Georges Lefebvre called nineteenth-century historiography a "bourgeois history" as he saw this social class as the most important factor defining the period's historiography.[1006] Perhaps he had read Jean Gabriel Cappot's aka Capo de Feuillide's[1007] (1800-1863) *Histoire du Peuple de Paris*, written about hundred years earlier, in which the author criticised his contemporary historians' emphasis on describing the Roman laws as better than the Merovingian laws. According to Capot de Feuillide, who was a lawyer, journalist and a politician from a minor noble family, the emphasis was due to the historians' bourgeois background.[1008]

[1002] Michelet, in his work *Le Peuple*, discussed the problems of men marrying richer women than themselves and considered it, for the men, a sort of a prison. A lower class woman could be difficult also, mostly due to her family and lack of education. But ultimately the latter choice was the better of the two. Michelet 1846, 240-244.
[1003] Prus 1846 (I), 34.
[1004] According to Joan Scott, "individual" most often referred to a male individual in early nineteenth-century France. In my opinion, Fredegonde was seen as an individual, an exception and therefore almost as a masculine figure. Hillman 2011, 22.
[1005] Den Boer 1998, 10-11.
[1006] Lefebvre 1971, 168.
[1007] A journalist and a lawyer, politician and a critic. He became a député in 1840 but his political career only lasted until the 1851 Revolution.
[1008] Capo de Feuillide 1844, 151. In 1846 Jules Michelet published his famous "Le Peuple", a work that concentrated on the people, which seemed to refer to working class people. He criticised the Bourgeoisie for their lust for money and predicted that their fate would be the same as that of the aristocracy just before the Revolution. Michelet 1846, 36-42.

Capot de Feuillide was the only historian who openly criticised his contemporary historians for their (perceived) bourgeois background. Yet he was not so different from his contemporaries as he was from a rather privileged family himself. Despite his own family background, he thought that the other historians' class affected their interpretation of history too strongly. Sarah Maza has observed that it was common in the nineteenth century to see the "bourgeoisie" in others rather than in oneself. As in Capot de Feuillide's work, the term was used as a negative marker.[1009] Capot de Feuillide's purpose seemed to be to juxtapose the people and the bourgeoisie, the working class against the political oppressors.[1010] Capot de Feuillide did not include the bourgeois class in "le peuple" but he presented this bourgeois class, which he directly equated with the Gallo-Romans, as an oppressing class. So he went a step further even than Augustin Thierry, who saw class relations in history only as symbolic ones.[1011]

According to Jo Burr Margadant, the opponents of the July Monarchy and of the royal family created an imagery of the bourgeoisie as an individual family, like the Orléans. According to this image, the bourgeois had their own interests that did not coincide with the nation's interests. *Le peuple* was a "virtuous collective" that represented the country's interest.[1012] In the first half of the nineteenth-century *le peuple* was often defined explicitly as a Christian people.[1013] Jules Michelet, in his work *Le Peuple,* saw the bourgeoisie as something separate from the people and he described bourgeoisie with very negative qualities, whereas *le peuple* was for him the engine of history.[1014] There were a lot of historians, as I have mentioned, who saw the Revolution of 1789 as a victory for the oppressed working class or for *le peuple*. It must be noted, however, that virtually none of the historians truly wanted an equal society as it is understood in the twenty-first century. Many wanted better working conditions for workers and more education, but these ideas did not mean complete equality between the lords and the workers. Historians, who frequently came from privileged families, highlighted the freedom of the Germanic tribes or the freedom of the people after the Revolution, but these concepts are not to be understood as unconditional, as they were tied to the contemporary social context. According to François Félix de Lafarelle, a civil servant and

[1009] Maza 2007, 21-37
[1010] Also, for example, Eugène Sue (1804-1857), a very popular author of historical novels, juxtaposed the working class and the bourgeoisie in his work *Les mystère du Peuple* (1851). Thiesse 2010, 49. Sue's work follows a family('s) oppression all through French history, including the Merovingian period.
[1011] Capo de Feuillide 1844, 132. He was known for his sharp opinions and pro-democratic values. See Larousse 1867 (III), 325.
[1012] Margadant 2008b, 323.
[1013] Graceffa 2009b, 65.
[1014] Hamnett 2011, 137-142.

lawyer from Nimes, people had the freedom to do as they were supposed to do.[1015] This applied especially to the social context: people from different social classes had the liberty to do as the moral and physical boundaries related to the classes allowed them to do. Yet this is exactly what Fredegonde was perceived not to have done and also what the nineteenth-century individuals increasingly ceased to do.

Historians did not see Fredegonde's low birth as somehow related to her being a Frank because the kings too were Franks. All historians agreed, and still do, that a Frank could be either of high or of low birth.[1016] In fact, being a famous Frank, it often seems that she defined the Frankish race more than the Frankish race defined her. What consequences did it have for the representations of Fredegonde that she was transformed in the early nineteenth century from a French royal into a Frankish royal? This meant that she was no longer an exceptional person as she had been in eighteenth-century historiography, but instead a representative of a Frankish people. With her perceived monstrousness, she came to represent the Germanic nature that could threaten France in the nineteenth century just as it had threatened France in the late sixth century. Not all historians took a strong stance on this question. Thierry saw Frankish and Gallo-Roman races as being related, or at least to have been related, to classes or historical estates. This point of view, however, was not explicitly brought up in many works.

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There was one thing that, according to the historian Eliane Gubin (2007), was perceived in the early nineteenth century as a positive feature in women, a feature that Fredegonde was described as having: ignorance. Yet, whereas Fredegonde was described as cruel and ignorant, what was wanted in the nineteenth century was sweet ignorance as a counterpart to the scientific knowledge that was suitable only for men.[1017] Indeed, historians saw Fredegonde as doing everything wrongly, doing all that a woman was not supposed to do (marrying for love, being sexually promiscuous and independent, engaging in political activity, showing passion, being violent, etc.), and even managing to get away with it all, to die peacefully in her bed.

[1015] Lafarelle 1839, 150-1 & passim. About Lafarelle and this study on social classes, see also Duval 1840, 265-324. Interestingly Lafarelle's book was not based on Catholic Christian arguments about human society, which is explicitly stated by Lafarelle himself and part of Duval's critique as he studies Lafarelle's book from a Christian perspective. See also the liberal monarchist Charles Cottu's (1838) *Guide politique de la jeunesse*, p. 1-53. He emphasised that freedom was only an idea which had no place in the real world, where inequalities were natural in all societies. See also Crossley on the ideas of the Revolution among Catholics in the Restoration and July Monarchy periods. Crossley 1993, 7

[1016] See, for example, Michelet 1833 (I), 194-197.

[1017] Gubin 2007, 15.

It is interesting to see that even though Fredegonde as a queen did not belong to any "estate", on many occasions the negative features associated with the working class could be found in her representations. The positive values, however, associated with the working class did not apply to Fredegonde, only the negative features such as stubbornness, immorality and lack of piety.[1018] Langerack has stated that women were not to leave their own social class and try to climb higher.[1019] Fredegonde did this and that is why she was such a fearsome example for readers. Thus, at the beginning of the nineteenth century Fredegonde could be used to symbolise the threat of different social classes mixing with each other. In addition, she could symbolise the freedom associated with the Franks, so tenderly cherished by many male historians.

Yet there was much more to Fredegonde's background than these negative qualities. Many historians could not but admire her willpower. The Catholic Henrion admired her spirit and saw that she had surpassed her low birth and gender, a double obstacle.[1020] Langerack stated that Fredegonde was at the peak of her glory just before dying and at that moment even her humble birth was forgotten.[1021] As much as Langerack criticised Fredegonde, at the end she seemed to admire her strength, force and drive - her manly values. Twice Jean Marie Félicité Frantin, the same author who praised Bathilde as a regent and recommended reading in a Parisian Catholic library, compared Fredegonde to Brunehilde: "Brunehilde, born in the palace of the kings of the Goths […] was indignant to see such a rival, born in lowness, […]"[1022] and again by claiming that Brunehilde: "[n]o less ambitious than Fredegonde even though highness of her spirit, dignity of her rank, her nature even distanced herself from this atrocity of the habits […]."[1023] Frantin highlighted Fredegonde's background for three reasons: 1) to create differences between her and Brunehilde, 2) to highlight her "bad" manners and 3) to highlight how unique she was as she could transform from a servant girl to a true queen. Frantin wrote that:

> She was till the end powerful and honoured, and with the greatness of her spirit, she almost made forgettable all the most odious events. It was especially after the death of Chilperic that she used the rare qualities and talents nature had given her. No longer was she nothing

[1018] The upper classes associated the working class with "a life of vice and criminality". Foley 2004, 59.
[1019] Langerack 1849, 270-6 & passim.
[1020] As Joan Scott has shown, the practice of defining women through their gender, as a person of gender, was very typical for nineteenth-century historiography and discussions in general. Men were the universal, women the exception. See, for example, Scott 1999, 3. Men's ethnic background was more often defined in detail. In his short essay called "Brunehauld", Paulin Paris, for example, first defined Sigebert's position as "roi de la Germanie française", "roi des Austrasiens", "petit-fils de Clovis". Paris S.a., 1. On defining women as "persons of sexe" see, for example, Fleury 1843, 59. The defining of a woman as "personne du sexe" was widespread among nineteenth-century historians.
[1021] Langerack 1847, 197.
[1022] Frantin 1825 (IV), 21. "Brunehat née dans le palais des rois Goths […] s'étoit indignée de voir telle rivale née dans le bassesse […]"
[1023] Frantin 1825 (IV), 22. "Non moins ambitieuse que Frédégonde quoique l'élévation de son esprit, la dignité de son rang, son naturel même l'éloignassent de cette atrocité de moeurs […]". See also Frantin 1825 (III), 168.

> but a queen and a mother, but worthy of presiding over the councils of Neustria and saving her son's throne.[1024]

Clearly Frantin saw all her misdeeds as forgiven, as he declared her honoured and powerful. Furthermore, Philippe le Bas stated of Fredegonde in his encyclopaedia that "[w]e have said enough of the bloody acts of revenge and it suffices to praise her for her administration: the great man Ebroin's administration was only an imitation of her administration."[1025] In these historians' representations Fredegonde's low birth and all the other disadvantages were forgiven at the end. Le Bas ranked her as one of the best Merovingian rulers, even above the majordomus Ebroin, who lived at the same time as Bathilde.

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Considering the growing interest in the Middle Ages in early nineteenth-century France,[1026] the growth in the number of biographical works, the increasing number of readers including women and children, the popularity of the historical novel and the demand for books on French "national" history, it is no surprise that Fredegonde was a popular figure. A powerful, cruel, boundary-crossing woman who was afraid of no-one and wisely ruled for her son, the mighty King Clothar II. There were more literary reasons for her popularity than historiographical ones - it seems that people wanted to read about her, and her cruel actions interested readers because they permitted the readers themselves to feel civilized. [1027] The differences between emerging academic historiography and historical, more popular, literature were still quite small and the readers would have expected the "serious" historical works to include dramatic language and value judgments as well.

Almost all historians, with some exceptions, brought up Fredegonde's obscure background and presented her, in the beginning of the narratives, as less worthy to be a queen than Brunehilde, who was a king's daughter. I believe that most historians used her low birth as a dramatic ploy to highlight the negative qualities of the early Middle Ages, the whole Merovingian dynasty and her as a queen. The historians of the early nineteenth century recognised that in the Merovingian period there had been several queens who had an obscure background, but these women played only minor

[1024] Frantin 1825 (IV), 20. "Elle-même jusqu'à la fin puissante et honorée, fit presque oublier les forfaits les plus odieux à force de grandeur d'ame. Ce fut sur-tout après la mort de Chilpéric qu'elle déploya les rares qualités et les talens dont la nature l'avoit douée, et ne parut plus que reine et mère, digne de présider aux conseils de Neustrie de sauver le trône de son fils."
[1025] Le Bas 1842 (VIII), 486. Ebroin was the majordomus during Bathilde's regency.
[1026] See Emery and Morowitz 2003, 15-16.
[1027] I find it very interesting that already in one of the most famous eighteenth-century historiographical works, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, the Maurist authors started each period of history by describing its uncontrolled barbarity before moving on to describe the men who had preserved the rightful knowledge. Ribard 2009, 42. I can't help thinking that the highlighting of barbarity is a rhetoric tool that was perhaps transmitted to the nineteenth-century historians, who no doubt knew well the *Histoire littéraire*.

roles in the history of France and they were mentioned only in secondary anecdotes, whereas no nineteenth-century historian could or would ignore Fredegonde. [1028] As a controversial figure, a warning example, she was far too intriguing for readers or historians to ignore.

[1028] Faileuba and Bilichilde, for example.

5. Closing Observations

A narrative has a beginning and a middle, and it needs an end. How did the narrative about the Merovingian queens end? Clotilde died in her monastery, Fredegonde in her bed and Brunehilde was executed by King Clothar II. Radegonde and Bathilde died in their monasteries as honoured founders. Even if their physical existence had an end, the narrative had one only in the books. In the historical imagination the story of the Merovingian queens will never cease, hopefully, to intrigue the minds of historians and readers.

As an instrument, the broad definition of historiography has been very helpful and it has allowed me to see the full scope of the historical imagination in early nineteenth-century France. One aim of my research has been to demonstrate that all representations are equally important to study because they all affected the way readers perceived the early medieval Merovingian queens, even if they did not all affect contemporary historians and authors in the same way. The historiography of the first half of the nineteenth century is indeed far broader than a few works from famous male historians. Names such as Jean Marie Félicité Frantin, Jésephine Amory de Langerack, Ignace de Peyronnet, Paulin Paris, Sophie de Maraise and Louis Pierre Anquetil, among many others, are an inherent part of the French nineteenth-century historiography. I have gathered almost 79 works from between 1815 and 1848 and yet even these are only a fraction of the totality of historiographical material produced in France in this period, which demonstrates that it would be hopelessly inadequate to reduce the whole field of historiography to the works of a few well-known male historians. The historiography of the Restoration and July Monarchy eras was very complex and controversial, full of different kinds of representations and narratives.

The various genres of early nineteenth-century historiography had distinct readerships and these readerships were offered different kind of representations of the Merovingian queens depending on readers' gender, social background and level of education. It has become obvious that the representations varied according to the author and the intended readership. The reason for this is that some groups of readers were perceived as more easily influenced and less capable of drawing a conclusion on what they had read. Therefore, it was perceived that women and children, for example, should be offered different kinds of representations of history than men because they were not perceived as capable as drawing the right conclusions from what they read. They were not to be

trusted to make the right interpretations and therefore the historians offered them the interpretations ready made.

Clotilde was given more space in works aimed for women. These included individual and collective biographies. Brunehilde and Fredegonde were more significant, and the events of their lives were given more space in large histories of France, written most often by educated men for their peers. Reading the wrong kind of material was perceived as dangerous for uneducated and ductile minds, so that especially (accepted) reading for women and youth had to offer morally righteous examples. Men (adult, well-educated, and wealthy) were not perceived as needing so much such guidance. Novels and biographies were read in all social classes and many readers got their knowledge of medieval history from the lives of the saints, from religious history.

I have deliberately tried to avoid constantly juxtaposing male and female historians as two homogenous groups. Instead, I have examined different historiographical genres which were, however, clearly gendered. This has also strongly emphasised the gendered aspect of historiography. Within certain genres, such as in collected biographies, there were no great differences in the representations of the Merovingian queens between the productions of male and female authors. If historiography is visualised as the line I presented in the introduction, with historical fiction at one end and Francois Guizot at the other, the differences in representations do not proceed from one to the other at regular intervals, but mostly according to the readership of the individual works, and hence only indirectly according to the gender of the historian.

It appears that women historians did not necessarily create radically different representations of the Merovingian queens to those of their male contemporaries. The representations created by male historians varied more simply because men produced a greater number works. Women could judge the historical queens as harshly as the male historians did. In fact many male historians offered more sympathy for the actions of the Merovingian queens than female historians did. It is impossible to say whether the women historians truly saw the Merovingian queens as they presented them in their works, or whether they made rigid moral judgments because they themselves were more easily judged and controlled by readers, by other historians, and by the authorities.

The nineteenth-century historians loved the histories of Great Men. The Merovingian queens were such “Great Men”. They had a role in the narrative(s) of French history and of French monarchy. A

historian's task was to write about events and persons worth remembering and the queens Clotilde, Fredegonde and Brunehilde were such figures. Even though "le people" became increasingly popular in historiography in the course of the nineteenth century, it never included individuals. "Le people" *was* an individual. The Great Men, however, were most often masculine individuals, kings and the like, and for women to become such individuals was quite rare. The three Merovingian queens were therefore truly exceptional characters in early nineteenth-century historiography.

The Merovingian queens were seen as Great Men but at the same time they were mere types and instruments for the early nineteenth-century historians. The queens were reduced and categorized to certain types depending on the historians' political and cultural affiliations. This was not only the destiny of the queens, but almost all historical figures were transformed in the same way. The execution of the king and queen in the late eighteenth-century revolutionary years caused a lot of debate among historians in early nineteenth-century France; not all of them were content to see the monarchy restored, while others still bore a grudge about the death of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Historians, who were often active in political life as well, sought support from history for their arguments regarding the monarchy's position in France. Yet historians were individuals, and everyone had their own way of seeing the Merovingian queens. The political stance of an author did not automatically guide the way he or she portrayed the early medieval royals, as the intended readership was also an important factor affecting the creation of representations.

All genres of historiography had a political aspect and the queens were not studied or written about for their own sake, but historians used them to make moral and political claims, to teach and instruct the reader. The Merovingian queens were often fitted into black and white categories of good or bad queens, especially in the religious historiography, even if many times these categories could be quite large. The lives of queens were constructed based on anecdotes that historians simultaneously used to represent the whole Merovingian period. All historians, no matter what their political stance, used the same anecdotes from the few early medieval sources available to them. Furthermore, the historians used a large variety of early modern historiographical works as their sources. This signifies that most of the representations of the early medieval Merovingian queens were in fact representations of representations created by other, previous historians. Not even all "serious" historians were keen to distinguish between the early medieval and early modern sources. This was a question of availability as well as conscious choice, because not all sources were available to every historian.

The political aspects of historiography were visible in the way the new, or redefined, nationalistic agenda affected historians' narratives about the Merovingian period. Historians started to use the word “nation” in the context of that period and to identify nationalistic purposes and actions in the early medieval period. It seems, however, that the Merovingian queens were not part of the “nation”, which as an abstract construction did not include individuals very often. In the same way queens, or any individuals, were excluded from *le peuple* which became more and more popular in French historiography in the nineteenth century. Sometimes queens, and other royals, were even pictured as the opponents of these groups: as individual actors opposing the faceless masses of history. Often the historiography presented the eternal desire of a people, or a mass, having one voice and one desire, instead of multiple conflicting realities and wishes.

How did the historians' fascination with the history of the French “nation” affect their concept of queenship? A *history* of queenship was essential to construct a shared past. Many historiographical writings on history were specifically aimed at educating readers to feel that they had this history (and French language) in common. Indirectly the spreading of nationalistic ideas among writers and readers made history more popular, which in turn draw attention to the queens and to the early decades of French history. Of course, the debate about the beginning of the French nation and monarchy had been ongoing since the early eighteenth century, and even earlier, but after Napoleon's reign the number of participants in the debate increased considerably.

What should be made of the lack of agreement concerning the role of Merovingian queens or queenship in the histories of the early Middle Ages? First of all, there was no clear pointer in the sources the early nineteenth-century historians used - no unanimous historiographical tradition that they could build upon, oppose or defend. Furthermore, representations of queenship could be utilized for historians' political purposes in order to promote or defame the Merovingian dynasty, or royal families in general. Moreover, in a period of considerable social change, historians had differing views on women's capability to rule in general, which naturally affected the way queens were represented. For all these reasons, and because of the lack of established historiographical practice and the use of historiography as a political tool, there were multiple interpretations of early medieval queenship.

Controversially, the history of France was thus shortened with the creation of the new idea of nation. No longer did the nation start in the emerging academic historiography with the Merovingian dynasty. The ideas of civilisation and progress included in the notion of nation made

history in many interpretations a progressive process where the Merovingian period played the role of "infancy". Historians found the decadence of the Merovingian period reflected in many individuals, especially in kings like Clothar I who married two sisters of whom one was a nun) but not in all of them.

One topic that seems to have been important, if we can judge by the great number of historians writing about it, was the arrival of the Franks in the area of modern France. The questions regarding the arrival of the Franks did not have a direct influence on how the Merovingian queens were presented, because almost all historians agreed that by the sixth century the Frankish kingdoms were already established. The Merovingians were seen rather negatively by all parties in this debate, even though not all saw the queens as Merovingians or even as Germanic. The queens, and women, were often perceived almost as a race of their own. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, there were still historians who believed that France had existed in the Merovingian period and accordingly that the members of the Merovingian dynasty were *French* royals. There was, starting from the 1820s, a wide discussion about whether or not the early rulers were French at all, and many historians agreed that they were not (yet) French. For example, Simonde de Sismondi saw Charles the Bald (823–877) as the first king of France, and Henri Martin saw the rulers of the tenth century as the first kings of France.[1029] Yet the old way of seeing the Merovingian royals persisted, especially in popular, devotional, educational literature, and in history text books. There were thus different overlapping traditions.

The question of who were Franks and what their relationship to the French and to France was intrigued numerous generations of historians. The question was as much political as historiographical. It is important to differentiate between several "Frankishnesses" in early nineteenth-century historiography: a) the Franks as a group of people, b) the queen (king) of the Franks and c) individual Franks like Fredegonde. The attribute "queen of the Franks" was less anachronistic, though still problematic, as it included an idea of a more or less coherent group called the Franks. The title "Queen of the Franks" left the Gallo-Romans without a ruler and indicated that all subjects were members of Frankish families.[1030] The attribute was rarely used in the emerging academic historiographical works of the early nineteenth century.

[1029] Sismondi 1839, 144; Martin 1855, 527-8.
[1030] See, for example, Martin 1838, 227. He really saw that the kings were primarily kings of the Franks and that the Gallo-Romans were "silent", without a voice. The early nineteenth-century writers were in general very keen to differentiate the Gallo-Romans from the Franks - and to point out that the kings were Franks.

The French monarchy changed considerably in the early decades of the nineteenth century: from an imitation of the Old Regime to a bourgeois and constitutional monarchy. The July Monarchy, the royal family first and foremost, followed bourgeois moral codes that were also applied to historical queens. These bourgeois values not only influenced the image of the royal family but they penetrated all areas of society, including historiography. No longer were queens in the public sphere but now, with a slight exaggeration, all women were driven away from it and into the domestic sphere. Queen Marie Amelie endeavoured to identify herself as a bourgeois lady uninvolved in politics. Historical queens were judged on these new moral codes, depending on the historiographical genre and the readership. The early medieval Merovingian queens began to act like bourgeois ladies. Royals acting in a bourgeois manner and the downgrading of nobility in the early nineteenth century had an effect on the readership of various historiographical works, because now the early queens could become role models for women and girls. Thus the rise of the bourgeois code signified that even the historical queens lost their sacrality and became comparable to "ordinary women". Despite the class differences that affected the realities of life (working conditions, wealth, family, living area etc.), all women could have the same role models.

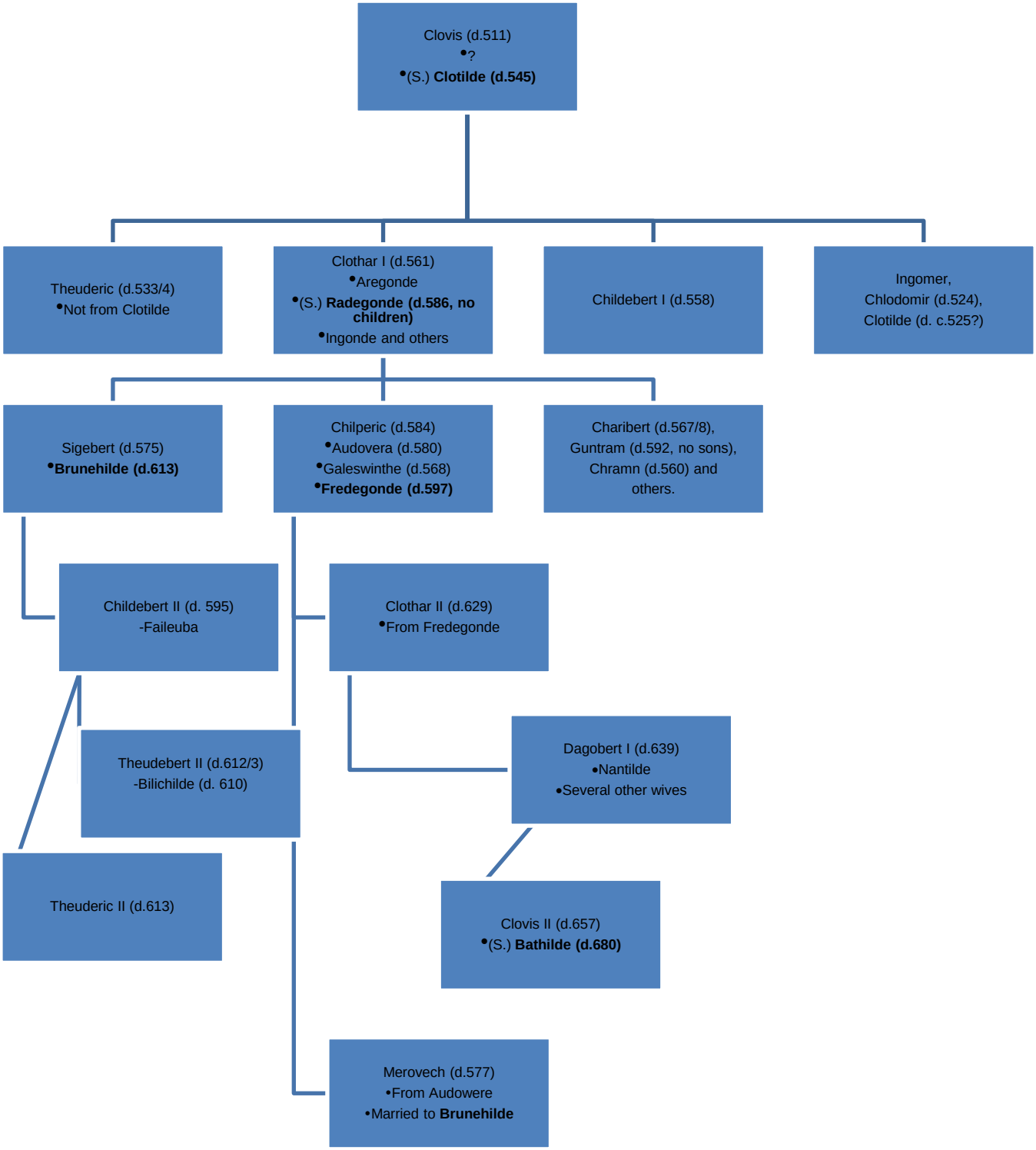
One of the leading motivations for the ways in which the queens were represented was the historians' desire to prove that women could and should not govern in France. In the early nineteenth century women were being categorically excluded from power, both from the throne and from the executive power, and they could not vote. They were even without basic human rights. Historians embraced and presented in a positive light those women who devoted themselves to their families and to religion without meddling in politics, wars or exerting power over others outside their families. Those queens who had had political influence, who were involved in activities that were perceived as masculine like decreeing taxes and deciding to go to war, were presented in a negative light and they were often associated with crimes, excessive passion, lust, greed for power and sexual promiscuity. Historians thus more or less explicitly pointed out to readers which queens were suitable role models and which queens were not. In addition to implanting bourgeois values into the Merovingian period, the historians took a stance on what kind of monarchy the French monarchy should be by presenting the Merovingian queens in a certain way. Almost all authors agreed that the French monarchy should be one that barred women from access to the throne. It seems that despite the differences in opinions regarding the position of monarchy in France, constitutional or not, the authors agreed that women had no formal place there. In the eyes of the nineteenth-century historians the historical women rulers could never be good enough to justify women's right to inherit the throne. Whereas their masculine gender was always an asset for kings,

for queens their female gender always worked against them. They could be seen as good rulers *despite* their gender, but never *because of* their gender.

Women who surpassed their gender were extraordinary and yet simultaneously very dangerous, because they had not stayed in their "natural" place. This was a paradox because, while rivalling the masculine gender was admirable because of male superiority over the female gender, it was perceived as very dangerous for society. Young women readers were not encouraged to pursue such a dangerous path. Nevertheless, many historians admired Fredegonde for surpassing her "weak" feminine gender, while at the same time presenting her as a salutary example of an unnatural woman who plunged the entire kingdom into civil war. The messages given to readers were confused and sometimes contradictory. It was a paradox that women, who did the right thing and lived the right way according to the early nineteenth-century moral codes, were forgotten and those women who behaved like men were remembered. A good bourgeois woman was invisible, both in society and in history, whereas "immoral" women would be visible. Women were like servants: necessary but preferably invisible. Of course these moral codes only truly applied to bourgeois, middle and upper middle class women because the (rich) nobles could afford to do as they liked, whereas the working class women could not afford to follow rigid moral codes.

The Merovingian queens offered something for everyone in nineteenth-century France; barbarous and morally upright actions, love and passion, scheming and devotion, destruction and civilisation. They had a role to play in the history of the French monarchy, both in Christianizing the monarchy and representing the dangers of women wielding the highest power in the kingdom. They could be hated or loved, but their histories left no one cold, which is why they have intrigued multiple generations of historians.

Appendix 1. The Merovingian Dynasty:



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