

Abstract:

Gothic tribes settled on the lower Danube and on the northern shore of the Black Sea entered in the year 376 the territory of the Roman Empire. This was followed by fierce fighting and migration of the Goths, who passed through the Balkans and Italy and reached Aquitaine in 413, where they settled temporarily. Here, originally various Gothic groups were formed into the one tribe *gens*, which we now call Visigoths. The pressure of the Franks from the north forced the Visigoths to leave Aquitaine at the beginning of the 6th century and move on to the Iberian Peninsula. Here the Visigoths established their own Kingdom of Toledo. Because the Visigoths at the time of their formation were not a homogeneous group, but rather a loose conglomerate of various barbarian groups and military units, they had no tradition of appointing their rulers. For this reason, they created the mechanism of the royal elections. Vallia was the first elected king in 415. During Visigothic history, a sequence of elected kings was disrupted several times by attempts of some kings to enforce a hereditary monarchy. This led in 633 to the enactment of the royal elections at the 4th Council of Toledo. Other ecclesiastical councils further improved the principles of election. The work will focus on the development of the Visigothic system of royal succession.