

The goal of this thesis is to describe the development of the Frankish military organization and social changes in the early mediaeval Kingdom of the Franks brought about by this development.

The first section describes relations in Gaul at the end of the Roman period and the onset of Frankish infiltration into the territory of the Roman Empire. The focus of interest after the Frankish conquest of Gaul under Clovis is the development of the Frankish military system from the 6th to the beginning of the 9th century. There is a description of the composition of this system and its strengths and weaknesses, and the military achievements of the Merovingian kings and subsequently the Carolingian rulers.

A period of great importance is the 8th century, during which there was not only a change of dynasty but also important changes in the Frankish armed forces and society in general. This constituted a decisive step towards the later feudal arrangements in western Europe at the height of the Middle Ages.

The final section of the thesis is an analysis of the impacts of these military and organisational changes on contemporary society, with a particular focus on Frankish social elites, which were of very great importance in subsequent developments.

This work has been based primarily upon a number of sources of Frankish provenance, (such as Gregory of Tours' Histories, Fredegar's Chronicle, the records of important church analysts, and, for the 8th and 9th centuries, the Capitularia of the Frankish kings). From the entire list of references, however, the most important were undoubtedly studies of P. Contamine, B. Bachrach, A. Barbero and D. Hagermann.