

- invented and established by the Normans, which were of all nations the most quarrelsome and most fallacious in contriving of controversies and suits." Cf. *ibid.*, chaps. 2 and 3. See also *Administration Civil and spiritual in Two Treatises* (London, 1648), I, xxxvii. It should be noted that Warr's phrase is cited in part in Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), p. 78.
28. See in particular John Lilburne, *The Just Man's Justification* (London, 1646), pp. 11-13; *A Discourse betwixt John Lilburne, close prisoner in the tower of London, and Mr. Hugh Peters* (London, 1649); *England's Birth-right Justified against all arbitrary usurpation* (London, 1645); *Regall tyrannie Discovered* (London, 1647); *England's New Chains Discovered* (London, 1648). Most of the Levellers' tracts are collected in W. Haller and G. Davies, ed., *The Levellers' Tracts, 1647-1653* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944).
29. *Regall tyrannie*, p. 86. The attribution of this tract to Lilburne is uncertain; R. Overton probably collaborated on it.
30. The best known of the Digger texts, to which Foucault may be referring here, are the anonymous manifesto *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1648) and *More Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1649). Cf. G. Winstanley et al., *To his Excellency the Lord Fairfax and the Counsell of Warre the brotherly request of thos that are called diggers sheweth* (London, 1650); G. Winstanley, *Fire in the Bush* (London, 1650); *The Law of Freedom in a Platform, or True Magistracy Restored* (London, 1652). See also G. H. Sabine, ed., *The Works of Gerrard Winstanley, with an Appendix of Documents Relating to the Digger Movement* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1941).

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Stories about origins. - The Trojan myth. - France's heredity. - "Franco-Gallia." - Invasion, history, and public right. - National dualism. - The knowledge of the prince. - Boulainvilliers's "Etat de la France." - The clerk, the intendant, and the knowledge of the aristocracy. - A new subject of history. - History and constitution.

I AM GOING TO begin with a story that started to circulate in France at the beginning, or almost the beginning, of the Middle Ages and that was still in circulation during the Renaissance. It tells how the French are descended from the Franks, and says that the Franks themselves were Trojans who, having left Troy under the leadership of Priam's son King Francus when the city was set on fire, initially found refuge on the banks of the Danube, then in Germany on the banks of the Rhine, and finally found, or rather founded, their homeland in France. I am not interested in what this story might have meant in the Middle Ages, or in the role that might have been played by the legend of the wanderings of the Trojans and of the founding of the fatherland. I simply want to look at this issue: it is after all astonishing that this story should have been picked up and gone on circulating in an era like the Renaissance.¹ Not because of the fantastic character of the dynasties or historical facts to which it refers, but basically because this legend completely elides both Rome and Gaul. It elides the Gaul that was the enemy of Rome, the Gaul that invaded Italy

and laid siege to Rome; it also elides the Roman colony of Gaul, Caesar, and imperial Rome. And as a result, it elides an entire Roman literature, even though it was perfectly well known at this time.

I don't think we can understand why this Trojan story elides Rome unless we stop regarding this tale of origins as a tentative history that is still tangled up with old beliefs. It seems to me that, on the contrary, it is a discourse with a specific function. Its function is not so much to record the past or to speak of origins as to speak of right, to speak of power's right. Basically, the story is a lesson in public right. It circulated, I think, as a lesson in public right. And it is because it is a lesson in public right that there is no mention of Rome. But Rome is also present in a displaced form, like a double outline or a twin: Rome is there, but it is there in the way that an image is there in a mirror. To say that the Franks are, like the Romans, refugees from Troy, and that France and Rome are in some sense two branches that grow from the same trunk, is in effect to say two or three things that are, I believe, important in both political and juridical terms.

To say that the Franks are, like the Romans, fugitives from Troy means first of all that from the day that the Roman State (which was, after all, no more than a brother, or at best an older brother) vanished, the other brothers—the younger brothers—became its heirs by virtue of the right of peoples. Thanks to a sort of natural right that was recognized by all, France was the heir to the empire. And that means two things. It means first of all that the rights and powers the king of France enjoys over his subjects are inherited from those the Roman emperor enjoyed over his subjects; the sovereignty of the king of France is of the same type as the sovereignty of the Roman emperor. The king's right is a Roman right. And the legend of Troy is a way of using pictures to illustrate, a way of illustrating, the principle that was formulated in the Middle Ages, mainly by Boutillier when he said that the king of France was an emperor in his kingdom.² This is an important thesis, you know, because it is basically the historico-mythical counterpart to the way that royal power developed throughout the Middle Ages by modeling itself on the Roman imperium and

reactivating the imperial rights that were codified in the era of Justinian.

To say that France is the heir to the empire is also to say that because France is Rome's sister or cousin, France has the same rights as Rome itself. It is to say that France is not part of some universal monarchy which, after the empire, dreamed of reviving the Roman Empire. France is just as imperial as all the Roman Empire's other descendants; it is just as imperial as the German Empire, and is in no sense subordinate to any Germanic Caesar. No bond of vassalage can legitimately make it part of the Hapsburg monarchy and therefore subordinate it to the great dreams of a universal monarchy that it was promoting at this time. That is why, in these conditions, Rome has to be elided. But the Roman Gaul of Caesar, the Gaul that was colonized, also had to be elided, as it might suggest that Gaul and the heirs of the Gauls had once been, or might be, subordinate to an empire. The Frankish invasions, which broke from within the continuity with the Roman Empire, also had to be elided. The internal continuity that existed between the Roman imperium and the French monarchy precluded disruptive invasions. But France's nonsubordination to the empire and to the empire's heirs (and especially the universal monarchy of the Hapsburgs) also implied that France's subordination to ancient Rome had to disappear. Roman Gaul therefore had to disappear. France, in other words, had to be an other Rome—"other" in the sense of being independent of Rome while still remaining Rome. The king's absolutism was therefore as valid in France as it had been in Rome. That, broadly speaking, was the function of the lessons in public right that we can find in the reactivation, or the perpetuation, of this Trojan mythology until late in the Renaissance, or in other words during a period which was very familiar with Roman texts about Gaul, about Roman Gaul.

It is sometimes said it was the Wars of Religion that allowed these old mythologies (which were, in my view, a lesson in public right) to be swept away and that first introduced the theme of what Augustin Thierry would later call "national duality,"³ or the theme, if

you like, of the two hostile groups that constitute the permanent substratum of the State. I do not think this is entirely accurate. Those who say that it was the Wars of Religion that made it possible to think in terms of a national duality are referring to François Hotman's text *Franco-Gallia*, which was published in 1573.¹ And the title does seem to indicate that the author was thinking in terms of some sort of national duality. In this text, Hotman in fact takes up the Germanic thesis that was circulating in the Hapsburg Empire at the time and which was, basically, the equivalent to, the counterpart to, or the homologue of the Trojan thesis that was circulating in France. The Germanic thesis, which had been formulated on a number of occasions, and notably by someone called Beatus Rhenanus, states: "We Germans are not Romans; we are Germanic. But because of the imperial form we have inherited, we are Rome's natural and legal heirs. Now the Franks who invaded Gaul were, like us, Germans. When they invaded Gaul, they certainly left their native Germany, but on the one hand and to the extent that they were German, they remained German. They therefore remained within our imperium; and as, on the other hand, they invaded and occupied Gaul, and defeated the Gauls, they quite naturally exercised imperium or imperial power over the land they had conquered and colonized, and, being German, they were quite entitled to do so. Gaul, or the land of the Gauls that is now France, is therefore a subordinate part of the universal monarchy of the Hapsburgs for two reasons: right of conquest and victory, and the Germanic origins of the Franks."⁵

This, curiously but up to a point naturally, is the thesis that François Hotman picks up and reintroduces into France in 1573. From that point on, and until at least the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was to enjoy considerable popularity. Hotman takes up the German thesis and says: "The Franks who, at some point, did invade Gaul and establish a new monarchy, are not Trojans, but Germans. They defeated the Romans and drove them out." This is an almost literal reproduction of Rhenanus's Germanic thesis. I say "almost" because there is after all a difference, and it is of fundamental importance:

Hotman does not say that the Franks defeated the Gauls; he says that they defeated the Romans.⁶

Hotman's thesis is certainly very important because it introduces, at much the same time that we see it appearing in England, the basic theme of the invasion (which is both the cross the jurists have to bear and the king's nightmare) that results in the death of some States and the birth of others. All the juridico-political debates will revolve around this theme. Henceforth, and given this basic discontinuity, it is obvious that it is no longer possible to recite a lesson in public right whose function is to guarantee the uninterrupted nature of the genealogy of kings and their power. From now on, the great problem in public right will be the problem of what Étienne Pasquier, who was one of Hotman's followers, calls "the other succession,"⁷ or in other words: What happens when one State succeeds another? What happens—and what becomes of public right and the power of kings—when States do not succeed one another as [a result of] a sort of continuity that nothing interrupts, but because they are born, go through a phase of might, then fall into decadence, and finally vanish completely? Hotman certainly raises the problem of the two foreign nations that exist within the State*—but I do not think that the problem he raises is any different, or very different, from that of the cyclical nature and precarious existence of States. And besides, in general terms, no author writing at the time of the Wars of Religion accepted the idea that there was a duality—of race, origins, or nations—within the monarchy. It was impossible because, on the one hand, the supporters of a single religion—who obviously believed in the principle of "one faith, one law, one king"—could not at the same time demand religious unity and accept that there was a duality within the nation; on the other hand, the thesis of those who were arguing the case for religious choice or freedom of conscience was acceptable only if they said, "Neither freedom of consciousness, nor the possibility of religious choice, nor even the existence of two re-

*The manuscript has "the problem of the two foreign nations that existed in France."

ligions within the body of a nation can in any circumstances compromise the unity of the State." So no matter whether one adopted the thesis of religious unity or supported the possibility of freedom of consciousness, the thesis of the unity of the State was reinforced throughout the Wars of Religion.

When Hotman told his story, he was saying something very different. It was a way of outlining a juridical model of government, as opposed to the Roman absolutism that the French monarchy wanted to reconstruct. The story of the Germanic origins of the invasion is a way of saying: "No, it is not true, the king of France does not have the right to exercise a Roman-style imperium over his people." Hotman's problem is therefore not the disjunction between two heterogeneous elements within the people; it is the problem of how to place internal restrictions on monarchic power.⁸ Hence the way he tells the story when he says: "The Gauls and the Germans were in fact originally fraternal peoples. They settled in two neighboring regions, on either side of the Rhine. When the Germans entered Gaul, they were in no sense foreign invaders. They were in fact almost going home, or at least to visit their brothers.⁹ What did 'foreigner' mean to the Gauls? The foreigners were the Romans, who imposed, through invasion and war (the war described by Caesar),¹⁰ a political regime: that of absolutism. Those foreigners established something foreign in Gaul: the Roman imperium. The Gauls resisted for centuries, but in ways that brought them little success. In the fourth or fifth century, their Germanic brothers began to wage a war, and it was a war of liberation fought on behalf of their Gaulish brothers. The Germans therefore did not come as invaders, but as a fraternal people which was helping a brother people to free itself from its invaders, and it was the Romans who were the invaders."¹¹ So the Romans were driven out and the Gauls were set free. They and their Germanic brothers make up a single nation, whose constitution and basic laws—as the jurists of the period were beginning to put it—were the basic laws of Germanic society. This meant that the people who regularly gathered on the Champ de Mars and in the May assemblies was sovereign. It meant the sovereignty of a people which elects its king as it pleases

and deposes him when necessary; the sovereignty of a people who is ruled only by magistrates whose functions are temporary and who are always accountable to the council. This was the Germanic constitution that the king subsequently violated in order to construct the absolutism to which the French monarchy of the sixteenth century bore witness.¹² It is true that the story told by Hotman is not designed to establish a duality. On the contrary, it is intended to establish very strong ties of Germanic-French unity, Franco-Gaulish or Franco-Gallic unity, as he puts it. He is attempting to establish a profound unity and at the same time to explain, in the form of a sort of story, how the present reproduces the past. It is clear that the Roman invaders Hotman is talking about are the equivalent, transposed into the past, of the Rome of the pope and his clergy. The fraternal German liberators are obviously the reformed religion from across the Rhine; and the unity of the kingdom and the sovereignty of the people is the political plan for a constitutional monarchy that was supported by many of the Protestant circles of the day.

Hotman's discourse is important because it established what would doubtless become a definitive link between the project of restricting royal absolutism and the rediscovery, in the past, of a certain specific historical model which at some moment established the reciprocal rights of the king and his people, and which was subsequently forgotten and violated. In the sixteenth century a connection began to be established among restricting the right of the monarchy, reconstructing a past model, and reviving a basic but forgotten constitution; these are, I think, the things that are brought together in Hotman's discourse, and not a dualism. The Germanic thesis was originally Protestant in origin. But it soon began to circulate not only in Protestant circles but also in Catholic circles, when (under the reign of Henri III and especially at the time of Henri IV's conquest of power) Catholics suddenly turned against royal absolutism and when it was in their interest to restrict royal power. Although this pro-Germanic thesis is Protestant in origin, you will therefore also find it in the work of Catholic historians such as Jean du Tillet, Jean de Serres, and so on.¹³ From the end of the first third of the seventeenth century,

this thesis will be the object of an attempt, if not to disqualify it, at least to get around this Germanic origin, the Germanic element, which monarchic power found unacceptable for two reasons. It was unacceptable in terms of the exercise of power and public right, and the European policy of Richelieu and Louis XIV also made it unacceptable.

A number of ways were used to get around the idea that France had been founded by Germans. Two were of particular importance. One was a sort of return to the Trojan myth, which was reactivated in the mid-seventeenth century. More important still was the foundation and introduction of an absolutely new thesis, which was to be of fundamental importance. This is the theme of what I would call radical "Gallo-centrism." The Gauls, whom Hotman had described as important partners in this prehistory of the French monarchy, were in a sense an inert matter or substratum: they were people who had been defeated and occupied, and who had to be liberated by outsiders. But from the seventeenth century onward, these Gauls became the principle or, so to speak, the motor of history. Thanks to a sort of inversion of polarities and values, the Gauls became the first or fundamental element, and the Germans came to be described as a mere extension of the Gauls. The Germans are no more than an episode in the history of the Gauls. This is the thesis that you find in people such as Audigier¹⁴ and Tarault.¹⁵ Audigier, for example, states that the Gauls were the fathers of all the peoples of Europe. A certain king of Gaul called Ambigate found himself with a nation so rich, so wealthy, so plethoric, and with such a surplus population that he had to liquidate part of it. He therefore sent one of his nephews to Italy and another, one Sigovège, to Germany. This was the beginning of a sort of expansion and colonization, and the French nation became the womb of all the other peoples of Europe (and even peoples outside Europe). And so, says Audigier, the French nation had "the same origins as all that was most terrible, most courageous, and most glorious, in other words the Vandals, the Goths, the Burgundians, the English, the Herules, the Silingals, the Huns, the Gepidae, the Alans,

the Quadi, the Hurons, the Ruffai, the Thuringians, the Lombards, the Turks, the Tatars, the Persians, and even the Normans."¹⁶

So the Franks who invaded Gaul in the fourth and fifth centuries* were simply the offspring a sort of primitive Gaul; they were simply Gauls who were eager to see their own country once more. For them, liberating a Gaul that had been enslaved or liberating their defeated brothers was not the issue. What was at issue was a deep nostalgia, and also a desire to enjoy a flourishing Gallo-Roman civilization. The cousins, or the prodigal sons, were going home. But when they went home, the certainty did not sweep away the Roman right that had been implanted in Gaul; on the contrary, they reabsorbed it. They reabsorbed Roman Gaul—or allowed themselves to be reabsorbed into it. The conversion of Clovis proves that the ancient Gauls, who had become Germans and Franks, readopted the values and the political and religious system of the Roman Empire. And if, at the time of their return, the Franks did have to fight, it was not against the Gauls or even the Romans (whose values they were absorbing); it was against the Burgundians and the Goths (who, being Aryans, were heretics), or against the Saracen infidels. That is whom they waged war on. And in order to reward the warriors who had fought the Goths, Burgundians, and Saracens, their kings granted them fiefs. The origins of what, at this time, had yet to be called feudalism can thus be traced back to a war.

This fable made it possible to assert the native character of the Gaulish population. It also made it possible to assert that Gaul had natural frontiers—those described by Caesar.¹⁷ Establishing those same frontiers was also the political objective of the foreign policy of Richelieu and Louis XIV. The purpose of this tale was also not only to erase all racial differences, but above all to erase any heterogeneity between Germanic right and Roman right. It had to be demonstrated that the Germans had renounced their own right in order to adopt

*The manuscript has "fifth and sixth centuries," which corresponds to the actual date of the conquest.

the juridico-political system of the Romans. And finally, the fiefs and prerogatives of the nobility had to be shown to derive not from the basic or archaic rights of that same nobility, but simply from the will of a king whose power and absolutism predated the organization of feudalism itself. The point of all this was, and this is my last point, to lay a French claim to the universal monarchy. If Gaul was what Tacitus called the *vagina nationum* (he was in fact referring mainly to Germany),¹⁸ and if Gaul was indeed the womb of all nations, then to whom should the universal monarchy revert, if not to the monarch who had inherited the land of France?

There are obviously many variations on this schema, but I will not go into them. The reason why I have told this rather long story is that I wanted to relate it to what was happening in England at the same time. There is at least one point in common, and one basic difference, between what was being said in England about the origins and foundations of the English monarchy, and what was being said in the mid-seventeenth century about the foundations of the French monarchy. The common feature—and I think it is important—is that invasion, with its forms, motifs, and effects, became a historical problem to the extent that it involved an important politico-juridical issue. It is up to the invasion to define the nature, rights, and limits of monarchical power, it is up to the history of the invasion to define the role of royal councils, assemblies, and sovereign courts. It is up to the invasion to define the respective roles of the nobility, the rights of the nobility, royal councils, and the people, as opposed to the king. In short, the invasion is being asked to define the very principles of public right.

At the very time when Grotius, Pufendorf, and Hobbes were trying to ground the rules that constitute the just State in natural law, a wide-ranging contrapuntal historical investigation was getting under way into the origins and validity of the rights that were actually being exercised—and it was looking at a historical event or, if you like, at a slice of history that was, in both juridical and political terms, the most sensitive region in the entire history of France. I refer, roughly speaking, to the period between Merovius and Charlemagne, or be-

tween the fifth and the ninth centuries. It has always been said (ever since the seventeenth century) that this is the least-known period. Least known? Perhaps. But definitely the most widely studied. Be that as it may, new figures, new texts, and new problems now—and, I think, for the first time—begin to appear on the horizon of the history of France, whose purpose had until now been to establish the royal imperium's continuity of power, and which spoke only of Trojans and Franks. The new figures were Merovius, Clovis, Charles Martel, Charlemagne, and Pipin; the new texts were by Gregory of Tours¹⁹ and Charlemagne's cartularies. New customs appear: the Champ de Mars, the May gatherings, the ritual of carrying kings shoulder-high, and so on. Events occur: the baptism of Clovis, the Battle of Poitiers, the coronation of Charlemagne; we also have symbolic anecdotes such as the story of the vase of Soissons, in which we see King Clovis renouncing his claim, acknowledging the rights of his warriors, and then taking his revenge later.

All this gives us a new historical landscape, and a new system of reference which can be understood only to the extent that there is a very close correlation between this new material and political discussions about public right. History and public right in fact go hand in hand. There is a strict correlation between the problems posed by public right and the delineation of the historical field—and "history and public right" will in fact remain a set phrase until the end of the eighteenth century. If you look at how history, and the pedagogy of history, was actually taught until well after the eighteenth century and even in the twentieth, you will find that it is public right that you are being told about. I don't know what school textbooks look like these days, but it is not so long ago that the history of France began with the history of the Gauls. And the expression "our ancestors the Gauls" (which makes us laugh because it was taught to Algerians and Africans) had a very specific meaning. To say "our ancestors the Gauls" was, basically, to formulate a proposition that meant something in the theory of constitutional law and in the problems raised by public right. Detailed accounts of the Battle of Poitiers also had a very specific meaning to the extent that it was precisely

not the war between the Franks and the Gauls, but the war between the Franks and the Gauls and invaders of a different race and religion that allowed the origins of feudalism to be traced back to something other than an internal conflict between Franks and Gauls. And the story of the Soissons vase—which, I think, crops up in all the history books and which is still taught today—was certainly studied very seriously throughout the whole of the seventeenth century. The story of the Soissons vase tells the story of a problem in constitutional law: when wealth was first distributed, what were the rights of the king, and what were the rights of his warriors, and possibly of the nobility (in the sense that the nobility were originally warriors)? We thought that we were learning history; but in the nineteenth century, and even the twentieth, history books were in fact textbooks on public right. We were learning about public right and constitutional law by looking at pictures from history.

So, first point: the appearance in France of this new historical field, which is quite similar (in terms of its material) to what was happening in England at the time when the theme of the invasion was being reactivated in discussions of the problem of the monarchy. There is, however, one basic difference between England and France. In England, the Conquest and the Norman/Saxon racial duality was history's essential point of articulation, whereas in France there was, until the end of the seventeenth century, no heterogeneity within the body of the nation. The whole system of a fabled kinship between the Gauls and the Trojans, the Gauls and the Germans, and then the Gauls and the Romans, and so on, made it possible to guarantee both a continuous transmission of power and the unproblematic homogeneity of the body of the nation. Now it is precisely that homogeneity that was shattered at the end of the seventeenth century, not by the supplementary or differential theoretical, or theoretico-mythological, edifice I was talking about just now, but by a discourse which is, I believe, absolutely new in terms of its functions, its objects, and its effects.

The introduction of the theme of national dualism was not a reflection or expression of either the civil or social wars, the religious

struggles of the Renaissance, or the conflicts of the Fronde. It was a conflict, an apparently lateral problem or something that has usually—and, I think, wrongly, as you will see—been described as a rearguard action, and it made it possible to conceptualize two things that had not previously been inscribed in either history or public right. One was the problem of whether or not the war between hostile groups really does constitute the substructure of the State; the other was the problem of whether political power can be regarded both as a product of that war and, up to a point, its referee, or whether it is usually a tool, the beneficiary of, and the destabilizing, partisan element in that war. This is a specific and limited problem, but it is, I think, also an essential problem because it leads to the refutation of the implicit thesis that the social body is homogeneous (which was so widely accepted that it did not have to be formulated). How? Well, because it raises what I would call a problem in political pedagogy: What must the prince know, where and from whom must he acquire his knowledge, and who is qualified to constitute the knowledge of the prince? To be more specific, this was quite simply the issue of how the duc de Bourgogne should be educated. As you know, this raised innumerable problems for a whole host of reasons (I am thinking not just of his elementary education, as he was already an adult at the time of the events I will be talking about). What was at stake was the body of information about the State, the government, and the country needed by the man who would, in a few years or after the death of Louis XIV, be called upon to lead that State, that government, and that country. We are therefore not talking about *Télémaque*,²⁰ but about the enormous report on the state of France that Louis XIV ordered his administration and his intendants or stewards to produce for his heir and grandson, the duc de Bourgogne. It was a survey of France (a general study of the situation of the economy, institutions, and customs of France), and it was intended to constitute the knowledge of the king, or the knowledge that would allow him to rule.

So Louis XIV asked his intendants for these reports. Within a few months, they were assembled and ready. The duc de Bourgogne's

entourage—an entourage made up of the very kernel of the nobiliary opposition, or of nobles who were critical of Louis XIV's regime because it had eroded their economic might and political power—received this report and appointed someone called Boulainvilliers to present it to the duc de Bourgogne. Because it was so enormous, they commissioned him to abridge it, and to explain or interpret it: to recode it, if you like. Boulainvilliers filleted or abridged these enormous reports, and summarized them in two large volumes. Finally, he wrote a preface and added a number of critical comments and a discourse: this was an essential complement to the enormous administrative task of providing a description and analysis of the State. The discourse is rather curious, as Boulainvilliers tried to shed light on the current state of France by writing an essay on the ancient governments of France down to the time of Hugh Capet.²¹

Boulainvilliers's text is an attempt to put forward theses favorable to the nobility—and his later works also deal with the same problem.²² He criticizes the sale of crown offices, which worked to the disadvantage of the impoverished nobility; he protests against the fact that the nobility has been dispossessed of its right of jurisdiction, and of the profits that went with it; he insists that the nobility has a right to sit in the Conseil du roi; he is critical of the role played by the intendants in the administration of the provinces. But the most important feature of Boulainvilliers's text, and of this recoding of the reports [presented] to the king, is the protest against the fact that the knowledge given to the king, and then to the prince, is a knowledge manufactured by the administrative machine itself. It is a protest against the fact that the king's knowledge of his subjects has been completely colonized, occupied, prescribed, and defined by the State's knowledge about the State. The problem is as follows: Must the king's knowledge of his kingdom and his subjects be isomorphic with the State's knowledge of the State? Must the bureaucratic, fiscal, economic, administrative, and juridical expertise that is required to run the monarchy be reinjected into the prince by all the information he is being given, and which will allow him to govern? Basically, the problem is as follows: Because the prince exercises his arbitrary and

unrestricted will over an administration that is completely in his hands and completely at his disposal, the administration, or the great administrative apparatus the king had given the monarchy, is in a sense welded to to the prince himself: they are one and the same. That is why it is impossible to resist him. But the prince (and the prince's power means that he and the administration are one and the same) must, whether he likes it or not, be persuaded to become part of the same body as his administration; he must be welded to it by the knowledge that the administration retransmits to him, but this time from above. The administration allows the king to rule the country at will, and subject to no restrictions. And conversely, the administration rules the king thanks to the quality and nature of the knowledge it forces upon him.

I think that the target of Boulainvilliers and those around him at this time—and the target of those who came after him in the mid-seventeenth century (like the comte de Buat-Nançay²³) or Montlosier²⁴ (whose problem was much more complicated because he was writing, in the early Restoration period, against the imperial administration)—the real target of all the historians connected to the nobiliary reaction is the mechanism of power-knowledge that had bound the administrative apparatus to State absolutism since the seventeenth century. I think it is as though a nobility that had been impoverished and to some extent excluded from the exercise of power had established as the prime goal of its offensive, of its counteroffensive, not so much the direct and immediate reconquest of its powers, and not the recuperation of its wealth (which was no doubt now forever beyond its reach), as an important link in the system of power that the nobility had always overlooked, even at the time when it was at the height of its might. The strategic position that the nobility overlooked had been physically occupied by the church, by clerks and magistrates, and then by the bourgeoisie, the administrators, and even the financiers who collected indirect taxes. The position that had to be reoccupied as a priority, or the strategic objective Boulainvilliers now set the nobility, and the precondition for any possible revenge, was not what was, in the vocabulary of the court, termed "the favor

of the king." What had to be regained and occupied was now the king's knowledge. It was the knowledge of the king, or a certain knowledge shared by king and nobility: an implicit law, a mutual commitment between the king and his aristocracy. What had to be done was to reawaken both the nobles' memory, which had become carelessly forgetful, and the monarch's memories, which had been carefully—and perhaps wickedly—buried, so as to reconstitute the legitimate knowledge of the king, which would provide legitimate foundations for a legitimate government. What is required is therefore a counterknowledge, a whole program of work that will take the form of absolutely new historical research. I say counterknowledge because Boulainvilliers and his successors initially define this new knowledge and these new methods in negative terms by contrasting it with two scholarly knowledges, with the two knowledges that are the two faces (and perhaps also the two phases) of administrative knowledge. At this time, the great enemy of the new knowledge the nobility wishes to use to get a new grip on the knowledge of the king, the knowledge that has to be got rid of, is juridical knowledge. It is the knowledge of the court, of the prosecutor, the juriconsult, and the clerk of the court or *greffier*. For the nobility, this was indeed a hateful knowledge, for this was the knowledge that had tricked them, that had dispossessed them by using arguments they did not understand, that had stripped them, without their being able to realize it, of their rights of jurisdiction and then of their very possessions. But it was also a hateful knowledge because it was in a sense a circular knowledge which derived knowledge from knowledge. When the king consulted *greffiers* and juriconsults about his rights, what answer could he obtain, if not a knowledge established from the point of view of the judges and prosecutors he himself had created? The king therefore quite naturally finds that it contains eulogies to his own power (though they may also conceal the subtle ways in which power has been usurped by the prosecutors and *greffiers*). At all events, a circular knowledge. A knowledge in which the king will encounter only the image of his own absolutism, which reflects back at him, in the form

of right, all the usurpations the king has committed [against] his nobility.

The nobility wants to use another form of knowledge against the knowledge of the *greffier*: history. A history whose nature will allow it to get outside right, to get behind right and to slip into its interstices. Only, this history will be unlike any previous history, and it will not be a pictorial or dramatized account of the development of public right. On the contrary, it will attempt to attack public right at the roots, to reinsert the institutions of public right into an older network of deeper, more solemn, and more essential commitments. It will undermine the knowledge of the *greffier*, in which the king finds nothing but eulogies to his own absolutism (or in other words, the praise of Rome again), by tapping historic reserves of equity. Whatever the history of right may say, commitments that were not written down, fidelities that were never recorded in words or texts, have to be revived. Theses that have been forgotten have to be reactivated, and the noble blood that has been spilled on behalf of the king has to be remembered. It has to be demonstrated that the very edifice of right—even its most valid institutions, its most explicit and widely recognized ordinances—is the product of a whole series of iniquities, injustices, abuses, dispossessions, betrayals, and infidelities committed by royal power, which reneged on its commitment to the nobility, and by the *robins* or legal small fry who usurped both the power of the nobility and, perhaps without really realizing it, royal power.

The history of right will therefore be a denunciation of betrayals, and of all the betrayals that were born of the betrayals. The goal of this history, whose very form is a challenge to the knowledge of the clerks and judges, is to make the prince see usurpations of which he is unaware and to restore to him a strength, and the memory of bonds, even though it was in his interest to forget them and to let them be forgotten. History will be the weapon of a nobility that has been betrayed and humiliated, and it will use it against the knowledge of the clerks, which always explains contemporary events in terms of contemporary events, power in terms of power, and the letter of the

law in terms of the will of the king and vice versa. The form of this history will be profoundly antijudicial, and, going beyond what has been written down, it will decipher and recall what lies beneath everything that has fallen into abeyance, and denounce the blatant hostility concealed by this knowledge. That is the first great adversary of the historical knowledge the nobility wants to create so as to reoccupy the knowledge of the king.

The other great adversary is the knowledge not of the judge or the clerk, but of the intendant: not *le greffe* (the clerk of the court's office) but *le bureau* (the office of the intendant). This too is hateful knowledge. And for symmetrical reasons, as it was the knowledge of the intendants that allowed them to eat into the wealth and power of the nobles. This too is a knowledge that can dazzle the king and hoodwink him, as it is thanks to this knowledge that the king can impose his might, command obedience, and ensure that taxes are collected. This is an administrative knowledge, and above all a quantitative economic knowledge: knowledge of actual or potential wealth, knowledge of tolerable levels of taxation and of useful taxes. The nobility wants to use another form of understanding against the knowledge of the intendants and *le bureau*: history. This time, however, it is a history of wealth and not an economic history. This is a history of the displacement of wealth, of exactions, theft, sleight of hand, embezzlement, impoverishment, and ruin. This, then, is a history that digs beneath the problem of the production of wealth so as to demonstrate that it was ruination, debt, and abusive accumulations that created a certain state of wealth that is, ultimately, no more than a combination of crooked deals done by a king who was aided and abetted by the bourgeoisie. The analysis of wealth will, then, be challenged by a history of how the nobles were ruined by endless wars, a history of how the church tricked them into giving it gifts of land and money, a history of how the bourgeoisie got the nobility into debt, and a history of how royal tax-gatherers ate into the income of the nobles.

The two great discourses that the history of the nobility is trying to challenge—that of the courts and that of *le bureau*—do not share

the same chronology. The struggle against juridical knowledge was probably at its height, or more active and more intense, in Boulainvilliers's day, or in other words, between the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries; the struggle against economic knowledge was probably much more violent in the mid-eighteenth century, or at the time of the Physiocrats (Physiocracy was *Buat-Nançay's* great adversary).²⁵ Whether it is the knowledge of intendants, of *le bureau*, economic knowledge, the knowledge of clerks and courts, what is at issue is the knowledge that is constituted as the State talks to itself, and which has been replaced by another form of knowledge. Its general profile is that of history. The history of what?

Up to this point, history had never been anything more than the history of power as told by power itself, or the history of power that power had made people tell: it was the history of power, as recounted by power. The history that the nobility now begins to use against the State's discourse about the State, and power's discourse about power, is a discourse that will, I believe, destroy the very workings of historical knowledge. It is at this point, I think, that we see the breakdown—and this is important—of both the close relationship between the narrative of history on the one hand and, on the other hand, the exercise of power, its ritual reinforcement and the picture-book formulation of public right. With Boulainvilliers and the reactionary nobility of the late eighteenth century, a new subject of history appears. This means two things. On the one hand, there is a new speaking subject: someone else begins to speak in history, to recount history; someone else begins to say "I" and "we" as he recounts history; someone else begins to tell the story of his own history; someone else begins to reorganize the past, events, rights, injustices, defeats, and victories around himself and his own destiny. The subject who speaks in history is therefore displaced, but the subject of history is also displaced in the sense that the very object of the narrative is modified: its subject, in the sense of its theme, or object, if you like. The modification of the first, earlier or deeper element now allows rights, institutions, the monarchy, and even the land itself to be de-

fined in relation to this new subject. This subject talks about events that occur beneath the State, that ignore right, and that are older and more profound than institutions.

So what is this new subject of history, which is both the subject that speaks in the historical narrative and what the historical narrative is talking about, this new subject that appears when we get away from the State's juridical or administrative discourse about the State? It is what a historian of the period calls a "society." A society, but in the sense of an association, group, or body of individuals governed by a statute, a society made up of a certain number of individuals, and which has its own manners, customs, and even its own law. The something that begins to speak in history, that speaks of history, and of which history will speak, is what the vocabulary of the day called a "nation."

At this time, the nation is by no means something that is defined by its territorial unity, a definite political morphology, or its systematic subordination to some imperium. The nation has no frontiers, no definite system of power, and no State. The nation circulates behind frontiers and institutions. The nation, or rather "nations," or in other words the collections, societies, groupings of individuals who share a status, mores, customs, and a certain particular law—in the sense of regulatory statutes rather than Statist laws. History will be about this, about these elements. And it is those elements that will begin to speak: it is the nation that begins to speak. The nobility is one nation, as distinct from the many other nations that circulate within the State and come into conflict with one another. It is this notion, this concept of the nation, that will give rise to the famous revolutionary problem of the nation; it will, of course, give rise to the basic concepts of nineteenth-century nationalism. It will also give rise to the notion of race. And, finally, it will give rise to the notion of class.

Together with this new subject of history—a subject that speaks in a history and a subject of which history speaks—we also have the appearance of a new domain of objects, a new frame of reference, a whole field of processes that had previously been not just obscure, but totally neglected. All the obscure processes that go on at the level

where groups come into conflict beneath the State and through the law rise to the surface and become history's primary thematic. This is the dark history of alliances, of group rivalries and of interests that are masked or betrayed; the history of the usurpation of rights, of the displacement of fortunes; the history of fidelities and betrayals, the history of expenditure, exactions, debts, trickery, and of things that have been forgotten, and of stupidity. This is also a knowledge whose methodology is not the ritual reactivation of the acts that founded power, but the systematic interpretation of its evil intentions and the recollection of everything that it has systematically forgotten. Its method is the perpetual denunciation of the evil that has been done in history. This is no longer the glorious history of power; it is the history of its lower depths, its wickedness, and its betrayals.

This new discourse (which has, then, a new subject and a new frame of reference) inevitably brings with it what might be called a new pathos, and it is completely different from the great ceremonial ritual that still obscurely accompanied the discourse of history when it was telling those stories about Trojans, Germans, and so on. History no longer has the ceremonial character of something that reinforces power, but a new pathos will mark with its splendor a school of thought that will, broadly speaking, become French right-wing thought. What I mean by this is, first, an almost erotic passion for historical knowledge; second, the systematic perversion of interpretive understanding; third, relentless denunciations; fourth, the articulation of history around something resembling a plot, an attack on the State, a coup d'état or an assault on the State or against the State.

What I have been trying to show you is not exactly what is known as "the history of ideas." I have not so much been trying to show you how the nobility used historical discourse to express either its demands or its misfortunes, as to show how a certain instrument of struggle was actually forged in the struggles that took place around the workings of power—struggles within power and against power. That instrument is a knowledge, a new (or at least partly new) knowledge: the new form of history. The recall of history in this form is basically, I think, the wedge that the nobility will try to drive

between the knowledge of the sovereign and the expertise of the administration, and it will do so in order to disconnect the absolute will of the sovereign from the absolute docility of his administration. It is not because they are odes to the freedoms of old that the discourse of history, the old story about Gauls and Germans, or the long tale of Clovis and Charlemagne, become instruments in the struggle against absolutism; it is because they disconnect administrative power-knowledge. That is why this type of discourse—which was originally nobiliary and reactionary—will begin to circulate, with many modifications and many conflicts over its form, precisely whenever a political group wants, for one reason or another, to attack the hinge that connects power to knowledge in the workings of the absolute State of the administrative monarchy. And that is why you quite naturally find this type of discourse (and even its formulations) on both what might be called the Right and the Left, in both the nobiliary reaction and in texts produced by revolutionaries before or after 1789. Let me just quote you one text about an unjust king, about the king of wickedness and betrayals: "What punishment"—at this point, the author is addressing Louis XVI—"do you think befits such a barbarous man, this wretched heir to a heap of plunder? Do you think that God's law does not apply to you? Or are you a man for whom everything must be reduced to your glory and subordinated to your satisfaction? And who are you? For if you are not a God, you are a monster!" This was not written by Marat, but by Buat-Nançay, who was writing to Louis XVI in 1778.²⁶ Ten years later, this would be repeated word for word by the revolutionaries.

You understand why, although this new type of historical knowledge, this new type of discourse, actually did play this important political role and did act as the hinge between the administrative monarchy's power and its knowledge, royal power had to try to bring it under its control. Just as this discourse circulated from Right to Left, from the nobiliary reaction to a bourgeois revolutionary project, so royal power tried to appropriate or control it. And so, from 1760 onward, we begin to see royal power—and this proves the political value, the vital political issue that is at stake in this historical knowl-

edge—trying to organize this historical knowledge by, so to speak, reintroducing it into the play between knowledge and power, between administrative power and the expertise to which it gave rise. From 1760 onward we see the emergence of institutions that were roughly equivalent to a ministry of history. The process began in about 1760, with the establishment of a *Bibliothèque de finances*, which had to supply His Majesty's ministers with the reports, information, and clarifications they needed. In 1763, a *Dépôt de chartes* was established for those who wanted to study the history and public right of France. In 1781, the two institutions were merged to form a *Bibliothèque de législation*—note the terms carefully—*d'administration, histoire et droit public*. A slightly later text states that this library is intended for His Majesty's ministers, those who are responsible for departments of the general administration, and for the scholars and jurisconsults who had been appointed by the chancellor or keeper of the seals and who were paid at His Majesty's expense to write books and other work that were of use to legislators, historians, and the public.²⁷

This ministry of history had an official in charge of it. His name was Jacob-Nicolas Moreau, and it was he, together with a few collaborators, who assembled the huge collection of medieval and pre-medieval documents on which historians such as Augustin Thierry and Guizot would work in the early nineteenth century.²⁸ At the time of its creation at least, the meaning of this institution—of this ministry of history—is quite clear: At the time when the political confrontations of the eighteenth century centered on a historical discourse, or, more specifically, at a deeper level, at the time when historical knowledge was indeed a weapon in the struggle against the absolute monarchy's administrative-style knowledge, the monarchy wanted, so to speak, to recolonize that knowledge. The creation of the ministry of history was, if you like, a concession, a first tacit acceptance on the part of the king that there did indeed exist historical material that might, perhaps, reveal the basic laws of the kingdom. It was the first tacit acceptance of a sort of constitution, ten years before the Estates General. So, a first concession on the part of royal power, a first tacit acceptance that something might slip between its power and its ad-

ministration: the constitution, basic laws, the representation of the people, and so on. But at the same time, historical knowledge was reinstalled, in an authoritarian way, in the very place where attempts had been made to use it against absolutism. That knowledge was a weapon in the struggle to reoccupy the knowledge of the prince, and it was placed between his power and the expertise and workings of the administration. A ministry of history was established between the prince and the administration as a way of reestablishing the link, of making history part of the workings of monarchic power and its administration. A ministry of history was created between the knowledge of the prince and the expertise of his administration, and in order to establish, between the king and his administration, in a controlled way, the uninterrupted tradition of the monarchy.

That is more or less what I wanted to say to you about the establishment of this new type of historical knowledge. I will try to look later at the way in which this knowledge led to the emergence within this element of the struggle between nations, or in other words what will become the race struggle and the class struggle.

1. There are at least fifty accounts of the Trojan origins of the French, from the Pseudo-Frédégaire's *Historia Francorum* (727) to Ronsard's *Franciade* (1572). It is unclear whether Foucault is referring to this tradition as a whole, or to a specific text. The text in question may be the one referred to by A. Thierry in his *Récit du temps mérovingien, précédé de considérations sur l'histoire de France* (Paris, 1840), or in other words *Les Grandes Chroniques de Saint-Denis* (which were written in the second half of the twelfth century, published by Paulin Paris in 1836, and reprinted by J. Viard in 1920). Many of these stories can be consulted in Dom. M. Bouquet, *Recueil des historiens de Gaule et de la France* (Paris, 1739-1752), vols. 2 and 3.
2. "Know that he is an emperor in his kingdom, and that he can do all and as much as imperial right permits" (J. Boutillier, *Somme rurale, ou le Grand Coutumier général de pratiques civiles* [fourteenth century] [Bruges, 1479]). The 1611 edition of this text is cited by A. Thierry, *Considérations sur l'histoire de France*.
3. Thierry, p. 41 (1868 ed.).
4. F. Hotman, *Franco-Gallia* (Geneva, 1573) (French translation: *La Gaule françoise* [Cologne, 1574], reprinted as *La Gaule françoise* [Paris: Fayard, 1981]).
5. Cf. *Beati Rhenani Rerum Germanicarum libri tres* (Basel, 1531). The edition published in Ulm in 1693 should also be consulted; the commentary and notes added by the members of the Imperial Historical College provide a genealogy and eulogy of the "Europa corona" of the Hapsburgs (*Beati Rhenani libri tres Institutionem Rerum Historici Imperialis scopum illustratarum* [Ulm, 1693], and especially pp. 569-600. See also the commentaries appended to the Strasbourg edition: Argentatori, 1610).
6. Cf. Hotman, *Franco-Gallia*, chapter 4, "De ortu Francorum, qui Gallia occupata. eius nomen in Francia, vel Francogalliam mutarunt" (pp. 40-52 of the 1576 ed.).
7. Étienne Pasquier, *Recherches de la France*, 3 vols. (Paris 1560-1567). Pasquier studied under Hotman.
8. Cf. Hotman, *Franco-Gallia*, p. 54: "Semper reges Franci habuerunt . . . non tyrannos, aut carnefices: sed liberatis suae custodes, praefectos, tutores sibi constituerunt."
9. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
10. Julius Caesar, *Commentarii de bello gallico*; see especially books 6, 7, and 8.
11. Hotman, *Franco-Gallia*, pp. 55-62.
12. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 65f, where Hotman describes "the continuity of the powers of the council" through the various dynasties.
13. Jean du Tillet, *Les Mémoires et recherches* (Rouen, 1578); *Recueil des Roys de France* (Paris, 1580); *Remonstrance ou Advertissement à la noblesse tant du parti du Roy que des rebelles* (Paris, 1585). Jean de Serres, *Mémoires de la troisième guerre civile, et des derniers troubles de la France* (Paris, 1570); *Inventaire général de l'histoire de la France* (Paris, 1597).
14. P. Audigier, *De l'origine des François et de leur empire* (Paris, 1676).
15. J.-E. Tarault, *Annales de France, avec les alliances, généalogies, conquêtes, fondations ecclésiastiques et civiles en l'une et l'autre empire et dans les royaumes étrangers, depuis Pharamond jusqu'au roi Louis treizième* (Paris, 1635).
16. P. Audigier, *De l'origine des François*, p. 3.
17. Caesar, *De Bello gallico*, book 1, p. 1.
18. It was in fact Bishop Ragvaldson who, speaking of the question of the "fabrication of the human race" at the Council of Basel in 1434, described Scandinavia as humanity's original cradle. He based his claim on the fourth-century chronicle of Jordanis: "Hac igitur Scandza insula quasi officina gentium aut certe velut vagina nationum . . . Gotthi quondam memorantur egressi" (*De origine actibusque Getarum* in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctorum antiquissimorum*, vol. 5, part 1 (Berolini, 1882), pp. 53-258 (quotation from p. 60). A far-reaching debate on this question began after the rediscovery of Tacitus's *De origine et situ Germaniae*, which was published in 1472.

19. Grégoire de Tours, *Historia Francorum* (575-592) (Paris, 1692).
20. Fénelon, *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (Paris, 1695).
21. The reference is to *Etat de la France dans lequel on voit tout ce que regarde le gouvernement ecclésiastique, le militaire, la justice, les finances, le commerce, les manufactures, le nombre des habitants, et en général tout ce qui peut faire comprendre à fond cette monarchie; extrait des mémoires dressés par les intendants du royaume, par ordre du roy Louis XIV à la sollicitation de Monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne, père de Louis XV à présent regnant. Avec des Mémoires historiques sur l'ancien gouvernement de cette monarchie jusqu'à Hugues Capet, par M. le comte de Boulainvilliers*, 2 vols. in folio (London, 1727). In 1728, a third volume appeared under the title *Etat de la France, contenant XIV lettres sur les anciens Parlemens de France, avec l'histoire de ce royaume depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Charles VIII. On y a joint des Mémoires présentés à M. le duc d'Orléans* (London, 1728).
22. Foucault is alluding to those of Boulainvilliers's historical works that deal with French political institutions. The most important are: *Mémoire sur la noblesse du royaume de France fait par le comte de Boulainvilliers* (1719; extracts are published in A. Devyver, *Le Sang épuré. Les préjugés de race chez les gentilhommes français de l'Ancien Régime* [Brussels: Éditions de l'Université, 1973], pp. 500-48); *Mémoire pour la noblesse de France contre les Ducs et Pairs*, s. 1. (1717); *Mémoires présentés à Mgr. le duc d'Orléans, Régent de France* (The Hague/Amsterdam, 1727); *Histoire de l'ancien gouvernement de la France avec quatorze lettres historiques sur les Parlemens ou Etats Généraux*, 3 vols. (The Hague/Amsterdam, 1727) (this is an abridged and revised edition of the *Mémoires*); *Traité sur l'origine et les droits de la noblesse* (1700), in *Continuation des mémoires de littérature et d'histoire* (Paris, 1730), vol. 9, pp. 3-106 (re-published, with numerous modifications, as *Essais sur la noblesse contenant une dissertation sur son origine et abaissement, par le feu M. le Comte de Boulainvilliers, avec des notes historiques, critiques et politiques* [Amsterdam, 1732]); *Abregé chronologique de l'histoire de France*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1733); *Histoire des anciens parlemans de France ou Etats Généraux du royaume* (London, 1737).
23. The historical writings of L. G. comte de Buat-Nançay include *Les Origines ou l'Ancien Gouvernement de la France, de l'Italie, de l'Allemagne* (Paris, 1757); *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Europe*, 12 vols. (Paris, 1772); *Eléments de la politique, ou Recerche sur les vrais principes de l'économie sociale* (London, 1773); *Les Maximes du gouvernement monarchique pour servir de suite aux éléments de la politique* (London, 1778).
24. Of the many works by F. de Reynaud, comte de Montlosier, only those that relate to the problems raised by Foucault in his lecture will be mentioned here: *De la monarchie française depuis son établissement jusqu'à nos jours*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1814); *Mémoires sur la Révolution française, le Consulat l'Empire, la Restauration et les principaux événements qui l'ont suivie* (Paris, 1830). On Montlosier, see the lecture of 10 March below.
25. See L. G. comte de Buat-Nançay, *Remarques d'un Français, ou Examen impartial du livre de M. Necker sur les finances* (Geneva, 1785).
26. L. G. comte de Buat-Nançay, *Les Maximes du gouvernement monarchique*, pp. 286-87.
27. On this question, see J. N. Moreau, *Plan des travaux littéraires ordonnés par Sa Majesté pour la recherche, la collection et l'emploi des monuments d'histoire et du droit public de la monarchie française* (Paris, 1782).
28. Cf. J. N. Moreau, *Principes de morale, de politique et de droit public puisés dans l'histoire de notre monarchie, ou discours sur l'histoire de France*, 21 vols. (Paris, 1777-1789).

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Nation and nations. - The Roman conquest. - Grandeur and decadence of the Romans. - Boulainvilliers on the freedom of the Germans. - The Soissons vase. - Origins of feudalism. - Church, right, and the language of State. - Boulainvilliers: three generalizations about war: law of history and law of nature, the institutions of war, the calculation of forces. - Remarks on war.

LAST TIME, I TRIED to show you how the nobiliary reaction was bound up with, not exactly the invention of historical discourse, but rather the shattering of a preexisting historical discourse whose function had until then been to sing the praises of Rome, as Petrarch puts it.¹ Until then, historical discourse had been inferior to the State's discourse about itself; its function was to demonstrate the State's right, to establish its sovereignty, to recount its uninterrupted genealogy, and to use heroes, exploits, and dynasties to illustrate the legitimacy of public right. The disruption of the praise of Rome in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries came about in two ways. One the one hand, we have the recollection, the reactivation, of the fact of the invasion, which, as you will remember, Protestant historiography had already used as an argument against royal absolutism. The evocation of the invasion introduced a major break in time: the Germanic invasion of the fourth to fifth centuries negates right. This is the moment when public right is destroyed, the moment when the hordes flooding out of Germany put an end to Roman