THE ROYAL TOUCH

Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France

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Preface

Few books can have deserved as much as this one to be called the work of friendship; for have I not indeed the right to give the name of friends to all those generous collaborators who have been good enough to help me? Some of them showed a kindness that was all the more admirable in that it was not addressed to me personally, since they had never met me. The extremely scattered nature of the source material, and the complexity of the problems I was forced to deal with, would have made my task downright impossible if I had not had so many invaluable helpers. I blush at the thought of all the professors or colleagues in Strasbourg, Paris, London, Tournai, Bologna, Washington and elsewhere whom I have troubled with requests for information or suggestions, and who have always been ready and eager with a prompt reply. If I attempted to thank them all here one by one, I should try the reader's patience with an almost endless list of names. Moreover, they have shown such a disinterested kindness that they will not take it amiss if I do not mention them by name, at any rate in this foreword. Yet I should really not be doing my duty if I did not straight away express my special gratitude to the librarians and archivists who have been kind enough to give me their guidance among their respective collections of records: Mr Hilary Jenkinson, in the Public Record Office; MM. Henri Girard, André Martin and Henri Moncel at the Bibliothèque Nationale, M. Gaston Robert at the Rheims archives. I must likewise acknowledge forthwith the enormous amount of useful information I owe to the unwearying kindness of Miss Helen Farquhar and the Rev. E. W. Williamson. Finally, I must not omit to acknowledge the help given me by Dr Wickersheimer in avoiding innumerable errors in a territory that I felt to be thoroughly treacherous ground. It was invaluable to have the ready and almost daily help of such a particularly competent historian of medicine. I should also like to express my respectful gratitude to the Institut de France, which gave me access to its London branch and thus afforded me a ready entry into the libraries and records of England.

But our own Faculté des Lettres is the place where I have felt myself above all surrounded by lively and active sympathy, for its constitution and habits of life are specially favourable to work pursued in common. More particularly my colleagues Lucien Febvre and Charles Blondel will discover so much of their own in some of the following pages that I can thank them only by pointing out how much I have borrowed in all friendship from their ideas.[1]

It would be presumptuous, when publishing a work of this nature, to talk of a second edition. But it is at least legitimate to envisage the possibility of some further supplementary material. The principal advantage that I hope will result from my labours is to draw attention to a kind of question which has hitherto been too much neglected. Many of my readers will no doubt be shocked by my errors, and particularly by the omissions. I can only say that there are some works which would remain for ever unfinished if one were insistent upon avoiding not only unforeseen but also foreseeable gaps, without however being able to fill them in; and the work I am now making public is certainly one of this kind. I shall always be profoundly grateful if my readers will bring to my notice any errors or omissions in whatever way suits them best. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see the continuance in this way of a collaboration to which this book in its present form already owes so much.

Marlotte, 4 October 1923

As I correct the proofs and re-read these few lines of thanks, I cannot be content to leave them as they stand. There are two names missing, which I was prevented from including through a kind of sentimental modesty—perhaps unnecessarily delicate; but I can no longer let them be passed over in silence. There is no doubt at all that I should never have thought of undertaking these researches without the long-standing interchange of ideas that took place between my brother and myself. As a doctor with a passionate interest in his profession, he helped me to reflect upon the case of the royal healers. He was attracted towards comparative ethnography and religious psychology, and his lively interest in this field—his favourite among all the many subjects over which his tireless curiosity was wont to range for enjoyment—helped me to realize the interest of the great problems which I have hardly done more than touch upon here. Then I owe to my father the best part of my training as a historian. The lessons he gave me, starting in childhood and continuing all down the years, have left on me what I believe to be a permanent impression. My brother only knew this book when it was scarcely more than a rough outline. My father read it in manuscript, but did not live to see it in print. I should

be lacking in filial and fraternal affection if I did not recall the memory of these two dear ones, though in the years to come I shall only have their examples and the thought of them to guide me on my way.

28 December 1923

Note on quotations from manuscripts and on the chronology

I have indicated the sources from which my information has come by the following abbreviations:

Arch. Nat.	Archives Nationales, Paris
Bibl. Nat.	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
B.M.	British Museum, London
E.A.	Exchequer Accounts in the Public Record Office, London
P.R.O.	Public Record Office, London (material other than the Exchequer Accounts)

Unless otherwise indicated, all the dates have been given in the new style, starting the year on 1 January. English dates before 14 September 1752 and French dates before 20 December 1582 are given according to the Julian calendar.

Introduction

'Ce roi est un grand magicien.' (Montesquieu, *Lettres Persanes*, 24.)

'Le seul miracle qui est demeuré perpetuel en la religion des Chrestiens et en la maison de France . . .' (Pierre Mathieu, *Histoire de Louys XI, roi de France*, 1610, p. 472.)

On 27 April 1340 Brother Francis, of the Order of Preachers, Bishop of Bisaccia in the province of Naples, chaplain to King Robert of Anjou and for the time being ambassador of Edward III, King of England, appeared before the Doge of Venice.[1] This was just after the outbreak of the dynastic struggle between England and France, which was destined to become the Hundred Years' War. Hostilities had already begun, but the diplomatic campaign was still continuing. Everywhere in Europe the two rival monarchs were seeking alliances. Brother Francis had been commissioned by his master to seek the support of the Venetians, and request their friendly intervention with the Genoese. We still possess a summary of what he said.[2] As was only fitting, he made much of the peaceful inclinations of the English sovereign. 'His Serene Highness Prince Edward' was, so he said, ardently desirous of avoiding the slaughter of a mass of innocent Christians. He had written to 'Philip of Valois, who calls himself King of France', proposing three possible methods of deciding the great matter at issue between them without a war; first, combat in the lists, true judgment of God, either in the form of a duel between the two claimants themselves, or a contest on a larger scale between two groups of from six to eight loyal supporters; alternatively, one or other of the following trials: 'If Philip of Valois is—as he affirms—the true king of France, let him prove the fact by exposing himself to hungry lions; for lions never attack a true king; or let him perform the miraculous healing of he sick, as all other true kings are wont to do'—meaning, no doubt, the

other true kings of France. 'If he should fail, he would own himself to be unworthy of the kingdom.' But Philip—so Brother Francis affirmed—had 'in his pride' rejected these suggestions.[3]

We may well wonder if Edward III had ever really made them. The documents covering the Anglo–French negotiations have come down to us in fairly good condition, but they do not reveal a single trace of the letter summarized by the Bishop of Bisaccia. It may well be that, in his desire to dazzle the Venetians, he imagined it in its entirety. But even supposing that it really had been sent, there is no need to take the trial by lions or by miracle any more seriously than the invitation to a duel. This was a classic challenge which monarchs who observed the rules of good form were accustomed to exchange in those days before entering into a state of war; yet never within human memory had any man seen a king enter the lists. It was simply a diplomatic formality; or rather, in the present case, the airy talk of a somewhat garrulous diplomat.

Nevertheless, these idle words should give the historian cause for thought. In spite of their apparent insignificance, they throw a vivid light upon some very deep questions. Compare them with what a plenipotentiary placed in a similar position today might say. The difference reveals the gulf that separates these two outlooks; for such protestations meant for the gallery are obviously a reflection of the collective consciousness. Brother Francis did not succeed in persuading the Venetians to abandon the neutrality which they considered advantageous to their trade. Neither were they swayed by the display of Edward III's peaceful intentions, of which—so they were told—he had given proof up to the last moment, or by the more specific promises in the later part of the speech. But the so-called offers said to have been made by the king of England to his French rival were perhaps not met with as much incredulity as we might imagine. Doubtless the Venetians did not expect to see Philip of Valois enter the lions' den; but the idea, 'K'enfant de roys ne peut lyons menger' (That the royal seed no lion will devour), was familiar enough to them in all the contemporary literature of adventure. They were well aware that Edward III was not disposed to give up the kingdom of France to his rival, even if the latter were to succeed in effecting miraculous cures. But even the most sceptical in the fourteenth century were hardly inclined to doubt what was known from experience—that every true king of France—or of England, for that matter—was capable of such marvels. In Venice and throughout Italy, the reality of this strange power was believed in, and if need be, it was resorted to. A document, saved by chance from destruction, has preserved the memory of four worthy Venetians who visited France in 1307—thirty-three years before Brother Francis' mission—to obtain healing from Philip the Fair.[4]

Thus the speech of a somewhat boastful diplomat is a timely reminder that our ancestors in the Middle Ages and even into more recent times had

a picture of royalty very different from our own. In every country, in those days, kings were considered sacred, and in some countries at least they were held to possess miraculous powers of healing. For many centuries, the kings of France and the kings of England used to 'touch for scrofula'—to use the classical expression of the time. That is to say, they claimed to be able, simply by their touch, to cure people suffering from this disease, and their subjects shared a common belief in their medicinal powers. Over an almost equally long period, the kings of England used to distribute to their subjects, and even beyond the boundaries of their own State, the so-called cramp rings which, by virtue of their consecration at the hands of the king, were held to have acquired the power to restore health to the epileptic, and to assuage all kinds of muscular pain. These facts—or at least a general outline of them—are well known to all who have studied or who are interested in such matters. Yet it must be admitted that they are peculiarly repugnant to the modern mind, since they are usually passed over in silence. Historians have written massive tomes on the idea of royalty without ever mentioning them. The chief purpose of the following pages is therefore to fill in this gap.

The idea of studying these healing rites and—more generally—the concept of royalty implied by them came to me a few years ago when I was reading in the Godefroy *Ceremonial* the documents referring to the anointing of the French kings. At that time I was very far from realizing the true extent of the task I was undertaking. The magnitude and complexity of the research into which I have been drawn has far exceeded my expectations. Was I nevertheless right to persevere in the attempt? I am afraid that the people to whom I confided my intentions must have more than once considered me to be the victim of a strange and, on the whole, rather idle curiosity. What out-of-the-way exploration was I embarking on? A kindly Englishman, in fact, called it 'this curious by-path of yours'. Nevertheless this little-trodden track seemed to be worth following, and experience seemed to suggest that it was leading somewhere worth while. I found that what had so far been merely anecdotal could be turned into history. This introduction is not the place to attempt a detailed justification of my project. A book should justify itself. I simply want to indicate briefly here how I conceived my task and what leading ideas guided me.

There could be no question of considering the healing rites in isolation, leaving aside the whole group of superstitions and legends which form the 'marvellous' element in the monarchical idea. That would have condemned me in advance to see in them nothing but a ridiculous anomaly, quite unconnected with the general tendencies of the collective consciousness. I have used them as a guide-line for studying—particularly in France and England—the supernatural character that was long attributed to the royal power. Using a term the sociologists have slightly twisted from its original

meaning, one might call this the 'mystique' of royalty. Royalty! Its history dominates the whole evolution of European institutions. Almost all the peoples of Western Europe down to our own times have been ruled by kings. The political development of human societies in our countries could for a long period be summed up almost entirely in the vicissitudes of power of the great dynasties. Now in order to understand what the monarchies were in former times, and above all to understand their long-lasting hold upon the human spirit, it will not be enough to enter into the most minute details of the workings of the administrative, judicial and financial organization which they imposed upon their subjects. Neither will it be enough to conduct an abstract analysis, nor to attempt to extract from a few great theories the concepts of absolutism or divine right. We must also fathom the beliefs and fables that grew up around the princely houses. On a good many points, this folklore tells us more than any doctrinal treatise. As Claude d'Albon, 'jurisconsult and poet of Dauphiné', writing in 1575, justly observed in his treatise *De la Maiesté royalle*, 'what has caused the kings to be so venerated has been chiefly the divine virtues and powers seen in them alone, and not in other men'.[5]

Of course, Claude d'Albon did not believe that those 'divine virtues and powers' were the only *raison d'être* for the royal power. And it should scarcely be necessary to declare that I do not believe this either. Nothing would be more ridiculous than to treat kings as nothing more than sorcerers on the grounds that the kings of the past, including the greatest among them—such as St Louis, Edward I and Louis XIV—all claimed, like our 'secret healers' in the countryside today, to cure illnesses simply by their touch. They were heads of State, judges and leaders in war. The institution of monarchy served to satisfy certain eternal needs in the societies of old, needs which were entirely real and essentially human. The societies of today are equally aware of them, yet are usually content to satisfy them in other ways. But in the eyes of his faithful subjects a king was, after all, something very different from a mere high official. He was surrounded by a 'veneration' which did not simply originate in the services he performed. How can we understand this feeling of loyalty which was so strong and so specific at certain periods in our history if, from the outset, we refuse to see the supernatural aura which surrounded these crowned heads?

We shall not have to examine this 'mystical' royalty in its germinal stage, or go back to first principles. Its origins elude the historian of mediaeval and modern Europe; in fact, they elude the historian altogether, and only comparative ethnography seems able to cast a certain degree of light upon them. The civilizations from which our own is directly descended received this heritage from still older civilizations, lost in the shadows of prehistory. Could it be, then, that we shall find as our object of study only what is sometimes a little disdainfully called 'a relic'?

We shall have occasion later on to observe that this word cannot in any

way be legitimately applied to the healing rites considered in themselves. Indeed, the touch for scrofula will appear as the creation of the first Capetians in France and the Normans in England. As for the blessing of rings by the English sovereigns, we shall see that this occurs only later in the evolution of miraculous royalty. There remains the intrinsic notion of the sacred and miraculous character of kings, an essentially psychological feature, and the rites we are considering constituted only one among many of its manifestations. This notion is much older than the most ancient historical dynasties of France or England, and might be said to have long outlived the social environment which had first conditioned its birth—an environment of which we know practically nothing. But if we are to understand 'relic' in the usual sense, that is to say, an institution or belief from which all real life has disappeared, the continued existence of which can only be justified by its having once upon a time corresponded to some reality—in fact a kind of fossil bearing witness to ages that have long since passed away—then in this sense the idea we are considering had nothing about it, in the Middle Ages and right up to the seventeenth century at least, which would authorize the use of this term. Its longevity involved no degeneration. On the contrary, it retained a profound vitality; it continued to be endowed with a power of feeling that remained constantly active; it adapted itself to new political, and, more particularly, new religious conditions; and it assumed forms that had hitherto been unknown, among which healing rites are a case in point. We shall not explain its origins, for that would take us out of our proper field of study; but we shall have to explain its continuance and its evolution, both of which are a part—and a very important part—of the total explanation. In biology, to give an account of an organism's existence is not simply to search for its parental forms; it is equally important to determine the character of the environment which allows it to live, yet forces it to undergo certain modifications. The same is true—*mutatis mutandis*—for occurrences in society.

In short, what I have attempted here is essentially a contribution to the political history of Europe, in the widest and truest sense of those words.

By the very nature of the material, this essay in political history has had to take on the form of an essay in comparative history; for France and England both possessed kings with healing powers, and the idea of royalty as something miraculous and sacred was common to the whole of Western Europe. This is a fortunate necessity, if it is true, as I believe, that the evolution of the civilizations we have inherited will become fairly clear to us only when we are able to consider it outside the very limited framework of national traditions.[6]

But there is more to be said. If I had not been afraid of adding to a title that was already too lengthy, I should have given this book a second subtitle: *The history of a miracle.* As the Bishop of Bisaccia reminded the Venetians, the healing of scrofula or of epilepsy by the royal touch was

indeed a 'miracle': in truth, a great miracle, which must be reckoned among the most renowned, and certainly among the most continuous, miracles presented by the past. Countless witnesses have testified to it, and its fame died out only after seven centuries of sustained popularity and almost unclouded glory. Surely a critical history of such a supernatural manifestation cannot be a matter of indifference to religious psychology, or rather, to our knowledge of the human mind?

The greatest difficulty I have met with in the course of my research has come from the condition of the source material. Not that testimonies relating to the miraculous healing-power of kings, taken as a whole and with the necessary reservations about the beginnings, are lacking in number; but they are extremely scattered, and enormously diverse in kind. A single example will illustrate the point. Our oldest information on the touch for scrofula by the kings of France occurs in a little work of religious polemics entitled *De Pignoribus Sanctorum*. In England, the first certain testimony to the same rite comes in a private letter, which is perhaps nothing more than an exercise in style. The first known mention of healing rings consecrated by the English kings is to be found in a royal prescription. For the rest of the story, I have had to draw upon a mass of documents of various kinds—account books, administrative material of every sort, narrative literature, political and theological writings, medical treatises, liturgical texts, figured monuments—and many more I will not mention. The reader will even find himself faced with a game of cards. The royal accounts, both French and English, could not be put to full use without a critical examination, and I have devoted a special study to them. But it would have overloaded the Introduction, so I have consigned it to the end of the book. The iconographical material was fairly scanty, and relatively easy to list; I have tried to draw up an accurate inventory of it, which will also be found in an Appendix. The other sources seemed to be too numerous and disparate to warrant any attempt at a complete list; it will be enough to quote them and comment upon them as they are used. Besides, with material like this, what is the good of attempting any nomenclature for the sources? It could be no more than a list of random soundings. With very few of the documents could one venture to predict with any certainty that it would or would not provide useful information about the royal miracles. It is a matter of groping one's way, trusting to good luck or instinct, and wasting a great deal of time for a very meagre return. If only all collections of texts were provided with an index—an index of subject matter! But it is scarcely necessary to point out that in many cases this is totally lacking. These indispensable tools seem to grow even rarer as the documents become more recent in date. Their too frequent absence constitutes one of the most shocking deficiencies in our present method of publication. I feel perhaps a little sore on this point, for this vexatious

omission has often made things extremely difficult for me. Moreover, even when there is an index, it often happens that its author has systematically omitted all mention of the healing rites, judging such practices as futile and beneath the dignity of history. Many a time I have felt like a man placed in the middle of a large number of closed coffers, some of them containing gold and others nothing but stones, with no directions to help distinguish between the treasure and the pebbles. In other words, I make no claim at all to completeness: I can only hope that this book may encourage researchers to make new discoveries!

Fortunately, I was by no means exploring entirely new ground. As far as I knew, there was no historical work in existence on the subject in hand with the breadth and critical character I have endeavoured to embody in mine. Yet the 'literature' on the royal healings is fairly rich. It is in fact of a dual kind. There are two literatures with different origins, moving side by side and mostly ignoring each other. One is the work of professional scholars, and the other—more extensive—is the work of doctors. I have done my best to study and use them both. The reader will find in this book a bibliographical list which will no doubt seem tolerably lengthy. But I should not like certain particularly distinguished works, which I have constantly drawn upon, to remain lost in the crowd; and I must make a point of naming my principal guides here. The studies by Law Hussey and Waterton, both of them published some time ago, have been of great service to me. Among authors still living, I owe more than I can express to M. François-Delaborde, Dr Crawfurd, and Miss Helen Farquhar.

I also owe a large debt of gratitude to my predecessors of another age. Much was written from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century on the healing rites, and in this literature of the *ancien régime* even the lumber is interesting, for it often provides information of an out-of-the-way kind on the state of mind of that age. But it does not contain merely lumber. The seventeenth century in particular did produce, alongside some works or pamphlets of a peculiarly inept kind some remarkable works, such as the pages devoted to scrofula by du Peyrat in his *Histoire ecclésiastique de la Cour*. Outstanding above all are two academic treatises, by Daniel Georges Morhof and Jean Joachim Zentgraff respectively. They have furnished an abundance of useful references such as I have not found elsewhere. I am particularly happy to recall here all that I owe to the second of these dissertations, for I can address myself to its author as a colleague. Jean Joachim Zentgraff was a native of Strasbourg. He was born in the free city, became a subject of Louis XIV, delivered the eulogy on Henry of Navarre,[7] and carved out a brilliant university career in his native city, which had then become French. The present book figures among the publications of our revived Faculté des Lettres; and I am delighted thus to be able to continue in some measure—though with full awareness of the difference between

the spirit of our respective times—the work begun in former days by a Rector of the ancient University of Strasbourg.

BOOK 1

THE ORIGINS

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I

The beginnings of the touch for scrofula

1 *Scrofula*

The two words 'écrouelles', or more often 'scrofula', which is only a learned form of the first (both of them coming from the Latin *scrofula*), are used by doctors today to signify tuberculous adenitis, that is to say inflammation of the lymph nodes due to the bacillus of tuberculosis. It is obvious that before the advent of bacteriology, such specialization of these two names, which go back to the medicine of antiquity, was quite impossible. It was not possible to distinguish between the various infections of the ganglia; or at any rate the tentative scientific efforts at classification —which were bound to be abortive—did not leave any traces in current medical language. All these infections were uniformly called 'écrouelles' in French and *scrofula* or *strumae* in Latin; these last two words were generally synonymous. It should be added that by far the greater number of inflammations of the ganglia are tuberculous in origin; so that the majority of cases classed as scrofula by the doctors in the Middle Ages would also be diagnosed as such by our doctors today. But popular language was less precise than technical language. The ganglia most easily attacked by tuberculosis are those of the neck; and when the disease goes untreated, and suppurations occur, the face may easily appear to be affected. Hence a confusion, apparent in many of the documents, between scrofula and various other affections of the face or even the eyes.[1] Tubercular adenitis is very widespread, even nowadays; so what must it have been like in conditions of hygiene notably inferior to our own? If we mentally add the other kinds of adenitis, and all the vague crop of miscellaneous diseases popularly confused with them, we shall have some idea of the ravages attributable to what Europe of old used to include under the name of 'scrofula'. In certain regions, as both mediaeval and modern doctors testify, these diseases were virtually endemic.[2] This is hardly ever a fatal disease; but especially where there is a failure to give the appropriate treatment, it

is very trying and disfiguring. The frequent suppurations had something repulsive about them, and the horror they engendered is naïvely expressed in more than one ancient account. The face became 'putrid' and the sores gave forth a 'foetid odour'. The background picture, then, which the historian of the royal miracle should keep in mind, is that of countless sufferers longing for healing, and ready to have recourse to any remedies they might hear of through common report.

I have already reminded the reader of what this miracle was. In France of old it was called 'mal le roi'; in England, the King's Evil. The kings of France and of England claimed that a simple touch of their hands, made according to the traditional rites, was able to cure the scrofulous. When did they begin to exercise this miraculous power? How were they led to make this claim? And how did their subjects come to acknowledge it? These are delicate problems, which I shall try to resolve. The rest of this study will be based upon reliable testimony; but here, in this first book devoted to origins, we are touching on a very obscure past, and we shall have to resign ourselves in advance to giving considerable place to hypotheses. The historian may legitimately make use of them, provided he does not put them forward as certainties. Let us then start by bringing together the most ancient texts relating to the 'physician princes', as they used to be called, beginning with France.

2 *The beginnings of the French rite*

We owe the first document, in which without a shadow of doubt the French 'touch' appears, to the chance fact of an unusual controversy.[3] About the beginning of the twelfth century the monastery of St-Médard of Soissons claimed to possess a most outstanding relic—a tooth belonging to Our Saviour, a milk-tooth, so it was said.[4] In order to spread the news of their glorious treasure, the monks had a short treatise put together, which has since disappeared; but thanks to numerous other examples, it is not difficult to guess what it was like. It must have been a fairly crude production—a small booklet for the use of pilgrims, containing a collection of miracles.[5] Now at this time there lived not far from Soissons a certain Guibert, the abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy, one of the best writers of the period. Nature had endowed him with a mind that was both judicious and subtle; moreover, there may have been some obscure quarrel which has now passed into oblivion spurring him on against his 'neighbours' of Soissons,[6] one of those bitter Church rivalries that abound in the history of the time. This may well have helped to sharpen his love of truth in the matter at issue. He did not believe in the authenticity of the famous tooth; and when the document referred to above appeared, he in his turn determined to open the eyes of the faithful who had been deluded by the

'falsifiers' of St-Médard.[7] That was the origin of this curious treatise *De Pignoribus Sanctorum*, which seems to have aroused little interest in the Middle Ages. In fact, there remains only one manuscript, copied perhaps under the eyes of Guibert himself;[8] today, however, scholars have been delighted to discover, among a great deal of rubbish, evidence of a quite unfettered critical sense—something extremely rare in the twelfth century. It is a rather disconnected work, containing alongside amusing anecdotes a quantity of rather unrelated observations on the subject of relics, visions, and miraculous manifestations in general.[9] Let us look at Book I, in which Guibert, in perfect conformity with the most orthodox doctrine, develops the idea that miracles are not by themselves any indication of holiness. God alone is their author; and in His Divine Wisdom chooses as instruments or 'channels' those men who are fitted to His purposes even if they are ungodly. Then there follow some examples from the Bible, or from the historians of antiquity, who were looked upon by the scholars of that time with almost as blind a faith as the Sacred Book itself. He mentions Balaam's prophecy, and Caiaphas', Vespasian's healing of a lame man, the sea at Pamphylia parting in front of Alexander the Great, and finally the signs that so often announced the birth or the death of princes.[10] To which Guibert adds:

> But what am I saying? Have we not seen our Lord King Louis performing a customary marvel? With my own eyes I have seen people suffering from scrofula on the neck or other parts of the body crowd round the king in order to be touched by him—and to his touch he added also the sign of the cross. I was there quite near him, and even helped to keep the crowds from pressing too close upon him. The king, however, showed his innate generosity towards them, drawing them to himself with his serene hand and humbly making the sign of the cross over them. His father Philip had also zealously applied himself to the exercise of this glorious and miraculous power; and I do not know what sins he committed to make him lose it.[11]

Such are the few lines that have been quoted again and again since the seventeenth century by the historians of scrofula. The two princes mentioned in them are clearly Louis VI and his father Philip I. What conclusions can we draw?

In the first place Louis VI (who reigned from 1108 to 1137) was considered to possess the power of healing scrofula; crowds were wont to press round him, and the king, himself fully persuaded of the power given to him from above, acceded to their prayers. And not only once, on some random occasion, in a moment of exceptional popular enthusiasm; no, we are already confronted with a 'customary' practice, a regular rite clothed in the forms that were to belong to it throughout the course of the French monarchy. The king touches the sufferers and makes the sign of the cross

over them—these were the two successive gestures destined to remain a permanent part of the tradition. Guibert was an eye-witness, whose testimony cannot be put in doubt; he met Louis VI at Laon, and perhaps on other occasions; his office as abbot meant that he would have regular close access to his sovereign.[12]

But there is more to be said. This miraculous power was not considered as belonging personally to King Louis. It was recalled that his father and predecessor Philip I (1060–1108), whose long reign takes us back almost to the middle of the eleventh century, had exercised this power before him; and it was said that he had subsequently lost it because of 'I do not know what sins', as Guibert delicately puts it, for he was greatly attached to the Capetian family, and disposed to cover up their faults. There can be no doubt that it was a question of the doubly adulterous union between Philip and Bertrade de Montfort. The king was excommunicated for this crime, and it was thought that the divine wrath had struck him with various 'shameful' diseases.[13] No wonder, then, that he had at the same time lost his healing power. This ecclesiastical legend is of little consequence for us here. But it does indicate that Philip I is the first French king of whom we can say with certainty that he touched the scrofulous.

It should also be observed that this invaluable text remains absolutely unique for its period. As we pass down the ages step by step, in search of healings carried out by the kings of France, we have to travel on as far as the reign of St-Louis (1226–70), about whom, incidentally, we have fairly full information,[14] before we arrive at any new document. If the monks of St-Médard had not claimed to possess a tooth of Christ, and if Guibert had not taken it into his head to hold forth against them, or if his treatise—like so many others of the same kind—had been lost, we should no doubt have been tempted to see St-Louis as the first healing monarch. There is in actual fact no reason to suppose that between 1137 and 1226 any interruption took place in the exercise of the miraculous gift. The texts dealing with St-Louis demonstrate clearly his powers as traditional and hereditary. Yet the continuous silence of the documents over almost a century demands an explanation, which we shall attempt later on. For the moment, however, we must concentrate upon determining when the rite began, and need only remember what has just been said by way of prudent counsel. By fortunate chance, we still have a few sentences from a twelfth-century writer who recalls in passing that his sovereign used to heal the scrofulous; and other less fortunate hazards may well have deprived us of similar references to previous kings. If without more ado we were to affirm that Philip I was the first to 'touch for scrofula', we should be in danger of making the same kind of mistake as if—supposing the only manuscript of the *De Pignoribus Sanctorum* to have been lost—we had concluded in the absence of any mention earlier than St-Louis that this king had initiated the rite.

Can we hope to go further back than Philip I?

It is no new question, whether the first two royal lines already possessed the medicinal powers claimed by the Capetians. It was thrashed out again and again by the scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in controversies whose echoes even reached the royal table.

One Easter Day at Fontainebleau Henry IV, after touching for scrofula, thought it good to enliven his dinner by a novel kind of joust. He selected as the combatants certain scholars—André du Laurens, his senior physician, Pierre Mathieu, his historiographer, and Guillaume du Peyrat, his almoner. The doctor and historiographer maintained that the power of which their master had just given fresh proof went back to Clovis; the almoner denied that the Merovingians or Carolingians had ever exercised this power.[15] Let us then also enter the lists and try to form an opinion. It is a complicated problem, but it may be split up into a number of simpler questions which must be examined one by one.

First, is there any documentary trace suggesting that any king of the first two dynasties may perhaps have claimed to heal the scrofulous? On this point, we shall have no difficulty in siding with the negative opinion, often expressed forcibly by du Peyrat, by Scipion Dupleix, and by all the learned minds of the seventeenth century. No document of that kind has ever been produced. But we should go further than this. Our knowledge of the High Middle Ages is based upon sources that are scanty, and therefore easy to explore. They have been conscientiously sifted over several centuries by the scholars of all nations. If such a source has never been discovered, it may safely be concluded that it does not exist. Later on, we shall have occasion to see how the story arose in the sixteenth century of the healing by Clovis of his squire Lanicet; and we shall then see that this tradition is without any real foundation. It is a younger sister of the legends about the Holy Phial or the heavenly origin of the fleur-de-lis, and must be consigned, along with its elder sisters, to the department of outworn historical accessories—as all serious historians long ago agreed.

We must now put our problem in a more comprehensive form. Neither the Merovingians nor the Carolingians, as far as documentary evidence goes, possessed this special form of healing power for the specific illness of scrofula. But may they not have been considered capable of healing either some other particular disease, or even diseases in general? Let us see what Gregory of Tours has to say. In Book IX, with reference to King Guntram, the son of Clotaire I, there occurs the following passage:

> It was commonly related among the faithful that a certain woman whose son lay stretched upon a bed of pain, suffering from a quaternary fever, made her way through the crowd from behind the king, and without his noting it, managed to pull off a part of the fringe of the royal cloak. She soaked it in water, and then gave this water to

her son to drink. The fever immediately abated, and the disease was cured. For my part, I do not doubt this matter; for indeed I myself have often seen demons who inhabit the bodies of those possessed cry out the name of this king, and, being unmasked by the virtue proceeding from him, confess their crimes.[16]

So it would seem that Guntram possessed among his subjects and advisers—of whom Gregory of Tours was avowedly one—the reputation of being a healer. There was a miraculous power inherent in the clothes that had touched his person. His mere presence—or perhaps simply the invocation of his name (the text is not very clear on this point)—could deliver the possessed. The whole question is to know if he shared this miraculous capacity with those of his line, or whether it was simply a personal gift. His memory would not appear to have been the object of any officially recognized cult, although the Italian hagiographer Pietro Natali thought him worthy of a place in his *Catalogus Sanctorum*.[17] But there is no doubt that many of his contemporaries, and first and foremost the bishop of Tours, considered him to be a saint. Not that his manners were particularly pure or gentle; but he was so pious!—for, says Gregory, a little before the passage quoted above, 'you would have taken him for a bishop rather than a king'. Moreover, this same Gregory gives us a host of details about Guntram's ancestors and uncles and brothers. Veriantius Fortunatus sang the praises of several Merovingian monarchs, but nowhere does it appear that any of those princes, though praised as more or less pious or generous or brave, had healed anyone. For the Carolingians, the verdict is the same. The Carolingian renaissance has left us a relatively abundant literature containing in particular some treatises of a semi-political and semi-moralistic character on the subject of royalty, and some biographies or collections of anecdotes about certain sovereigns; but it would be impossible to discover anything in them relating to the healing power of kings. If we were to rely on a single passage in Gregory of Tours and decide that the early Merovingians possessed medicinal powers, we should also have to assume that these powers had suffered an eclipse under the Carolingians. There would thus be no possibility of establishing continuity between Guntram and Philip I, between a king of the sixth century and one of the eleventh. It is simpler to admit that these miracles were attributed to Guntram by common belief, not as a royal attribute, but as a seemingly necessary consequence of the saintly character ascribed to him by his faithful. For in the eyes of his contemporaries, what was a saint but —first and foremost—a worker of beneficent miracles? Moreover, as we shall see later on, it was all the easier for Guntram to appear saintly because he was a king, and belonged to a dynasty the Franks had long been accustomed to consider holy. But if he partly at least owed his sanctity—and consequently his miraculous powers—to his royal origin,

this gift nevertheless constituted a personal grace not possessed by his immediate forefathers, ancestors or successors. The uninterrupted series of physician-kings in mediaeval France does not begin with the pious sovereign so dear to the heart of Gregory of Tours.

But at this point I shall perhaps be interrupted with an objection. No doubt, it will be said, the Merovingian or Carolingian texts—at least in the form in which they have come down to us—nowhere show us a king healing scrofula, and except for the passage just studied from Gregory of Tours, never mention royal healings of any imaginable kind whatsoever. This cannot be denied. But our sources—as we recalled above—are very scanty; and are we justified in taking their silence as anything more than an admission of ignorance? Is it not possible, although we know nothing about it, that the sovereigns of the first two lines did in fact lay hands upon the sick? To be sure, in all scientific matters negative proof is dangerous; and, in historical criticism more especially, the argument from silence is always full of pitfalls. Nevertheless, we should not let ourselves be led astray by this formidable word 'negative'. On this very subject du Peyrat writes quite admirably as follows:

> Someone may say to me, perchance, that the argument from negative authority cannot be conclusive; but I would answer him as Coeffeteau answers Plessis Mornay, namely that this is a logic that does not apply to history; on the contrary, it is in truth an affirmative argument; for all those authors—St-Remy, Gregory of Tours, Hincmar and others who followed them during the second royal line—were in duty bound, as faithful historians, to mention such a memorable thing in their writings, if it had indeed been practised in their time . . . and in as much as they did not write of such a miracle, they did in fact affirm that it was unknown in their century.[18]

In other words, it is all a question of knowing whether the documents contemporary with the Merovingian and Carolingian dynasties are of such a kind that if the practice of royal healing had existed, they could have passed it over in silence. And that is something which will appear very unlikely, particularly where the sixth century—the period of Fortunatus and Gregory of Tours—is concerned, and more so still for the splendid age of the next dynasty. If Charlemagne or Louis the Pious had laid hands upon the sick, is it conceivable that the monk of St-Gall or the Astronomer would not have mentioned this miraculous feat? Is it likely that any of those writers at the royal court, who formed the brilliant constellation of the 'Carolingian renaissance', could fail to make some passing allusion to such a notable fact? No doubt—as I recalled above—there is an equal documentary silence from Louis VI to St-Louis; but later on I shall offer an explanation of this silence, which after all only lasted three reigns. I shall show how this originated in a movement of political thought arising

from the Gregorian reforms, whose ruling ideas were as different as possible from those inspiring the authors mentioned above. The incomparably much longer silence of Merovingian and Carolingian literature would be absolutely inexplicable on any other assumption than the absence of the very rite we are searching for, but in vain. There is no reason to believe that the descendants of Clovis or Pepin ever claimed to heal anyone in their capacity as king.

We will now go on to the early Capetians. As we all know, the life of the second prince of this line, Robert the Pious, was written by one of his protégés, a monk called Helgaud. It is, frankly, a panegyric: Robert is adorned with all the virtues, especially those calculated to appeal to the monks. Helgaud particularly vaunts his kindness to lepers, and adds:

> The divine virtue granted to this perfect man a very great grace, to wit, the power of healing men's bodies; for by touching with his most pious hand the sores of the suffering and signing them with the holy cross, he was wont to deliver them from their pains and diseases.[19]

This short passage has been much discussed. Excellent scholars have refused to see it as the earliest reference to the healing power of the French kings. Let us look at the reasons they put forward.

What precisely does the *Life* of King Robert say? It says that this king used to heal the sick; but was this by special grace, or by virtue of an hereditary vocation belonging to him in common with all his line? The text is silent on this point. It may well be wondered whether Helgaud, full of admiration for the king whose mighty deeds he recounted, and perhaps with an eye to his future canonization, may not have considered the miraculous power attributed to his hero as a strictly individual manifestation of sanctity. Let us come back a moment to the passage quoted above from Gregory of Tours. Our conclusion was that King Guntram was personally considered to have been a saint, rather than that the Merovingians as a whole were considered to have possessed miraculous powers of healing. Surely the testimony of Helgaud should carry the same interpretation. Yet closer consideration shows this analogy to be thoroughly superficial. The text by Gregory of Tours stood out as an absolutely isolated witness in the midst of a prolonged and universal documentary silence. In order to link the healing powers of the son of Clotaire and the authentic beginnings of the touch for scrofula in the reign of Philip I, we should have to leap five centuries and three dynasties; we should have to assume complete silence about the past by a mass of authors who had no motive at all for silence. But in this later case, there is no difficulty of this nature. Between Robert II and his grandson Philip I there is only a short interval of twenty-nine years—a single generation, a single reign, that of Henry I, which happens to be the least well-known of all the reigns in this period. We know

practically nothing about this prince. He may well have laid hands on the sick without any memory of this gesture coming down to us; and we even have no right to be surprised at our ignorance on this matter. Let us assume for the moment that Robert II initiated the famous rite the history of which we are attempting to trace, and see what may have happened. His faithful followers believed him capable of healing, for this is testified by the mouth of his biographer. They may after all have considered this a gift peculiar to their lord. But after him his descendants and successors claimed the paternal privilege as their prescriptive inheritance. We do not know if Helgaud survived his hero for any considerable time; but he may have been ignorant of their claims, or, being aware of them, he may have preferred for one reason or another to be silent. But for us, there is really no cause for doubt, since we have irrefutable textual evidence that his grandson Robert exercised the same power only a few years later. In truth, nothing could be more natural than to imagine, between two generations that lay so close to one another, the continuity of one and the same miraculous tradition, or rather the same rite,—the touch, followed by the sign of the cross—whether it be Robert or Louis VI, for the healing gestures would seem to have been exactly the same. On this point, so far as Philip I is concerned, the documents are silent. Helgaud does not appear to have viewed the 'great grace' granted to his king as a heritage from his ancestors. We may thus conclude, with a fair chance of being right, that Robert II was the first of the wonder-working kings, the original link in this glorious chain; but not that no subsequent king accomplished healings, for this would be contradicted by the facts.

There is a further difficulty. We know that Philip I touched the scrofulous; now in Helgaud's account there is no mention of scrofula. Helgaud's 'great grace' occurs after he has been describing the behaviour of the king towards the lepers, though his act would not appear to have particular reference to lepers. It is not any special disease as such, scrofula or leprosy or anything else, but rather all diseases in general that Robert could cure, according to his admirers. 'It should be noted', writes Delaborde, 'that scrofula is not mentioned in the passage from this biography which has been taken as the earliest reference to our kings' particular gift; the reference is purely to the general power to heal disease common to all the saints.'[20] I agree. But is it certain that the gift recognized as belonging to the king was in the first place thought of as 'particular' to him? We are so accustomed to seeing the miraculous power of the French princes attached solely to the healing of scrofula that we are no longer surprised at its having taken this strictly limited form. But it would be an unjustifiable postulate to assume from the outset that such was indeed the case, and this can be shown by a comparison. The majority of the really popular saints also have their own special talent. People call on one of them for help in eye diseases, another for stomach affections, and so on. But, as far as we can see, these

specializations are seldom recognized at the beginning: the best proof of this is the variations sometimes to be found. In the popular mind, every saint is considered a physician, and gradually, through an association of ideas that is often obscure, and sometimes merely through a play upon words, the faithful become accustomed to ascribing to their saint the gift of alleviating such and such a disease with a specific name. Then time completes the work. After a certain number of years, belief in this very specific power has become a genuine article of faith among the unfortunate sufferers from this disease. Later on we shall come across one of these great pilgrimage saints, St-Marcoul of Corbeny. Like the kings of France, he was a healer of scrofula, and as such he acquired a notable fame, though very late in time. Earlier, for several centuries, he had only been one saint among many others, whom people called upon indiscriminately for any kind of disease. We know his story fairly well; and it would seem probable that it was only a repetition—though at some centuries' remove—of the story of the French kings, which is more imperfectly known to us. Like the saint of Corbeny, the kings no doubt began by healing a number of diseases, and only secondarily came to specialize in one. The collective notions giving rise to the idea of a medical power residing in royalty are a delicate matter to pursue in all their ramifications, but they are not impossible to understand. A little later I shall try to reconstruct them, and show that they are connected to a whole cycle of beliefs relating to the sacred character of royalty which we are just beginning to uncover. What would be really inconceivable is that the French should suddenly have got it into their heads that their sovereigns could cure scrofula and the scrofulous only, rather than diseases and illnesses in general.

Let us assume, on the contrary, that events took the same course as with St-Marcoul. Let us suppose that the early Capetians—say from Robert the Pious onwards—'touched' and 'signed with the cross' all the poor sufferers from various diseases who flocked around them, attracted by their wonder-working reputation. This crowd would certainly have included some scrofulous sufferers, for in Europe at that period scrofula was a very frequent and much-dreaded illness. But basically it was a fairly benign affection, more repulsive to look at than really dangerous, and above all subject to remissions, at least of an apparent or temporary kind.[21] Among the scrofulous over whom the royal hand had passed, some would get well, and many others would appear to do so; in the course of nature, as we should say nowadays, by virtue of the royal touch, as they said in the eleventh century. It can easily be conceived that some cases of this kind happened to occur, for one reason or another, in conditions particularly calculated to strike the imagination. People would then be naturally inclined to contrast the sufferers thus relieved with others suffering from different diseases, who had been touched by the king without success, and that would be quite enough to instil into the popular mind the belief that the Capetian princes

specialized in the healing of scrofula. No doubt, in reconstructing a sequence of events of this sort, there is necessarily a large element of hypothesis. It will always be difficult to follow out in detail the process by which a healer in general becomes a specialized healer, because it comes about as the result of a multitude of small occurrences, very diverse in kind, which are effective solely in their cumulative weight. Taken separately, they would be too insignificant for mention in the documents; and this is what historians call 'chance'. But the possibility of such a process is abundantly demonstrated by the cults of the saints. Here we possess a solid support for our argument, since we have a specific text. There is no reason to reject Helgaud's testimony, and there is nothing contrary to probability in the development it enables us to trace. It should therefore be accepted.

We can feel sure, therefore, that we are on solid ground if we sum up as follows: Robert the Pious, the second Capetian, was held by his faithful admirers to possess the gift of healing the sick. His successors inherited his power; but as it passed down the generations, this dynastic virtue became gradually modified or rather grew more precise. The idea arose that the royal touch was a sovereign remedy, not for all diseases indiscriminately, but in particular for one extremely widespread disease, scrofula; and by the time of Philip I, Robert's grandson, this transformation had been accomplished.

We have thus been able to fix with some probability the genesis of touching for scrofula in France. It remains to search out the origins, in the proper sense of the word; that is, to understand how it came about that the kings were looked upon as such prodigious physicians. But for the moment, this is not something that can be undertaken with a full measure of success. For the royal miracle was just as much English as French, and in any explanatory study of its origins, the two countries must not be treated separately. If it is a question of determining why the healing rite made its appearance in France at one particular moment rather than at another, the attempt cannot be made without having fixed the time when the same rite first saw the light of day in England. Without this indispensable precaution, there would be no means of knowing whether the French kings did not simply imitate their English rivals. Again, if it is a question of analysing the concept of royalty embodied in this rite, the same collective ideas will be found at the source in these two neighbouring nations. So we must first of all undertake the same critical enquiry for England as we have carried out on the French documents.

3 *The beginnings of the rite in England*

Towards the end of the twelfth century there was at the court of Henry II, king of England, a cleric of French origin, Peter of Blois. He was one of

those ecclesiastic scholars of whom the brilliant Plantagenet court produced so many—men far more spiritual, according to Hauréau,[22] than those assembled at the same period round the king of France. Among other works by him we possess an invaluable collection of letters, well worth perusing. In it, we shall find two letters closely connected with each other, both being addressed to clerics of the royal entourage. In the first, Peter says everything bad he can think of about the court and its courtiers; in the second, he sings its praises.[23] Was he forced to make this retraction—as certain historians have believed[24]—by his sovereign's displeasure? For my part, I admit that it goes against the grain to take these two letters seriously: I find it hard to see in them any more than two exercises in rhetoric or sophistry, a *sic et non* thoroughly in keeping with the taste of the period. Not that this really matters, however. The second letter contains the following passage:

> I would have you know that to attend upon the king is [for a cleric] something sacred, for the king himself is holy; he is the Anointed of the Lord; it is not in vain that he has received the sacrament of royal unction, whose efficacy—if someone should chance to be ignorant of it or doubt it—would be amply proved by the disappearance of that plague affecting the groin and by the healing of scrofula.[25]

So Henry II used to heal the scrofulous. The disappearance (*defectus*) of a plague attacking the groin (*inguinariae pestis*) was likewise attributed to his royal power. We do not know precisely to what these words refer. Perhaps it was some bubonic plague epidemic which was believed to have yielded to the miraculous influence of the king. It was quite possible, as that excellent historian of medicine, Dr Crawfurd, points out, for a man of that time[26] to confuse certain forms of bubonic plague with adenitis of the groin. Peter of Blois was not a doctor and he shared in the popular errors of his day; he probably considered the bubonic plague, which he, like most of his associates, believed Henry II to have miraculously cured, as a particular case of the huge group of those affections of the ganglia which the Middle Ages lumped together under the name of scrofula. In short, scrofula was Henry II's speciality. His healing power was not personal, but belonged to his function, for it was as king that he had this wonder-working gift. Henry died in 1189. For the following century, we have a series of documents, increasing in number as we approach the year 1300, indicating that his successors inherited the same gift.[27] In the history of this royal miracle, he occupies the same place for England as Philip I does for France, namely that of the first sovereign of whom it may be said with certainty that he touched for scrofula. But there is no reason why we should not, if need be, use a certain amount of conjecture and go further back in time than Henry II.

We have seen that, according to certain learned Frenchmen of the *ancien*

régime, the initiator of the rite on the French side of the Channel was Clovis. An English clergyman of the sixteenth century, William Tooker, conferred the same honour upon King Lucius, who was supposed to be the first Christian to reign over Great Britain.[28] This story did not find much support, and deserves none at all. Clovis at least was a real person; the good Lucius never existed except in the imagination of scholars. In solid history, during the greater part of the Anglo-Saxon period, we do not come across any mention of healing power attributed to the kings.[29] Not till the period immediately preceding the Norman conquest do we find a prince who was—rightly or wrongly—credited with being the first of a line of healing kings. Edward the Confessor is still almost universally considered today as the founder of the English rite. This tradition is all the weightier because Shakespeare, drawing as usual upon Holinshed, made it his own, in one of his most famous and most widely-read plays. In *Macbeth*,[30] Malcolm and Macduff, fleeing from the hatred of the Scottish tyrant, take refuge in the court of Edward the Confessor, where Malcolm becomes the astonished witness of the miracle, which he reports to his companion:

> strangely visited people,
> All sworn and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
> The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
> Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
> Put on with holy prayers; and 'tis spoken,
> To the succeeding royalty he leaves
> The healing benediction.
>
> (*Macbeth*, IV, iii)

Are we to support this opinion of Shakespeare?

The life and, more especially, the supernatural virtues of Edward the Confessor are known to us in particular from four documents: some passages in William of Malmesbury's *Historia Regum*, and three biographies, the first anonymous, and the two others respectively by Osbert of Clare and Ailred of Rievaulx. Ailred was writing in 1163, under Henry II, Osbert in 1138, in the time of Stephen of Blois. William is a little earlier, the first edition of his *Historia* falling in the second half of Henry I's reign in 1124 or 1125. Lastly, the anonymous *Life* is usually considered to be roughly contemporary with its hero. It was probably put together after Edward's death, about 1067, and certainly before 1076. Such at least was the general opinion up till now. I have attempted elsewhere to show that it is not well founded, and that the *Life*, too, dates from the reign of Henry I, but from the first part of it, between 1103 and 1120. I shall here assume this to be so.[31]

Edward the Confessor was soon held to be a saint; his veneration, though as yet without any official sanction, was already flourishing under Henry I.

Osbert espoused the cause of his canonization, which had just taken place when Ailred began his work. Consequently, it is not surprising that the four works enumerated above ascribe a good number of miraculous healings to him, for, being a saint, it was only to be expected that he would be a wonder-worker. Among the various anecdotes, only one has been traditionally preserved by historians of the 'touch', and it is to be found in almost the same form in all these four authors. Here, as elsewhere, Ailred does little more than put into good shape the confused and wordy account given by Osbert, who clearly knew the anonymous *Life*. As for the two earlier authors, William and the unknown author of the *Life*, commonly called the Biographer, they seem both to have drawn upon a collection of miracles, no doubt composed at Westminster, and also quoted by Osbert. We can briefly summarize this famous episode as follows.[32]

There was at this time in England a young woman suffering from an appalling disease, a swelling in the glands of the neck which gave out a foetid odour. She was told in a dream to seek healing at the hands of the king. The king sent for a vase of water, dipped his fingers in it, then touched the affected parts, signing them several times with the cross. Immediately blood and pus came out under the pressure of the royal hand, and the disease appeared to abate. The patient was kept at court, but the treatment does not seem to have been repeated. Nevertheless, after scarcely a week, the woman was overjoyed to find herself completely healed; and not only healed of this illness, but also of a stubborn sterility which was a great source of grief to her; and that same year she presented her husband with a son.

Such is the general outline of the story. Our authors add certain comments, which concern us as much as or even more than the text.

Here, to begin with, is a comment peculiar to William of Malmesbury:

> In our day, some have used these miracles [the miracle of the young woman and others like it, ascribed—as we shall see—to Edward before he was grown up] to support a false idea. They have claimed that the king possessed the power to heal this illness, not by virtue of his holiness, but by hereditary title, as a privilege of the royal line.[33]

This is a doubly valuable observation, because it informs us both of William's ideas, and of the very different ones held by many of his contemporaries. The monk of Malmesbury holds that only saints perform miracles; kings may perform them if they are saints, but not by virtue of their royalty. There is no such thing as a wonder-working dynasty. We shall come across this concept later on, a concept which, as we remember Gregory VII, we may well call Gregorian. For the moment, what particularly interests us is the opposite opinion; for in combating it, William has provided us with irrefutable testimony.

We are in England, in the year 1124 or 1125. Edward the Confessor, who died some sixty years before, is thought to have relieved many sufferers. Were those healings all of the same kind? Clearly not everyone thinks so. Some consider that the scrofula healings should be set in a special class; for it was by reason of his royal origin, and not his religious virtues, that Edward must have been able to perform them. The upholders of this view evidently have reason to believe that kings do heal scrofula; where can such an idea have come from? No doubt, from the facts they have before their eyes. Their king is Henry I; could this mean that Henry I was already claiming the miraculous gift we know his grandson Henry II was to claim? It is difficult to avoid this conclusion.

There is another document more or less contemporary with the *Historia Regum*, which must also be taken into account. I quoted above the famous passage from Guibert de Nogent constituting our earliest testimony to the rite in France; but I deliberately omitted the final words. Let us fill in the gap:

> What is the practice of other kings on the subject of healing the scrofula? I will keep silent on this matter; yet as far as I know, no English king has ever presumed to attempt it.[34]

French historians have long used these short sentences to prove that when the *De Pignoribus Sanctorum* was written—during the reign of Henry I—the English kings had as yet no share in the splendid privilege already belonging to the Capetians.[35] This interpretation would have delighted Guibert, for it is what he wanted posterity to believe. But it is perhaps rather over-simplified. There is something a little suspect about the zeal with which the Abbot of Nogent—whose exaggerated patriotism is well known—defends the French dynasty's prerogative, for he surely had no need to choose out this Norman prince from among all the sovereigns of Europe, and expressly deny him the gift of medicinal healing. It looks very much as though 'some rumour of usurpation'—as Dr Crawfurd so delightfully puts it—had reached him from England.[36] Taken by itself, his evidence would not perhaps have proved anything one way or the other; but when put alongside William of Malmesbury's it is an indirect and involuntary confirmation of what we arrived at by induction above. In all probability, Henry I did touch for scrofula.

The passage from William of Malmesbury just discussed is not the only gloss in our various sources accompanying the healing of the scrofulous woman. I must now quote a sentence occurring in very similar form in three different authors, the Biographer, William and Osbert. It would seem probable that it already existed in the primitive collection of miracles drawn upon by the first two writers. I will give it in the words of the Biographer, who is the earliest of the three. In order to understand it, we should remember that Edward had been driven from his country by the Danish

invasion, and had spent his youth at the court of his family, the Norman Dukes.

> Now, strange though it may seem to us, the French say that he often did the same thing in his young days when he was in Neustria, which is now called Normandy.[37]

What an astonishing remark. Certainly, no man is a prophet in his own country. All the same, it is difficult to see why Edward as a young exile should have exercised for the benefit of foreigners a wonder-working power which was later to fail him in his own kingdom. Or rather, it is hard to understand how the notion that this had happened could have taken root in the minds of his hagiographers. Besides, what is the point of this appeal to people on the other side of the Channel, namely the French, in reference to a specifically English saint? A closer look at the history of Henry I's reign will provide us with the key to this mystery.[38]

Although a sovereign whose title was far from legitimate, Henry I was an extremely adroit politician. He made a point of flattering the feelings of his native subjects. Despite the gibes of the Norman nobility, he married a lady belonging to the island's ancient royal family. A son was born to him from this union, and he put about a prophecy according to which the young prince represented the national aspirations, offering him as the new green shoot from the old dynastic tree cut down in days gone by, by Harold's usurpation and by the Norman conquest. Since this vision needed a prophet, Henry and his advisers chose Edward the Confessor; and the last of the Anglo-Saxon kings was made to announce on his deathbed the advent of the predestined child. This episode occurred in the lives of the saint, and we come across it in the works enumerated above, in all of them under the same, or almost the same, form. Their common basis—made up, as we know, in all probability, from a collection of miracles that has not survived—had thus been influenced by Henry I's own political ideas.

In the light of these facts, let us now try to interpret the little story of the woman suffering from scrofula. It is mentioned in all the lives of St Edward, though naturally their testimony cannot be taken to mean that the Confessor really healed—or thought he healed—adenitis of the neck. It simply proves that at the time when the earliest of these lives was put together, this miracle was commonly being recounted; and this was during the reign of Henry I. We have weighty reasons for thinking that Henry did actually touch for scrofula. Upon what did he base his claims? William of Malmesbury has seen to it that we are aware of the conclusions respecting the miracle popularly attributed to St Edward, drawn by certain zealous persons anxious to find a precedent for their prince's beneficial action; and this was no doubt the official interpretation. What finer origin could be found for the royal prerogative than to link it up with the memory of that most pious monarch, dear to the hearts of Englishmen, whose heir William

the Conqueror himself had always claimed to be? The saint's biography thus reconstituted in the twelfth century bears very clear marks, as we have seen, of a governmental stamp. A prophecy having been introduced into it, would it not also have been quite natural to slip in a miraculous cure? Yet it is not likely that the story of the young English woman was invented just as it stands by unscrupulous redactors. The deliverance of a sufferer from scrofula was as natural, and—if we may so put it—as classic an exploit as to restore sight to the blind or the use of his limbs to a paralytic; and the hagiographers did not fail to attribute such mighty acts to St Edward. But when Henry I's advisers came across this miracle as part of the legend in its formative stage, along with many other similar manifestations, they were quite naturally led to give it a special place and use it to justify the wonder-working virtues of their master. Only there was one difficulty: this miracle was unique. Once only in his reign had Edward 'touched' for scrofula; and this was a very fragile basis for the special healing power claimed by King Henry as part of his royal heritage. On this point, the legend was already firmly established; it may well have seemed inconvenient, and perhaps even sacrilegious, to make any alterations. But before he came to the throne, Edward had lived in Normandy, though the English tradition paid no heed to this stay; so the idea was invented that there, at any rate, in the very court of Henry I's direct ancestors, Edward had healed numerous cases of scrofula. This emendation came into the primitive hagiological version, and is to be found in all the early lives.[39] William of Malmesbury rejected the conclusions being drawn from the Norman miracles by those about him; but he did not venture to reject a piece of information coming from his sources. Like everyone else, he believed in these prodigies performed on foreign soil. Today, we may rightly be more sceptical, or rather, more critical; and we must consider these prodigies too as 'a work of falsehood'.[40]

There is no reason, therefore, to believe that the Anglo-Saxon kings ever claimed by virtue of their royalty to heal the scrofulous—and Edward the Confessor was no more likely to have done so than his predecessors. It is certain that Henry II exercised this power, and probable that Henry I had already appropriated it. Working to justify it, he gave it the support of a great name, that of St Edward. So far then as our knowledge goes, such would seem to be the beginnings of the rite in England.[41]

II

The origins of the royal healing power: the sacred aspects of royalty in the early centuries of the Middle Ages

1 *The evolution of royalty in its sacred aspects: the anointing*

The problem confronting us now is a double one. The royal miracle stands out above all as the expression of a certain concept of supreme political power. From this point of view, to explain it would be to link it with the whole body of ideas and beliefs of which it was one of the most characteristic expressions. Moreover, does not all scientific 'explanation' rely on the principle of bringing a particular case within the compass of some more general phenomenon? But having brought our research this far, we shall not yet have completed our task, for if we were to stop at this point, we should be letting precisely the particular case slip through our fingers. We shall still have to see why the healing rite, begotten by a movement of thought and feeling common to a whole region of Europe, first saw the light at one particular moment rather than another, both in France and in England, but not elsewhere. In short, we must enquire into the deeper causes on the one hand, and on the other into the exact occasion, the quirk of history which brought into actual being an institution that had long held sway in people's minds.

But, it may perhaps be objected, do we really need a long investigation in order to discover the collective elements which are at the origin of touching for scrofula? Surely it is obvious from the outset that this apparently singular rite was only the last echo in mediaeval and modern society of those 'primitive' beliefs which science today has managed to reconstruct by studying the savage races. To understand this practice, it will surely be enough to run through the great catalogues of facts so carefully and ingeniously collected by Sir James Frazer in *The Golden Bough* and *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*. 'What would Louis XIV have said', writes Salomon Reinach, 'if it had been demonstrated to him that in touching for scrofula he was imitating a Polynesian chieftain?'[1] And already Montesquieu, under the mask of the Persian Usbeck, had written

of this same prince: 'This king is a great magician: he rules even over the minds of his subjects . . . He even goes so far as to make them believe he can heal them of all sorts of evils by touching them, so great is the strength and the power he has over their spirits.'[2] In Montesquieu's thought, the word magician was no more than a verbal sally: but nowadays we can readily give it its full meaning. I have placed this short quotation at the beginning of the Introduction of this book; but it might more fittingly still have stood on the first page of those splendid works by Sir James Frazer, which have taught us how to see links, which long remained unknown, between certain ancient concepts of the nature of things and the earliest political institutions of the human race. Yes, the miracle of scrofula is incontestably bound up with a whole psychological system which may on two counts be called 'primitive'; first, because it bears the marks of an undeveloped way of thinking still steeped in the irrational; and secondly, because it is found in a particularly pure state in those societies we are agreed to call 'primitive'. But in so saying, we have done no more than give an approximate indication of the kind of mental pictures to which our research should be directed. Historical reality is less simple and very much richer than any such formulae.

Sir James Frazer writes in *The Golden Bough:*

> Royal personages in the Pacific and elsewhere have been supposed to live in a sort of atmosphere highly charged with what we may call spiritual electricity, which, if it blasts all who intrude into its charmed circle, has happily also the gift of making whole again by a touch. We may conjecture that similar views prevailed in ancient times as to the predecessors of our English monarchs and *that accordingly scrofula received its name of the King's Evil from the belief that it was caused as well as cured by contact with a king.*[3]

Let us make certain that we understand. Sir James Frazer does not claim that the English or French sovereigns in the eleventh or twelfth centuries were thought capable of spreading scrofula all round them, as well as relieving it; he is simply imagining that, long ago in the dawn of history, their ancestors had used this double-edged weapon. Then gradually the deadly side of the royal gift had been forgotten, and only the beneficial side retained. In actual fact, as we already know, the wonder-working kings of the eleventh or twelfth centuries did not have to reject part of the ancestral heritage, since nothing in their miraculous powers came to them from a very remote past. This argument would seem then to be sufficient; yet, putting it on one side for the moment, let us suppose, if you like, that the healing powers of the Norman or Capetian princes went back to very distant origins. Would Sir James Frazer's hypothesis then be strengthened? I do not think so. It is based upon the case of the Tonga Islands in Polynesia, where certain chiefs are said to exercise a power of this kind. But what is

this argument from analogy really worth? The comparative method is extremely fertile, provided it is confined to general proportions: it cannot be used to reconstruct details.

Certain collective ideas affecting the whole social life are met with among a large number of peoples, showing great similarities in their broad outlines, and apparently symptomatic of specific states of civilization, for they vary in accordance with these. In other societies known to us only by relatively recent or incomplete documentation, there is no historical testimony to such ideas. Does this mean that no such ideas existed? Probably not; and comparative sociology allows us to reconstruct them with considerable likelihood. But these broad notions common to more or less the whole of humanity have clearly received varying applications in different places and circumstances. A study of the tribes of Oceania throws light upon the idea of a sacrosanct royalty as it existed under other skies in ancient or even mediaeval Europe; but one cannot expect to rediscover in Europe all the institutions of Oceania. In a Polynesian archipelago—the only example quoted—the chieftains are both the agents of disease and doctors: that is the form ascribed to the supernatual power residing in them. But elsewhere, the same power may have manifested itself in a different way, beneficially, for instance, and without any adverse counterpart. Many of the early missionaries thought they could descry among the 'savages' faint surviving traces of all sorts of Christian ideas. We should beware of making the opposite mistake by transporting the Antipodes to Paris or to London.

Let us then try to reconstruct in all its complexity the movement of beliefs and sentiments which made it possible for the rite of touching to come into existence in two countries of Europe.

The French and English kings were able to become miraculous physicians because they had already long been considered sacred persons. 'He is holy and the Anointed of the Lord,' as Peter of Blois said of his master Henry II, in order to justify his wonder-working powers. We must therefore show first of all how the sacred character of royalty came to be recognized, before going on to explain how by a natural association of ideas their healing power was deduced from this character as an almost self-evident conclusion.[4]

The Capetians always maintained themselves to be the authentic heirs of the Carolingian dynasty, and the Carolingians likewise of Clovis and his descendants; and the Norman kings of England claimed as their own patrimony the succession to the Anglo-Saxon princes. There are direct and continuous links between the chieftains of the ancient Franks, Angles and Saxons and the French or English kings of the twelfth century. So it is to the ancient Germanic royal lines that we must look in the first place, for through them we make contact with a deposit of extremely ancient ideas and institutions.

Unfortunately, our knowledge of them is very imperfect. In the absence of any written literature, the whole of pre-Christian Germany will always remain irremediably obscure. All that we can glimpse is a few gleams of light; but enough to make us certain that the concept of royalty among the Teutons, as with all peoples at the same stage of civilization, was deeply impressed with a religious character.[5] Tacitus had already observed that among the Teutons there was a distinction between the temporary leaders in warfare, freely chosen for their personal valour, and the kings, who were taken solely from certain noble families; that is to say, no doubt, certain families hereditarily endowed with a sacred virtue.[6] The kings were considered divine beings, or at the very least descended from the gods. 'Since the Goths', as Jordanes tells us in so many words, 'used to attribute their victories to the blessed influence emanating from their princes, they did not wish to look upon them as simple men; so they gave them the name of *Ases*, that is, demi-gods'.[7] The word *Ases* recurs in the ancient Scandinavian languages, where it served to designate the gods, or certain categories of them. We still possess several Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies, which all go back to Woden.[8] From this faith in the supernatural origin of kings there sprang a feeling of loyalty. It was not attached to a particular individual, for primogeniture did not exist, and hereditary rights within a dynasty were uncertain. The sovereign could be changed, provided that he was always taken from the same dynasty. As Athalaric wrote to the Roman Senate: 'Just as anyone born from among you is said to be of senatorial origin, so he who comes of the Amal family—to which all nobility gives first place—is worthy to reign.' And elsewhere, this same prince, with a blend of Germanic ideas and Roman vocabulary, spoke of 'the blood of the Amal family, destined for the purple'.[9] Only these predestined families were capable of providing really efficient masters, for they alone were the possessors of that mysterious blessing, *quasi fortuna* as Jordanes calls it, to which the people attributed their triumphs much more than to the military talent of a particular captain. The notion of personal legitimacy was weak, but that of dynastic legitimacy very strong.[10] In the sixth century, a detached group of the Heruli had settled in the region of the Danube; it had been followed there by a branch of the traditional line, which provided it with chiefs. But the day came when this line died out completely. The last of the line, like so many princes in those violent times, fell victim to assassination by his own subjects. But these barbarians, who had murdered their king, did not resign themselves to being without royal blood. They decided to go and bring back a representative of the ancient line from the distant country of their origins—'from Thule', as Procopius says—meaning no doubt the Scandinavian peninsula. Their first choice died on the journey; the ambassadors than retraced their steps and came back with a second. Meanwhile, the Heruli, tired of waiting, had finally chosen a new head, one of their own company, picked out solely

on his individual merit. Not daring, maybe, to elect him themselves, they had asked for a nomination by the Byzantine Emperor. But when the lawful heir arrived, in the course of a single night he gained the support of almost the whole people, although he was a complete stranger.[11]

These kings were in their divine capacity considered to possess a certain power over nature. In accordance with a notion met with in many other peoples, and particularly strong in Chinese societies, they were held responsible for the general order of things. A legend recorded in the thirteenth-century *Heimskringla* relates that Halfdan the Black, king of Norway, had been 'of all kings the one who had brought most success to the harvests'. When he died, instead of burying his corpse entire and in one single place, his subjects cut it into four pieces, and buried each portion under a mound in each of the four principal districts of the country; for 'the possession of the body'—or one of its fragments—'seemed to those who obtained it to give hope of further good harvests'.[12] It was also believed among the Danes of the eleventh century that by touching children and crops, a worthy prince could ensure a man fine offspring and fine harvests.[13] Now and again, when the harvest happened to fail, the king would be deposed. In a like case, the same fate used to befall the Burgundian kings, according to the testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus; and the Roman historian, with his customary intelligence, himself invites the reader to compare this custom with the traditions of ancient Egypt, the classic country of sacred royalty. The same practice seems to have flourished in pagan Sweden.[14]

Did the Teutonic kings with their mastery over the fertile seasons also extend their power to the healing of disease? The *Heimskringla* attributes some healings to King Olaf, the son of Harold, who reigned in Norway at the beginning of the eleventh century;[15] but, as we recalled above, this text was not written in Iceland until the thirteenth century, by a priest called Snorri Sturlason. Moreover, Olaf—St Olaf—was a Christian saint, and the miracles attributed to him by the Icelandic saga may be no more than the echo of a theme in hagiography. Our documents are no doubt too meagre to assert that no Germanic people ever viewed their king as a physician; and prudent wisdom suggests we had better leave this an open question. In the absence of documents, it is always tempting to have recourse to comparative sociology. Yet here too there is no obligation to maintain that kings in ancient Germany, just because they were endowed with divine power, were all or even mostly healers, for healing kings would seem to have been at all times and in all places distinctly rare. That at least is the impression given by Sir James Frazer's works. For examples of this form of royal magic recorded in these great collections are not very numerous. The Oualo chieftains of Senegal and the Polynesians of the Tonga Islands are quoted again and again, and their constant reappearances remind one of those figures in the theatre who walk round and round the same 'sets' to represent an army marching past on the stage.[16] Indeed,

there is nothing surprising about this dearth of examples. The miraculous power attributed to their kings by the 'primitives' is generally conceived as employed for collective ends which are intended to serve the well being of the whole group, and not as directed towards individual benefits. Their role is to call down rain or assure that the harvests are regular rather than to relieve the sufferings of individuals. Indeed, it would be easy to fill pages with examples of the 'rain-making' chiefs who appear in ethnographical records. This may perhaps explain why the rite of touching, with which we are here concerned, developed more readily in societies where religion prevented men from ascribing to their kings any influence over the great cosmic phenomena that rule the lives of nations.

A revolution in religion did, in fact, strike a deadly blow at the ancient concept of sacred royalty as it had flourished among the Teutons. The advent of Christianity stripped it of its natural support, the national paganism. The kings continued to exist as heads of State, and for a short while after the invasions their political power was even stronger than ever before; but they ceased—at least officially—to be considered divine persons. No doubt the old ideas did not die out all at once. They probably continued to live on more or less obscurely in the popular consciousness. Our documents show traces of this now and again, and we should probably discover many more if our sources were not all ecclesiastical in origin, and as a result hostile to the past[17] on this particular point. The long hair constituting the traditional attribute of the Frankish dynasty (all other freemen wore their hair short as soon as they were adult) had certainly been at the beginning a symbol of a supernatural nature. Or rather, hair that had never been cut must have been thought of originally as the seat of the miraculous power resident in the sons of the chosen race. The *reges criniti* were so many Samsons. This custom, which is supported by very ancient testimony, lasted as long as the Merovingians themselves, though we have no means of knowing whether it continued up to the end to have magic significance, at any rate among the common people.[18] Many persons belonging to the Anglo–Saxon royal houses were venerated as saints after their death, and the same is true, though in smaller numbers, of the Merovingians. Not that these lines were particularly fertile in religious or private virtues—far from it; but it was a favourite practice to canonize at the altar the members of families customarily considered holy.[19] From Dagobert onwards, the Merovingian dynasty sank into a state of impotence; yet these kings, who were simply marionettes, continued in office for more than a century and a half. The first *coup d'état* attempted against them—by Grimoald—was a miserable failure. Charles Martel himself thought he had sufficient power to suppress royalty for a time, though not in order to usurp the title himself. This failure and this prudent abstention can be partly explained by the rivalries among the great—but only in part; for we must believe that the legitimate line preserved a kind of prestige through this time of abasement.

A comparison has sometimes been drawn between the descendants of Clovis, reduced by the Mayors of the Palace to a purely representative existence, and the lives of the Mikados in ancient Japan under the Shoguns. Without getting this matter out of proportion, it would in fact seem probable that the Frankish princes, like the Japanese emperors, were protected over a long period if not exactly by their sacred character, at least by the dim memory in men's minds of their role in ancient times. Yet if we confine ourselves to official appearances, until the eighth century the Frankish or English kings do not seem to have been more than ordinary Christians—mere laymen, we might say. Their coming to the throne was not celebrated by any ecclesiastical ceremony, but only by rituals regulated by somewhat uncertain custom. They did not receive upon their foreheads any special religious impress.[20]

To those of the Germanic sovereigns who—like the Merovingians—found themselves reigning after the invasions over a profoundly romanized country, the traditions of the conquered people offered all the splendours of the imperial religion. Here too, no doubt, Christianity had exercised a passing influence; but although it had gradually changed some of the forms, it had scarcely affected the underlying foundations. In Byzantium, the imperial religion was destined to survive almost as long as the Empire.[21] We only know its official splendours, but cannot really enter into the hold it must have exercised on men's spirits. Some of the emperors were held to have wonder-working powers. Vespasian, who was proclaimed emperor in the East, in a milieu charged with messianic hopes, performed some healings; but this was at Alexandria, a place accustomed for thousands of years to venerating its chiefs as divine. Moreover, there were suspicions that the priests of Serapeum, whose skill was generally acknowledged, had engineered these miraculous manifestations. Hadrian, too, was said to have healed a blind woman.[22] But these are isolated instances. We shall never know whether the belief in the divinity of the emperors was strong enough for the masses to hold their miraculous powers as genuinely efficacious. Yet there can be no doubt that emperor-worship was a marvellously effective instrument of government, which was allowed to lapse with the coming of the barbarians.[23] Besides, the Merovingians did not pose as successors to the Empire. True, if we are to accept the testimony of Gregory of Tours—and I see no reason to reject it—Clovis did accept office at the hands of the sovereign of Byzantium, and by a sort of usurpation adopted the title of Augustus.[24] But his descendants did not continue to use this title. Nevertheless, they may well have felt freer than he did in relation to the Augustus on the shores of the Bosphorus; for the conquests of Justinian, reintroducing 'Roman' arms into the West, had led the Frankish kings to break free finally from all dependence upon the ancient masters of the world. Up till then, they had been willing to accept the rather vague supremacy of a distant emperor; now, they did not wish to remain attached

by any links of subjection, however vague, to a neighbour who was only too close and too menacing. They asserted their autonomy, notably by minting money in their own name; but whether from a remaining vestige of respect, or from mere indifference, they stopped short at assuming any of those ancient titles which recalled the sacred character of princes. The imperial cult disappeared from Gaul at the same time as the Roman domination. The most we can suppose is that with it the old habits of thought, and a certain tendency to confuse the categories of politics and divinity, did not completely perish.

Later on, Charlemagne renewed the links with the Roman tradition. The Empire came to life again.[25] But it was now an entirely Christian Empire. The imperial religion, which had been essentially pagan, and moreover interrupted by a long period of proscription, could not join in this revival. At Byzantium, the emperors had continued to call themselves divine; Charlemagne, or the particular counsellor who drew up in his name the preface to the *Libri Carolini*, could not refrain from reproaching them for their pride from the lofty security of his own orthodox position.[26] Nevertheless, this period saw the reintroduction of some more inoffensive expressions derived from the obsequious language of the Byzantine Empire, such as the sacred Emperors, the most sacred Augustus, and the sacred palace.[27] Did not Hincmar himself, for all his scrupulous denial of any sacerdotal character to the temporal sovereigns, so far forget himself one day as to write: 'the sacred eyes' of the Emperor?[28] But this term should not leave us under any illusion. In France, at any rate, it hardly survived beyond the Carolingian era.[29] Already in Rome it had been progressively divested of its original meaning. These pious formulae had become more or less simply expressions of politeness. With the writers of the ninth century, in short, they indicate no more than a verbal acquaintance with the Latin texts. Or if these apparently ancient words did sometimes carry a full sense with the first Frankish emperors' contemporaries, it meant that they were no longer thinking of the old outworn cult which had formerly used such terms, but of a new and authentically Christian ceremonial. Thanks to a new institution, the sovereigns of the West had once more become officially sacred; for they now received ecclesiastical consecration, and more particularly unction, the fundamental part of this rite, when they came to the throne. As we shall see, unction made its appearance in the barbarian kingdoms of the seventh and eighth centuries. In Byzantium, on the other hand, it was only introduced quite late in the day, and in obvious imitation of foreign customs. In Charlemagne's time, the people of those parts were apt to jeer at this gesture they did not understand. They said—probably in derision—that the Pope had anointed the Frankish emperor 'from head to foot'.[30] Historians have sometimes wondered what was the origin of the differences between the royal ceremonies of the West and the East. I think the reason is clear. The imperial religion

was still very much alive in the Rome of the East, and so made the new rite superfluous.

To sum up, it may be said that in the kingdoms which had arisen from the invasions, a multitude of memories with various origins, Germanic or Romano-oriental, surrounded royalty with a quasi-religious atmosphere of veneration; but there was no regular institution to embody this vague sentiment. In the end, it was the Bible that provided the means of reintroducing into the lawful ceremonies of Christianity the sacred royalty of past ages. To begin with, it provided some useful comparisons. In chapter 14 of Genesis there was the account of Abraham receiving the bread and wine at the hands of Melchisedech, who was both King of Salem and priest of the most High God[31]—a mysterious episode which the exegetes of today still have some difficulty in explaining. The early commentators got out of the difficulty by giving it a symbolical meaning. Melchisedech was a figure of Christ; and it is by virtue of this that he can be seen represented on so many cathedrals. But such an enigmatic personage was also calculated to tempt the apologists of royalty, for to those who attributed a superhuman character to kings this priest-king took the ideal back into a mysteriously distant past. At the time of the great controversy between the sacerdotal and the imperial power in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Melchisedech —St Melchisedech, as the Carolingian sacramentary of St-Amand calls him[32]—was distinctly in the fashion. He was presented as a model as early as the Merovingian period. Fortunatus says of Childebert: 'Our Melchisedech [who is] justly [called] king and priest, though a layman, has carried out the work that pertains to religion.'[33]

But the Old Testament was not only a source of symbols; it also provided the model for a very concrete institution. In the ancient world of the East, kings were as a matter of course considered to be sacred persons. Among a good many peoples, their supernatural character was marked by a ceremony whose significance was clear. On their accession, they were anointed on certain parts of their body with oil that had previously been blessed and hallowed. The Tell-el-Amarna tablets have preserved a letter that a dynast of Syria, Addu-nirari by name, addressed to the Pharaoh Amenophis IV about the year 1500 B.C., to remind him of the day when 'Manahbiria, the King of Egypt, your grandfather, made my grandfather Taku king in Nuhasse, and poured oil upon his head.' The day when the documents bearing on the anointing of our kings are finally collected, the transcription of this venerable clay fragment might well stand at the head of the work. For it is from those ancient Syrian or Canaanite civilizations, which had become so strangely familiar to the Christians of the seventh and eighth centuries through their reading of the Bible, that royal unction has come down to us. The sons of Israel were amongst those who practised it. Moreover, with them, and probably with the surrounding peoples, too, unction was not confined to their kings. It was a primary element in all

Hebrew ceremonial, and constituted the normal procedure for transferring a person or an object from the profane to the sacred category.[34] In this general application it was borrowed by Christianity from the Ancient Law, and soon began to play an important part in the ritual of the new religion, particularly in the West, and more especially in the countries of the Gallican Rite, Spain, Gaul, Great Britain and northern Italy. Here it was used more particularly in the confirmation of catechumens, and in the ordination of priests and bishops.[35] The idea of resuming these ancient Israelite customs in their entirety, and transferring them from the unction of catechumens or priests to the anointing of kings, must have been quite a natural development. The examples of David and Solomon provided a way of restoring to kings in a Christian setting the sacred character that belonged to them.[36]

The new institution first took shape in the Visigothic kingdom of Spain. Here, after the disappearance of Arianism, the Church and the royal dynasty enjoyed a particularly intimate union, and the institution came in as early as the seventh century. It was next introduced into the Frankish State.

It was never by virtue of their kingship that the Merovingians had received unction; and this applies, as we need hardly be reminded, to Clovis, no less than to the others. The only anointing he received was the one prescribed by the Gallican Rite for all catechumens. As we shall be seeing, legend much later in the day converted the ceremony carried out by St-Rémi at Rheims into the first royal consecration, though it was in truth no more than simple baptism. But in 751 Pepin, boldly risking the step his father Charles Martel had not dared to take, decided to consign to a convent the last descendants of Clovis, and to claim royal honours as well as royal power. He then felt the need to colour his usurpation with a sort of religious prestige. There is no doubt that the kings of old had always been considered by their faithful supporters far superior to the rest of the people; but the vague aura of mysticism surrounding them was solely due to the influence upon the collective consciousness of obscure memories dating from pagan times. The new dynasty, on the other hand, possessing an authentic sacrosanctity, were to owe their consecration to a definite act justified by the Bible, and fully Christian. The theologians in Gaul were quite prepared to accept this revival of Jewish practice, for the trend among them at that time was favourable to the Old Testament; and partly as a result of Irish influence, the Laws of Moses were penetrating into the discipline of the Church.[37] Thus Pepin became the first of the French kings to receive unction from the hands of priests, after the manner of the Hebrew chiefs. 'It is manifest to all men', he announced proudly in one of his proclamations, 'that, by anointing, Divine Providence has raised us to this throne.'[38] His successors were not slow to follow his example; and it was likewise towards the end of the eighth century that the same rite took root in England, probably in imitation of what had just taken place in

France. Before long, it had become a general practice throughout almost the whole of Western Europe.

At the same time a second rite with a different origin was being joined to it. On 25 December 800, in the basilica of St Peter, Pope Leo III had placed a 'crown' on the head of Charlemagne, and proclaimed him emperor. This was no doubt a golden circle, like the one that had for many centuries on the heads of the Byzantine sovereigns replaced the diadem formerly worn by Constantine and his immediate successors—a band of material ornamented with pearls and precious stones. Crown and diadem had both been borrowed by the emperors from the Eastern monarchs; the diadem probably from Persia. Originally, no doubt, they had possessed a religious virtue; but in the eyes of Christians contemporary with Charlemagne, the only sacred character of the crown came from the hands that set it upon the prince's head, namely the Patriarch in Byzantium and the Pope in Rome, and from the ecclesiastical ritual surrounding the prelate at that moment. Having once been anointed king, Charlemagne was not reanointed emperor. For the first time at Rheims in 816, his son, Louis the Pious, received from Pope Stephen IV, along with the imperial title, the anointing with holy oil as well as the crown. From that time onwards, the two actions became more or less inseparable. For the consecration of an emperor, both became necessary; and this was soon the case for the consecration of a king. From the time of Charles the Bald in France, and from the ninth century in England, we see the kings being successively anointed and crowned. Around these two fundamental rites there rapidly grew up in every country a full and rich ceremonial. In a very short time there was a multiplication of the royal insignia handed to the new sovereign. Already in Charles the Bald's time the sceptre had made its appearance along with the crown; and the same thing took place in England, according to the old English liturgical texts. The emblems were mostly ancient; the novelty was to give them a place in the religious ceremonies of the enthronement. In short, there was always something of a double element in these solemnities: on the one hand, the handing over of the insignia, among which the crown remained the main element; on the other, the anointing, which remained up to the end the particular act of sanctification. This was how consecration came into being.[39]

And so, to use the biblical expression, kings had become the 'Lord's Anointed', protected from all the machinations of the wicked by the divine word, for God himself had said: 'Touch not mine anointed'. This commandment was recalled in 787 at the Council of Chelsea, in the course of which the first royal anointing in England probably took place.[40] The effect was to transform the enemies of royalty into apparently sacrilegious persons; though this provided a rather illusory protection, to judge by the violent history of those troubled times.[41] For all we know, however, princes may well have set more store by it than we should imagine today,

and the desire to claim the benefit of this divine word from the Sacred Book may have influenced more than one of them to seek the consecration offered by the Church.

By the holy oil, sovereigns were exalted far above the common crowd, for did they not share this privilege with priests and bishops? Yet there was a reverse side of the coin. In the course of the ceremony, the officiating priest carrying out the unction seemed for a moment superior to the monarch who was devoutly receiving it. It might well have been thought from henceforth that a priest was necessary for the making of a king, an obvious sign of the superiority of the spiritual over the temporal. Very soon after the time of Charlemagne, ideas of this kind were already being upheld by some prelates. For instance, there was Hincmar of Rheims: no one attached more value to royal consecration than he did. Although this ceremony only had a fairly short history behind it, Hincmar—as we shall see later on—managed to find a famous and miraculous precedent for it, either by invention, or by the ingenious adaptation of a legend. How was it that this man, preeminently capable of vast designs, should have been so interested in these liturgical actions? All we need do in order to understand the reasons for his attitude is to set side by side two passages selected from his works. In 868 he wrote to Charles the Bald: 'It is to your anointing, an episcopal and spiritual act, and to the blessing that flows from it, much more than to your temporal power, that you owe your royal dignity.' So there could be no true king without consecration, whatever his 'terrestrial' claims to the throne might be. Certain ecclesiastical circles had already reached this conclusion within less than a hundred years after the first Frankish consecration. And in another passage from the proceedings of the Council of Ste-Macre, drawn up by Hincmar, who presided over the assembly: 'The dignity of pontiffs is above that of kings; for kings are consecrated kings by pontiffs, whereas pontiffs cannot be consecrated by kings.'[42] Nothing could really be clearer. Perhaps it was fear of a similar interpretation that led the king of Germany, Henry I, in the following century, to be the only one of his time and his line to refuse both the anointing and the crown at the hands of the Archbishop of Mainz, and to reign 'without the blessing of the pontiffs'[43]—to quote the reproach levelled at him by the author of a certain life of a saint, who puts the words into the mouth of the apostle St Peter. The new rite was clearly a two-edged weapon.

Yet it was only to be seen quite openly as such some few centuries later, when the great Gregorian controversy had opened. For the first two or three centuries, it would seem above all to have helped confirm in the minds of the people—with the exception of a few of the Church's theorists—the notion of the sacred character, or better still, the quasi-priestly character, of royalty. Of course, some discerning minds were quickly aware of the dangers for the Church, and even for Christianity, in this confusion between an essentially temporal dignity and the priesthood as

such. And here we once again come across Hincmar. He never tired of repeating that since the advent of Christ, no man could be both priest and king.[44] But his very insistence proves how widespread was the idea he wished to combat. The ancient liturgy of consecration will show us better than any other document that it had assumed an official colouring.

For a moment, then, let us examine these ancient texts. We shall have no difficulty in noting that a special point has been made of putting into them everything that could possibly favour a confusion between these two very similar rites, one the gateway to the priesthood, the other to royalty. In general, the necessary formulae are taken from the Old Law: 'May thy hands be anointed with the holy oil, which anointed the kings and *the prophets*'—so runs a very ancient ritual, contemporary with the early days of the Carolingian dynasty. The same thought is developed with more precision in a doubtless later prayer. We do not know its exact date of composition, but it appears for the first time in history at the crowing of Charles the Bald as king of Lorraine. By a strange chance, it was Hincmar in person who carried out the act of consecration that day; and he was no doubt bound by already established tradition to use the following words: 'May God crown thee with the crown of glory . . . and make thee king by this anointing given with oil by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who anointed the priests and kings and prophets and martyrs.' And here is the ancient Anglo-Saxon ceremonial wording: 'O God . . . Thou who by the anointing with oil didst consecrate thy servant Aaron to be priest, and didst in later days with the self-same oil of anointing make priests and kings and prophets to reign over Israel . . . we pray Thee, Almighty Father, that Thou wilt vouchsafe to sanctify with thy blessing, by means of this oil taken from one of thy creatures, thy servant here present before Thee . . . and grant him the power to be a faithful follower of the example of Aaron in thy service.'[45] Clearly, the vision conjured up before the English or Frankish sovereigns on this consecration-day was not simply a picture of the Jewish kings, but also the priests and the prophets, and the great figure of Aaron, founder of the Hebrew priesthood—all, so to speak, their ancestors. It is hardly surprising to find that a poet of the time, celebrating the consecration of an emperor—a pretty poor emperor, Berengar of Frinli, but what does that matter here?—ventures to say of his hero, as he shows him advancing towards the church where the ceremony will take place: 'soon he would be a priest', *mox quippe sacerdos futurus erat*.[46]

Moreover, the leaders of the clergy had not always spoken in the language of Hincmar. At the period when he was so crisply setting forth the incompatibility under the New Law of combining the dignities of priest and king, the growing weakness of the dynasty was encouraging the prelates to claim the position of mentors to the king; whereas during the

flourishing days of the Carolingian State, this tone would have been quite out of place. In 794, the bishops of northern Italy present at the Synod of Frankfurt published a defence of orthodox doctrine against the Spanish Adoptionists. At the end of this theological declaration there was an appeal to the sovereign, as protector of the faith. In it, Charlemagne was called not only 'lord and father' and 'most prudent governor of all Christians', but also—in so many words—'king and priest'.[47] And some years earlier, Pope Stephen III himself, wishing to flatter Charles and Carloman, whose services he needed, had had the idea of seeking out from the First Epistle of Peter an expression applied by the apostle to the elect, and by slightly diverting it from its original meaning, using it in honour of the Frankish dynasty: 'you are a holy race, and royal priesthood.'[48] In spite of all that could subsequently be said by all the Hincmars in the world, such expressions were never forgotten.

Thus the monarchies of Western Europe, already heirs to long years of veneration, found themselves definitively stamped with a divine seal, which they were to bear for ever. On this point, tradition was not denied either by Capetian France, or Norman England, or for that matter by the Saxon or Salic emperors of Germany. It was quite the contrary. For in the eleventh century, a whole party made it their business to bring the royal dignity closer to the priesthood, in a more outright manner than ever before. We shall have a word or two to say later on about those efforts, but they do not concern us for the moment. It is enough to know that, quite independently of any exact assimilation to the priesthood, the kings in the two countries specially concerning us continued to be considered sacred beings. Of this, the documents do not leave us in the slightest doubt. We still have certain letters addressed to Robert the Pious by one of the highly respected prelates of his time, Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres, in which the bishop does not scruple to give the king the titles of 'Holy Father' and 'Your Holiness', reserved by Catholics today for the supreme head of their Church.[49] And we already saw above how Peter of Blois deduced the 'holiness' of kings from their anointing; a subject on which, no doubt, most of his subjects were of this same opinion.

But Peter of Blois went further. My master, he said in effect, is a sacred person: so he can heal the sick. This would appear at first sight to be a strange deduction; but as we shall see, to a mind of normal breadth of outlook in the twelfth century, there would have been nothing astonishing about this idea.

2 *The healing power of the sacred person*

The men of the Middle Ages—or the vast majority of them at all events—were accustomed to picture the things of religion in an extremely rational

and down-to-earth fashion. And it is difficult to see how this could have been otherwise. The miraculous world to which the Christian rites gave access did not appear to them to be separated from the world they lived in by an impassable abyss, for the two worlds interpenetrated one another. How could it be possible for actions affecting the life beyond not to have an effect also on this life here below? Of course, the idea of this kind of intervention did not shock anyone, since no one had any accurate conception of natural laws. Sacred actions, objects or individuals were thus thought of not only as reservoirs of powers available beyond this present life, but also as sources of energy capable of exerting an immediate influence on this earth too. Moreover, they pictured this energy in such concrete terms that they sometimes even represented it as possessing a certain weight. Gregory of Tours tells us that a piece of material placed upon the altar of a great saint—such as St Peter or St Martin—would become heavier than before, provided always that the saint was willing to display his power.[50]

The priest, thought to be possessed of sacred powers, was considered by many as a kind of magician, and as such was sometimes venerated and sometimes hated. In certain places, people would cross themselves as he passed by, since meeting him was considered a bad omen.[51] In eleventh-century Denmark, the priests were held responsible for disturbances in the weather and for infections in the same way as witches, and they were sometimes persecuted as the agents of such evils, and with such bitterness that Gregory VII had to make a protest.[52] Besides, there is no need for us to look so far north; for there is no doubt at all that the following instructive anecdote belongs to thirteenth-century France. Jacques de Vitry, the popular writer who relates it, says that he had it 'on very reliable authority'. An epidemic broke out in a certain village, and to put an end to it, the villagers could think of nothing better than to sacrifice their *curé*. One day, when he was wearing his robes and conducting a funeral, they threw him headlong into the grave alongside the corpse.[53] And similar insensate practices—though in rather milder forms—still survive today.

Thus the power commonly ascribed by public opinion to a sacred person could sometimes take on formidable or adverse shapes; but, more often than not, it was of course regarded as beneficent. Now is there any greater and more perceptible benefit than health? It was an easy step to attribute healing power to everything that in some measure formed part of the consecration rite.[54] The Host, the communion wine, the baptismal water, the ablution water in which the officiant had dipped his hands after touching the sacred elements, the very fingers of the priest—all these were regarded as so many remedies. And even today, in certain provinces, the dust from a church and the moss growing on its walls are held to partake of the same properties.[55] This kind of idea sometimes led uneducated minds into strange aberrations. Gregory of Tours tells the story of some barbarian

chieftains who, suffering pains in their feet, bathed them in a paten[56] which was used to hold the sacred host. The clergy naturally condemned such excesses; but they allowed the continuance of those practices which they did not consider harmful to the due dignity of worship. Moreover, popular beliefs were largely out of their control. Among all the sacramentals, the holy oils, being the normal vehicle of consecrations, seemed to be particularly rich in supernatural virtues. The parties to a trial by ordeal would swallow some in order to ensure a favourable result for themselves. Above all, the holy oils were held to be marvellously effective against all bodily ills, and it proved necessary to safeguard the vessels containing them against the indiscreet attentions of the faithful.[57] In truth, in those days the word 'consecrated' implied the possession of power to heal.

Let us remember, then, what kings were at this period. Almost everyone believed, in the words of Peter of Blois, in their 'holiness'. But this notion went even further. Whence came this 'holiness'? Largely, no doubt, in the eyes of the people, from this family predestination in which the masses, holding on to ancient ideas, had certainly not lost faith; but also since Carolingian times, more specifically and from a more Christian sentiment, from the religious rite of unction—in other words, from the consecrated oil which likewise seemed the most effective remedy for so many illnesses. Thus kings were doubly marked out for the role of beneficent wonder-workers—first by their sacred character *per se*, and then more particularly by the most apparent and venerable of its origins, through which this sacred character was held to act. Sooner or later, it would seem, they were bound to figure as healers.

Yet they did not become healers straight away, that is, not immediately after the introduction of anointing for kings in the States of Western Europe, nor in all countries. So the general considerations just put forward are not enough to explain the appearance of the royal touch in France and in England; they can do no more than show how men's minds were prepared to conceive or to admit such a practice. In order to account for its birth at a specific date and in a particular environment, we shall have to appeal to facts of a different and more fortuitous order, since they imply to a higher degree the interplay of individual wills.

3 *The dynastic policy of the early Capetians and of Henry I (Beauclerc)*

The first French sovereign thought to have healed the sick was Robert the Pious. Now Robert was the second representative of a new dynasty. He received the royal title and anointing in his father Hugh's lifetime, in 987, that is to say in the very year of the usurpation. The Capetians were successful, and that is why it is not easy for us to imagine how frail their power must have seemed in those early years. Yet we know that it was in fact

contested. There was great prestige attached to the Carolingians, and since 936 no one had dared to dispute their right to the crown. It needed a hunting accident (causing the death of Louis V) and an international intrigue to make their fall a possibility. In 987, and even later, who could have been certain that they had fallen for good? For many, no doubt, this association of father and son together on the throne was only an interim measure: as Gerbert wrote in 989 or 990, they were only 'kings provisionally' (*interreges*).[58] For a long time there were centres of opposition, notably at Sens, and in the South. As a matter of fact, a lucky stroke on Palm Sunday 991, which delivered the pretender of Charlemagne's line into Hugh's hands, was to make ineffectual any efforts that might have been made by the partisans of his line, since its head was henceforward a prisoner, and its last descendants were destined to disappear into oblivion. But this unlooked-for success was no guarantee for the future. The continuing loyalty towards the descendants of their former masters shown by some legitimists had perhaps never been a very serious threat to the Capetian house. The real menace lay elsewhere, in the sharp blow that these same events of 987, to which the new kings owed their throne, had administered to the loyalty of their subjects and above all to the principle of hereditary monarchy. The decisions of the assembly at Senlis looked dangerously like a triumph for the elective principle. To be sure, this was no new principle. In the ancient Germanic people, at least, as we have seen, it had been balanced by the obligation to choose the king always from the sacred line. But now it looked as though the right of free choice might become quite unfettered. The historian Richer puts into the mouth of Archbishop Adalberon, as part of his harangue to the notables in favour in Hugh Capet, the following formidable phrase: 'Royalty is not a matter of hereditary right'[59] and in a work dedicated to King Hugh and King Robert themselves, Abbo wrote these words: 'We recognize three kinds of general election—that of a king or emperor, that of a bishop, and that of an abbot'.[60] This latter statement should be noted as outstandingly significant. The clergy, used to considering election as the sole canonical source of the bishop's or the abbot's power, were naturally tempted to see it also as the most laudable origin of supreme political power. What had been brought about by one election however, could be undone by another, if need be without waiting for the death of the first elected person, and in any case without regard for the claims of his children. People had certainly not forgotten what had happened during the fifty years that had followed the deposition of Charles the Fat. And whatever might be the origin of the fortunate candidate, there was always unction to sanctify the choice. In short, the most urgent task confronting the Capetians was to re-establish the legitimacy of their line to their own advantage. They had only to be conscious of the perils surrounding them, and the dangers bound to fall upon their descendants' heads, to feel the necessity for some fresh mani-

festation calculated to increase the splendour of their name. In very similar conditions, the Carolingians had fallen back upon a biblical rite, royal unction. It is surely very possible for the appearance of the healing power under Robert II to be explained as the result of the same kind of solicitude as had formerly prompted Pepin to imitate the example of the Hebrew princes. To affirm this would be presumptuous; but it is certainly a tempting supposition.

Of course, it was not simply a matter of cold calculation. Robert enjoyed a great reputation for personal piety, which probably explains why the Capetian miracle began with him and not with his father Hugh. The saintly character attributed to the king as a human being, together with the sanctity inherent in royalty, must quite naturally have led his subjects to credit him with wonder-working gifts of healing. We can if we like suppose that the first people who asked for the royal touch—at a date we are never likely to know—did so of their own accord. It is even quite possible after all that other similar deeds had already been performed, here and there, in the previous reigns, as formerly in the time of Guntram. But when we see these beliefs, hitherto rather insubstantial, taking shape at such an opportune moment for this still rather insecure dynasty, it seems hard to think that there was not some ulterior political motive at work in their crystallization, though not of course in their original formation. Moreover, there is no doubt that Robert and his advisers had faith in the marvellous powers emanating from his person. The history of religions gives abundant proof that there is no need to be a sceptic in order to exploit a miracle. The court probably did its utmost to attract sufferers and to spread abroad the good news of any cures that took place. To start with, it cannot have seemed of much importance to know whether the power to heal was personal to the master of the moment, or inherent in the Capetian blood. In fact, as we have already noted, Robert's successors took good care not to let such a splendid gift fall into disuse. They too proceeded to heal, and soon came to specialize in the specific disease of scrofula.

It may be wondered whether each of them, as he claimed his share in this glorious privilege, was looking any further than his own personal interest. Nevertheless, unconsciously perhaps, their united efforts had the ultimate effect of endowing their whole house with a supernatural character. Besides, up to the reign of Henry Beauclerc, who—as we know—instituted the rite in England, that is to say, up to, at the earliest, the year 1100, Robert II and his descendants were the only European kings to touch the sick; the other kings, although 'the Lord's anointed', did not attempt to heal. It would seem then that something else besides unction was needed to convey this wonderful talent. To make a real king, a really saintly king, something else was required beyond an election followed by consecration: ancestral virtue was still an element that counted for something. The persistence of the claims to miraculous healing-powers in the

Capetian line certainly did not by itself create that faith in the legitimacy of their family which was to prove one of the best supports of the French crown. Precisely the opposite was the case: the idea of this inherited miracle was only accepted because there still lingered on in men's hearts some trace of the ancient notions concerning hereditarily sacred families. Yet it cannot be doubted that the spectacle of these royal healings served to strengthen this feeling, and somehow renew its youth. The second Capetian had begun these wonders; his descendants—much to the benefit of the monarchy—made it no longer the prerogative of a particular king, but of the whole dynasty.

Let us pass on now to England. There too we shall find physician-kings. So we are confronted by the eternal problem facing historians when they meet with similar institutions in neighbouring States; is this coincidence, or a case of interaction? And if we incline to the latter hypothesis, in which dynasty are we to look for the models, and in which for the imitators? It was formerly a burning question, for patriotism was long interested in its solution. The early scholars of the sixteenth or seventeenth century who took it up never failed to come down on the side of France or England according to whether they were French or English themselves. Today, it will not be difficult for us to face the question more dispassionately. Of course, the collective beliefs that originated the healing rites and made possible their success were the fruits of a political and religious state common to the whole of Western Europe. They had blossomed of their own accord in England no less than in France, and then likewise faded away; but a day came when they took concrete shape on both sides of the Channel in a precise and regular institution—the royal 'touch'; and it was in the birth of this institution that the influence of one of the countries on the other made itself felt.

Let us take a look at the dates. Henry Beauclerc, the first of his line known to have touched the sick, came to the throne in the year 1100. By this time Robert II, who certainly seems to have been the initiator in France, had been dead sixty-nine years. The Capetians were not plagiarists: but were they themselves plagiarized? If the royal miracle had developed in England independently of all foreign imitation, it would probably have evolved in the same manner as in France: first the appearance of wonder-working virtue applied to all diseases indiscriminately, then—by a random development that will always remain mysterious—a progressive specialization towards one specific disease; and it would be puzzling to think that scrofula too had been chosen purely by chance. True, scrofula is a disease lending itself particularly to the miraculous, because, as we have already seen, it can easily give the illusion of having been cured. But there are many other affections to which this applies. There were saints known to specialize in the healing of scrofula; but how many other illnesses are there in which such-and-such a particular saint is

invoked? Now, the English kings would never appear to have claimed even at the beginning any healing power of an indeterminate character. From the very start, the disease they claimed to be able to relieve was precisely the one their neighbours in France had taken upon them to heal as a result of a perfectly natural development. Remember that Henry I was more than half French: he could scarcely be unaware of the cures performed by the Capetian who was his feudal lord and rival. He must have envied their prestige, and must surely have wanted to imitate them.[61]

But he did not admit to any imitation. He had the happy idea of placing his miraculous power under the patronage of a great national figure. As his patron and guarantor he took Edward the Confessor, the last representative of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty to which he had striven to link himself in marriage. What could have been a better choice than this virtuous sovereign who was soon to become the official saint of the monarchy? Did he perhaps experience some difficulties with the religious opinions of his country? At the time when Robert the Pious had begun to touch those who were suffering from disease in France, the Gregorian reforms had not yet come into being. We shall return to them later, and shall see how little sympathy they had for the prerogatives of kings, and especially how hostile they were to anything that smacked of usurpation in respect of any priestly privileges. When the healing rite crossed the Channel, the reform was at the height of its activity; and its leading ideas were expressed, as we have seen, in William of Malmesbury's scornful phrase in protest against the 'falsification' undertaken by the faithful supporters of royalty. But William's attitude must not be taken as typical of all English Churchmen. About the time when Henry I began to use his miraculous powers, a cleric attached to York Minster was writing his thirty-five treatises, representing the quintessence of all the anti-Gregorian ideas, and displaying the most absolute and unyielding faith in the virtues of royal anointing, and in the sacerdotal and quasi-divine character of royalty.[62] Henry I himself, at least throughout the first part of his reign, was in a delicate situation as regards the reformers. It was probably members of his entourage who drew up a false papal bull, defying all these new principles, and recognizing that the kings of England possessed 'the patronage and right of protection . . . of all the churches in England' and a kind of perpetual pontifical power of legation.[63] It is not to be wondered at that this was the moment doubtless chosen by Henry to establish the wonder-working practice in his dominions, seeing that it represented the apotheosis of belief in the sacred power of kings. Nor is it surprising that this practice flourished from that time onwards in a thoroughly favourable soil.

This rite, then, would seem to have originated in France towards the year 1000, and about a century later in England. Thus the royal touch made its appearance in dynasties where, in contrast to the ancient Germanic custom, primogeniture was beginning to prevail. In Moslem countries

during the early days of Islam, it was thought that the royal blood could cure rabies; but among the mass of believers the reigning monarch, the Caliph, was not the sole possessor of this virtue, for every member of the family from which the Caliph had to be chosen had the same miraculous powers attributed to the blood which flowed in his veins.[64] The fact is that the whole royal race was considered sacred; Islamic States have never, in fact, recognized the privileges of the first-born in any political matter. On the other hand in France and in England, the healing of scrofula was always held to be a prerogative strictly reserved to the sovereign. The king's descendants did not share in it, unless they themselves were kings.[65] No longer, as among the early Germanic peoples, did the sacred character extend to a whole line; it had become definitively concentrated in a single person, the head of the eldest branch, the sole lawful heir to the crown, who alone possessed the right to work miracles.

For all religious phenomena, there are two traditional explanations. One—call it Voltairian, if you like—prefers to see the fact under study as the conscious work of an individual thought very sure of what it is doing. The other, on the contrary, looks rather for the expression of social forces of an obscure and profound nature; this might well be called the romantic approach. For has not one of the great services of Romanticism been its vigorous accentuation of the spontaneous in human affairs? These two kinds of interpretation are only apparently in contradiction. If an institution marked out for particular ends chosen by an individual will is to take hold upon an entire nation, it must also be borne along by the deeper currents of the collective consciousness. The reverse is perhaps also true: for a rather vague belief to become crystallized in a regular rite, it is of some importance that clearly expressed personal wills should help it to take shape. If the hypotheses put forward above are acceptable, the history of the royal touch will deserve to be numbered among the already plentiful examples from the past in which a dual action of this kind has been at work.

Notes

PREFACE

1 I likewise owe a very special debt of gratitude to my colleagues P. Alfaric and E. Hoepffner, who—along with L. Febvre—have been kind enough to help me with correcting the proofs.

INTRODUCTION

1 A little difficulty arises regarding this person. The Venetian document quoted below in n. 2 calls him Richard: 'fratri Ricardo Dei gratia Bisaciensis episcopus, incliti principis domini regis Roberti capellano et familiari domestico'. But in 1340 the Bishop of Bisaccia, who was a Dominican and in consequence a 'Friar', was called Francis; cf. Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, 2nd ed., 1913, and Ughelli, *Italia sacra*, vol. VI, Venice, 1720, col. 841. It can hardly be doubted that Francis was the person who held forth in front of the Doge; the Venetian scribe must somewhere or other have made a mistake in reading or copying (perhaps an incorrect initial?). I have thought it right to correct this.

2 Venice, Archivio di Stato, *Commemoriali*, vol. III, p. 171; analysed in *Cal. State Papers, Venice*, I, no. 25. I am indebted for a copy of this most interesting piece to the extreme kindness of M. Cantarelli, professor at the University of Rome. There is no mention of the Bishop of Bisaccia's embassy in E. Deprez, *Les Préliminaires de la Guerre de Cent Ans*, Bibl. Athènes et Rome, 1902. The analysis of the *Calendar* is not free of mistakes: it translates *comitatum de Pontyus in Picardiam* (le Ponthieu) as 'the counties . . . of Pontoise'.

3 '. . . ne tanta strages Christianorum, que ex dicto belo orta et oritur et oriri in posterum creditur, ipsi serenissimo principi Eudoardo imputaretur aliquatenus, in principio dicte guerre suas literas supradicto destinavit Philipo, continentes quod ad evitandum mala super inocentes ventura eligeret alterum trium: silicet quod de pari ipsi duo soli duelum intrarent,

vel eligeret sibi sex vel octo aut quot velet, et ipse totidem, et si[c] questio terminaretur inter paucos, Altissimo de celo justitiam querenti victoriam tribuente; aut si verus rex Francie esse[t], ut asserit, faceret probam offerendo se leonibus famelicis qui verum regem nullactenus lesunt; aut miraculum de curandis infirmis, sicut solent facere ceteri reges veri, faceret [MS: facerent]; alias indignum se regni Francie reputaret. Que omnia supradicta, ac plures et diversos [MS: diversi] pacis tractatus contempsit, se in superbiam elevando.'

4 For the belief relating to lions, see p. 148. For the four Venetians' journey, see p. 63.

5 Cf. d'Albon, *De la Maiesté royalle, institution et preeminence et des faveurs Divines particulieres envers icelle*, Lyons, 1575, p. 29v.

6 I am moreover well aware that in the course of my enquiry I have not always succeeded in holding the balance between the two countries whose parallel destinies I wished to follow. Sometimes England may seem to have been somewhat neglected. I have, I think, been able to study the healing rites in England just as thoroughly (except for a few details) as in France; but not the history of sacred royalty in general. The present state of Europe (1923) is unfavourable to travel and to the purchase of foreign books by public or private libraries; and it makes research in comparative history more difficult that ever. The remedy would no doubt be a good system of international loans, for both printed books and manuscripts; but it is well known that Great Britain, in particular, has not yet embarked on such a course. As I have already indicated, my work was only made possible by the generous gift on the part of M. de Rothschild, to whom the Institut de France owes its London house. Unfortunately, I was only able to fit in a single visit to England, at—or very near—the beginning of my labours, that is, at a time when the problems never show up in all the breadth and complexity they are destined to reveal later on. Hence certain gaps which I have not always managed to fill in, in spite of the kindness of my London friends.

7 On 17 May 1691; the speech was printed: *Speculum boni principis in Henrico Magno Franciae et Navarrae rege exhibitum exercitatione politica Deo annuente, in inclyta Argentoratensium Academia . . . Argentorati, Literis Joh. Friderici Spoor* (small quarto brochure, 54pp.). This little work must be very rare: I know of no other copies but those in the Bibl. Nat. and the Bibl. Wilhelmitana at Strasbourg. On p. 12 there is a eulogy of the Edict of Nantes, which—in spite of its brevity—might well have been significant in its day. Apart from the articles in the *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* and *La France protestante*, the reader can consult for Zentgraff's career O. Berger-Levrault, *Annales des professeurs des Académies et Universités alsaciennes*, Nancy, 1892, p. 262.

BOOK I CHAPTER I *The beginnings of the touch for scrofula*

1 The confusion with affections of the face is still nowadays one of those against which there are warnings for practitioners in modern medical treatises; cf. de Gennes in Brouardel, Gilbert and Girode, *Traité de*

Médecine et de Thérapeutique, III, pp. 506 ff. For confusion with eye diseases, cf. e.g. Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia*, pp. 140 ff., 149, 168. Cf. Crawfurd, *King's Evil*, p. 99.

2 For Italy (the Lucca region), see Arnold of Villanova's evidence quoted by H. Finke, 'Aus den Tagen Bonifaz VIII' (*Vorreformationsgeschichtliche Forschungen 2*), Münster, 1902, p. 105, n. 2. For Spain, below, Book 2, Ch. V, n. 7.

3 What follows is taken from *De Pignoribus Sanctorum* by Guibert de Nogent, the most accessible edition of which is Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 156.

4 *P.L.*, vol. 156, col. 651ff.

5 Col. 664 at the beginning of Book III §IV: 'in eorum libello qui super dente hoc et sanctorum loci miraculis actitat'.

6 Col. 607 'nobis contigui'; col. 651 'finitimi nostri'.

7 Col. 652 'Attendite, falsarii . . .'.

8 Bibl. Nat. MS. Lat. 2900 which comes from this very monastery at Nogent.

9 See in particular the very interesting memoir by M. Abel Lefranc, 'Le Traité des reliques de Guibert de Nogent et les commencements de la critique historique au moyen âge', in *Études d'histoire du moyen âge dédiées à Gabriel Monod*, 1896, p. 285. M. Lefranc seems to me slightly to exaggerate Guibert's critical sense, though there is certainly no denying it. Cf. Bernard Monod, *Le Moine Guibert et son temps*, 1905.

10 Col. 615 and 616. Incidentally, the passage relating to the scrofula is rather strangely intercalated in the middle of the argument, between the examples from antiquity and the reminder of the prophecies of Balaam and Caiaphas. The treatise as a whole is very badly composed. The greater part of the examples quoted by Guibert de Nogent were the classical ones of that time; see e.g. the moral drawn by Peter Damian from the prophecy of Caiaphas—taken as the type of the Simonist—in *Liber gratissimus*, chapter X, *Monumenta Germaniae, Libelli de lite*, I, p. 31.

11 I quote from the manuscript, fol. 14: 'Quid quod dominum nostrum Ludovicum regem consuetudinario uti videmus prodigio? Hos plane, qui scrophas circa jugulum, aut uspiam in corpore patiuntur, ad tactum eius, superadito crucis signo, vidi catervatim, me ei coherente et etiam prohibente, concurrere. Quos tamen ille ingenita liberalitate, serena ad se manus obuncans, humillime consignabat. Cuius gloriam miraculi cum Philippus pater ejus alacriter exerceret, nescio quibus incidentibus culpis amisit'. The text of *P.L.*, vol. 156, col. 616, spelling apart, is correct.

12 Cf. G. Bourgin, the introduction to his edition of Guibert de Nogent, *Histoire de sa vie* (Collect. de textes pour l'étude et l'ens. de l'histoire), p. xiii. Bourgin seems not to have noticed a passage in the *De Pignoribus* relating to the healing of scrofula, or he would not have represented the meetings between Guibert and the king as merely 'probable'.

13 Ordericus Vitalis, Book VIII, chapter xx, ed. Le Prévost, III, p. 390.

14 It will be found collected together above, see p. 74.

15 Du Peyrat, *Histoire ecclésiastique de la cour*, p. 817. It will be noticed that in our time Sir James Frazer has taken up again the old theory of du Laurens and Pierre Mathieu (*Golden Bough*, I, p. 370), without realizing the historical difficulties it raises.

16 *Historia Francorum*, 9, c. 21: 'Nam caelebre tunc a fidelibus ferebatur, quod mulier quaedam, cuius filius quartano tibo gravabatur et in strato anxius decubabat, accessit inter turbas populi usque ad tergum regis, abruptisque clam regalis indumenti fimbriis, in aqua posuit filioque bibendum dedit; statimque, restincta febre, sanatus est. Quod non habetur a me dubium, cum ego ipse saepius larvas inergia famulante nomen eius invocantes audierim ac criminum propriorum gesta, virtute ipsius discernente, fateri'.

17 *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, 1, p. 555.

18 *Histoire ecclésiastique de la Cour*, p. 806.

19 *Histor. de France*, 10, p. 115A and Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 141, col. 931: 'Tantam quippe gratiam in medendis corporibus perfecto viro contulit divina virtus ut, sua piissima manu infirmis locum tangens vulneris et illis imprimens signum sanctae crucis, omnem auferret ab eis dolorem infirmitatis.' I would particularly mention that the interpretation of this passage, developed later on, had already been indicated in its broad lines by Dr Crawfurd in his *King's Evil*, pp. 12, 13.

20 'Du toucher des écrouelles', p. 175, n. 1.

21 On this point, and on everything to do with the critical explanation of the royal miracle, see above Book III.

22 *Journal des Savants*, 1881, p. 744.

23 Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 207, letter XIV, col. 42; letter CL, col. 439.

24 For example, A. Luchaire in his attractive article on Peter of Blois in *Mém. Acad. Sc. Morales*, 171, 1909, p. 375. In order to have a right judgment of Peter of Blois' correspondence and the sincerity of his letters it is as well to remember that he composed a manual on the art of letter-writing, *Libellus de arte dictandi rhetorice*; cf. C.-V. Langlois, *Notices et extraits*, 34, 2, p. 23. For Peter's career, see finally J. Armitage Robinson, 'Peter of Blois' in his *Somerset Historical Essays* (published for the British Academy), London, 1921.

25 *P.L.*, vol. 207, col. 440 D: 'Fateor quidem, quod sanctum est domino regi assistere; sanctus enim et christus Domini est, nec in vacuum accepit unctionis regiae sacramentum, cujus efficacia, si nescitur, aut in dubium venit, fidem ejus plenissimam faciet defectus inguinariae pestis, et curatio scrophularum'. The text of the new acq. MS. lat. 785 in the Bibl. Nat., fol. 59, is in conformity with that of the editions, except for the insignificant inversion 'unctionis regie accepit sacramentum'.

26 *King's Evil*, pp. 25, 26. I owe a great deal to this excellent commentary.

27 These documents are discussed on pp. 67 ff., 76 ff.

28 *Charisma*, p. 84. Tooker also puts forward—though with rather less assurance—Joseph of Arimathea as the institutor of the English rite. Lucius (whose reputation was largely spread in England through Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I, 4) owes his origin, as we know, to a mention in the *Liber Pontificalis* of a letter said to have been addressed to Pope Eleutherius by 'Lucius, the Breton king.' Harnack proves that the redactor of the life of Eleutherius had erroneously converted a king of Edessa into a Breton prince: *Sitzungsberichte der kg. preussischen Akademie*, 1904, i, pp. 909–16.

29 Cf. J. F. Payne, *English Medicine in Anglo-Saxon Times*, (Fitzpatrick Lectures), Oxford, 1904, p. 158.

30 Cf. Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, i, Book VIII, chap. 7, 1807, ed. I, London, p. 754.

31 For everything concerning the Lives of Edward the Confessor, I shall refer the reader once and for all to the introduction to my edition of Osbert de Clare, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 41, 1923, pp. 5 ff.

32 *Vita Aeduuardi regis qui apud Westmonasterium requiescit* in *Lives of Edward the Confessor*, ed. Luard (Rolls Series), p. 428; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Regum*, ii, I, 222, ed. Stubbs (Rolls Series), i, p. 272; Osbert of Clare, chap. XIII; Ailred, ed. R. Twysden, *Historiae anglicanae scriptores*, x, London, 1652, col. 390, and Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 195, col. 761.

33 Loc. cit., p. 273: 'unde nostro tempore quidam falsam insumunt operam, qui asseverant istius morbi curationem non ex sanctitate, sed ex regalis prosapiae hereditate fluxisse'.

34 'Super aliis regibus qualiter se gerant in hac re, supersedeo; regem tamen Anglicum neutiquam in talibus audere scio'. Such at any rate was the original text of the manuscript, and the one adopted by the editors; cf. Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 156, col. 616. What would seem to be a twelfth-century hand has sought to emend *scio* into *comperio* by adding the abbreviation of *com* before the *sc* and changing *sc* into *per*.

35 E.g. Mabillon, *AA.SS.ord. S. Bened.*, iv, 2, p. 523; this is still the modern interpretation, adopted by Delaborde.

36 *King's Evil*, p. 18. Crawfurd, who does not think that Henry I touched for scrofula, sees in Guibert's phrase an allusion to the miracles of St Edward.

37 P. 429: 'Quod, licet nobis novum videatur, hoc eum in adolescentia, cum esset in Neustria quae nunc Normannia nuncupatur, saepius egisse Franci testantur'.

38 For what follows, see my introduction to the *Life* by Osbert of Clare, in particular, pp. 20, 35.

39 The allusion to the Norman miracles does not occur in Ailred. By his time—the reign of Henry II—belief in the wonder-working power of kings was firmly established; there was no longer any point in insisting on the large number of scrofulous healed by Edward the Confessor. Besides, this appeal to rather unknown events, said to have taken place abroad, would have seemed somewhat odd. That is no doubt why Ailred, who was officially entrusted with the revision of Osbert's text, suppressed the sentence in question.

40 The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford possesses a medal of Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon origin found in the seventeenth century, near the city of Oxford itself. It has a hole through its upper part, and carries an inscription that is hard to decipher. When it was first discovered, the inscription was thought to be *E.C.*, which certain scholars, by a strange aberration, interpreted as *Edward the Confessor*—as though Edward would have used this hagiological appellation during his lifetime! Now, the coins distributed by the kings of England in modern times to the scrofulous touched by them—the *touch-pieces*—were also pierced, so as to be hung round the patient's neck; so these over-ingenious scholars thought that what had been discovered was a touch-piece of St Edward. Their opinion scarcely needs refuting. Cf. Farquhar, 'Royal Charities', i, pp. 47 ff.

41 Between the reigns of Henry I and Henry II comes Stephen of Blois. He was only the nephew of the former, only on the maternal side at that, and reigned in spite of the last wishes expressed by his uncle. Did he nevertheless claim the healing power initiated by his uncle? Or did Henry II, on coming to the throne, have to revive a tradition that had momentarily been interrupted? In the absence of documentary evidence, this little problem remains insoluble.

BOOK I CHAPTER II *The origins of the royal healing power*

1 *Cultes, mythes et religions*, 2, p. 21.

2 *Lettres Persanes*, 24.

3 *Golden Bough*, I, p. 371 (italics mine). Cf. ibid., III, p. 134.

4 I owe a great deal in the argument that follows to the fine book of Kern, *Gottesgnadentum*. There is a very full bibliography in this book, though there is unfortunately no classification. It will make it possible for me to make a large reduction in the bibliographical references, particularly with reference to consecration. Perhaps it will help researchers if I tell them there is nothing useful to be found in the article by Jos von Held, 'Königtum und Göttlichkeit: Am Ur-quell', *Monatschrift für Volkskunde*, 3, 1892. Since Kern's volume, a useful work has appeared on the subject of consecration by Reginald Maxwell Woolley, *Coronation Rites*, Cambridge (The Cambridge Handbooks of Liturgical Study), 1915, and a thesis in the Law faculty, Toulouse, by Georges Péré, *Le Sacre et couronnement des rois de France dans leurs rapports avec les lois fondamentales*, 1921, in which there is to be found certain judicial information, unfortunately marred by an astonishing ignorance of the literature of the subject; cf. also Ulrich Stutz, 'Reims und Mainz in der Königswahl des X. und zu Beginn des XI. Jahrhunderts', *Sitzungsber. der preussischen Akademie*, 1921, p. 414.

5 The sacred character of the ancient Germanic royalty has been brought out on many occasions. It is specially worth while consulting H. M. Chadwick, 'The Ancient Teutonic Priesthood', *Folklore*, 1900; cf.—by the same author —*The Origin of the English Nation*, Cambridge, 1907, p. 320. There are suggestive hints in J. Flach, *Les origines de l'ancienne France*, 3, pp. 236, 237, and Paul Vinogradoff, *Outlines of Historical Jurisprudence*, I, Oxford, 1920, p. 352. I have made use below of some information borrowed from the Scandinavian group. I am well aware that among these peoples the sacred character of royalty became much accentuated through the absence of a specialized priesthood, which appears on the other hand to have existed in many other Germanic tribes. The Northern kings always remained priests; but for the most part, the kings of Germania properly speaking did not possess—or no longer possessed—this kind of function round about the period of the great invasions. But we are not interested here in these differences, however important they may be, for in the South no less than in the North, the fundamental idea was the same; and this is all we need to know.

6 *Germania VII:* 'Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt'. This sentence

from Tacitus has often, and rightly, been compared with a remark by Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, II, 9, on the subject of Frankish origins: 'ibique iuxta pagos vel civitates reges crinitos super se creavisse de prima, et, ut ita dicam, de nobiliori familia'.

7 *Getica*, chapter XIII, ed. Mommsen (*Momunenta Germaniae A.A.*, v), p. 76, on the subject of the royal family of the Amales: 'iam proceres suos, quorum quasi fortuna vincebant, non puros homines, sed semideos id est Ansis uocauerunt'. For the meaning of the word Ase, cf. Maurice Cahen, *Le Mot 'Dieu' en vieux-scandinave* (Collect. linguistique Soc. linguistique de Paris, 10, and thesis, Fac. Lettres, Paris), 1921, p. 10, n. 1. E. Mogk, in his article 'Asen' in Hoops, *Reallexikon der germ. Altertumskunde*, seems to think that the word was only applied to kings who had died and been posthumously deified; but I can see nothing of the kind in Jordanes. In an interesting passage of Justin, *Histor. Philippic.* vii, 2, we see the Macedonians being accompanied into battle by their infant king, 'tanquam deo victi antea fuissent, quod bellantibus sibi regis sui auspicia defuissent'. This suggests a belief similar to that testified among the Goths by the text of Jordanes.

8 Cf. among others Kemble, *The Saxons in England*, 1876 ed., London, i, p. 336; W. Golther, *Handbuch der deutschen Mythologie*, 1895, p. 299; J. Grimm *Deutsche Mythologie*, 4th ed., Berlin, 1878, iii, p. 377. The most recent study of genealogies is the essay by E. Hackenberg, *Die Stammtafeln der anglo-sächsischen Königreiche*, Berlin, 1918. I have not been able to consult it; but its chief conclusions are summed up by Alois Brandl, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, 137, 1918, pp. 6ff. (esp. p. 18). There is perhaps an allusion to the would-be divine origin of the Merovingians in a phrase of the famous letter written by Avitus, Bishop of Vienne, to Clovis at the time of his baptism. Cf. Junghans, *Histoire de Childerich et de Chlodovech*, trans. Monod (*Bibl. Hautes Études*, part 37), p. 63, n. 4.

9 Cassiodorus, *Variae*, viii, 2: 'quoniam quaevis claritas generis Hamalis cedit, et sicut ex vobis qui nascitur, origo senatoria nuncupatur, ita qui ex hac familia progreditur, regno dignissimus approbatur'. ix, 1: 'Hamali sanguinis purpuream dignitatem'.

10 This is what the German historians express by the contrast between *Geblütsrecht* and *Erbrecht*.

11 Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, ii, 15. Cf. Kern, *Gottesgnadentum*, p. 22. In Procopius' view, the Heruli settled in 'Thule' were a group who had come rather late in the day from the Black Sea region, where the Herulian people had lived 'since time immemorial' (ii, 14). This is an obvious mistake, which has been unanimously rejected.

12 *Heimskringla*, ed. Finnur Jonsson, i, *Halfdana Saga Svarta*, K. 9. For the translation of this text and the others subsequently quoted from the same source, I owe a great deal to the kind help of my colleague Maurice Cahen.

13 This is what we gather from a passage from the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus (Book xiv, ed. Holder-Egger, Strasburg, 1886, p. 537). According to this passage, when Waldemar I of Denmark travelled across Germany in 1164 on his way to the Diet at Dole, the mothers were said to have brought their children to be touched by him, and the peasants their corn, hoping in both cases to promote their favourable growth. Thus even in

foreign parts there would appear to have been a belief in Waldemar's marvellous powers. This is an obvious exaggeration, clearly attributable to nothing else but Saxo Grammaticus' chauvinism. Nevertheless, this is an instructive little story, for it tells us not so much about the Germans' mental attitude, as about the Danes'. In order to vaunt the powers of his country's king Saxo Grammaticus contrives to picture even the neighbouring peoples as having recourse to the prince's sacred hand. Such a gesture on the part of his own compatriots would probably have appeared too commonplace even to mention. He certainly did not invent the belief he sets before us: where did he get the idea from? One can only suppose that he has changed the country in order to add to the effect of his story. Perhaps he himself shared this faith: he evidently speaks of it with sympathy, though—no doubt out of respect for the Church's teaching—he thought himself bound to add that it was of a superstitious kind: 'Nec minus supersticiosi agrestes . . .'

14 Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVIII, 14: 'Apud hos generali nomine rex appelatur Hendinos, et ritu ueteri potestate deposita remouetur, si sub eo fortuna titubauerit belli, vel segetum copia negauerit terra, ut solent Aegyptii casus eiusmodi suis adsignare rectoribus'. For Sweden, see *Heimskringla*, I, *Ynglinga*, K. 15 and 43. In the second of these passages, note the appearance of the idea that bad harvests were due, not to a deficiency in the king of this mysterious power, that *quasi-fortuna* spoken of by Jordanes, but to the commission by him of some precise fault (such as neglect of the due accomplishment of the sacrifices). This is a first step towards a rationalistic interpretation which begins to shake the old belief. On the same kind of superstitions among primitive peoples, there is an abundant literature; see as the latest authority L. Lévy-Bruhl, *La Mentalité primitive*, 1922, pp. 366 ff.

15 *Heimskringla*, II, *Olafs Saga Helga Konungs*, II, K. 155 and 189. Olaf died in 1030. W. Ebstein, 'Zur Geschichte der Krankenbehandlung', *Janus*, 1910, p. 224, has construed these texts (in the second of which we see Olaf healing a little boy with a tumour on the *neck*) so as to attribute a Scandinavian origin to the touch for scrofula, suggesting that the practice passed from the northern countries to England (under Edward) and from there to France. This theory certainly does not need to be refuted at length. It will be enough just to recall the dates: Olaf's healing power is only attested by a thirteenth-century document, and there is nothing to indicate that the Norwegian kings exercised a dynastic gift. Edward the Confessor's miracles are only known to us from an early twelfth-century document, which is in all respects highly dubious. In France, the healing rite was certainly in existence in the second half of the eleventh century (Philip I); and it is highly probable that the wonder-working virtue of the French kings goes back to the end of the tenth century, that is, to a time not only earlier than the *Saga* containing the account of St Olaf's healings, but even than the reigns of this monarch and of St Edward.

16 We may add certain noble families of Arabia, whose healing power seems to have been specialized for the treatment of rabies, and would appear to go back to the pre-Islamic period; cf. below, Bk. 1, Ch. II, n. 64. For classical antiquity, documentary evidence is obscure. A passage in Plutarch's *Pyrrhus*, chapter III, tells us that people used to attribute the gift of healing to

Pyrrhus; in his case, the seat of this marvellous power was his big toe; but there is nothing to indicate that he shared this power with the other kings of Epirus. Perhaps this is a case similar to that of the Merovingian Guntram: the application to a particularly famous individual—but not to a whole line —of the general belief in the magical character of royalty. Incidentally, two illnesses—leprosy and jaundice—appear in the ancient documents as *morbus regius* (see in particular Law Hussey, 'On the cure of scrofulous diseases', p. 188), without its being possible in any way to determine whether this name originally had any connection with a royal 'miracle'.

17 I am confining myself here to survivals which are certain, though others have also been suggested. According to some historians (e.g. Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*, 4th ed., I, pp. 314 ff., and Chadwick, loc. cit.), the wagons drawn by oxen, which Einhard shows us to have been used by the last Merovingians, were sacred wagons, similar to those reported by Tacitus (*Germania*, 40) to have been used in the processions of the goddess Nertus. This is perhaps an attractive hypothesis but, after all, it is no more than a hypothesis. A legend first attested by the pseudo-Fredegarius (III, 9) makes Merowig the son of a sea monster. Is this a remnant of some old pagan sea-myth? Or is it a purely etymological legend, basically a play on words upon the name Merowig, which first arose in Gaul? No one will ever know. We must exercise caution. I may perhaps be allowed to reproduce at this point an amusing example of the excesses that too ardent folklorists are apt to fall into. In Grimm, loc. cit., I, p. 339, we read this sentence, supported by a reference to a Provençal poem *Fierabras*: 'Der König, der ein pferd tödtet, hat kein recht im reich'. Might this be a 'taboo'? If we go back to the documents, Fierabras is a pagan king, but a valiant knight. He engages in combat with Olivier. By accident, he kills his opponent's horse—a serious infringement of the rules of jousting courtesy; for nothing was considered more disreputable than to triumph over an adversary by depriving him of his mount. Hence Olivier's reproaches: a king who does such a deed no longer deserves to reign: 'rey que caval auci non a dreg en regnat' runs the Provençal text quoted by Grimm (I. Bekker, *Der Roman von Fierabras*, Berlin, 1829, v. 1388); 'Rois ki ceval ocist n's droit en ireté' runs the French poem (ed. Guessard in *Les anciens poètes de la France*, 1850, v. 1119). Fierabras then dismounts from his horse; the two heroes will now be on equal terms, and the combat can continue in due and proper form. The line I have just quoted, if isolated from the context, seems to supply the strangest information about royal magic, and this is certainly how it was understood by Grimm. But one has only to read the complete scene to see that it offers nothing more than some rather commonplace information about the code of combat in chivalry.

18 The oldest evidence is no doubt contained in Claudius IV, *Consul. Honor.*, 446; *Laud. Stilic.*, I, 203; Avitus, letter to Clovis on the subject of his baptism, ed. U. Chevalier, *Oeuvres de St. Avit*, Lyons, 1890, Letter XXXVIII, p. 192; Priscus, *Ἱστορία Γοθίκη*, chapter 16. On the battlefield of Vézeronce, Clodomir's dead body was recognized by his long hair, 'the honour of the royal line': see the very strange passage in Agathias, *Histor.*, I, chapter 3. The custom by which adult Franks were compelled to wear the

hair short is attested by Gregory of Tours, *Histor.*, III, 18. I will not enquire here whether long hair was likewise a mark of royalty among other Germanic nations. At least it is certain that among some of them, this privilege was common to all freemen. For the Suevi in the time of Tacitus, *Germ.*, XXXVIII; for the Goths, F. Dahn, *Die Könige der Germanen*, III, p. 26. For the magic value of long hair, cf. J. Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, 2, London, 1919, pp. 480 ff.

19 The same fact has been noted for Byzantium by Bréhier (in the work mentione below, n. 21), on p. 72: 'Another significant fact [for the survival of the imperial culture] is the frequency of imperial canonizations'.

20 The reader will find the documents relating to the accession of barbarian dynasties conveniently brought together and intelligently commented upon in W. Schuecking, *Der Regierungsantritt*, Leipzig, 1889. Briefly, it would seem that among the Merovingians the new king's accession to power was accompanied by various, and variable, practices, which never seem to have been collected and fixed in a co-ordinated ritual—carrying aloft on the buckler, investiture with the lance, a solemn progress through the kingdom . . . All these practices had one factor in common: they were strictly lay (in as much as they were considered to be emptied of their ancient religious character, which was pagan); the Church played no part in them. For a recent opinion to the contrary, cf. Germain Morin, above, Appendix III, p. 264.

21 See Louis Bréhier and Pierre Batiffol, *Les Survivances du culte impérial romain*, 1920, particularly pp. 35, 43, 59; cf. the review by J. Ebersolt, *Moyen Âge*, 1920, p. 286.

22 For Vespasian, see Tacitus, *Hist.*, IV, 81; Suetonius, *Vesp.*, 7; Dio Cassius, LXVI, 8. For Hadrian, *Vita Hadriani*, c. 25. Cf. Otto Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder* (*Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche*, 8, 1), Giessen, 1909, pp. 66, 68, 75; H. Dieterich, *Archiv. fur Religionswissenschaft*, 8, 1905, p. 500, n. 1. For Vespasian and messianism, see the fine account in Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, chap IX.

23 M. Batiffol (loc. cit., p. 17, n. 2), notes that in the Ostrogoth kingdom of Italy there are vestiges of the imperial cult; in the reign of Theodoric, the imperial purple was worshipped: Cassiodorus, *Variae*, XI, 20, 31. But from the point of view of political law, Theodoric's kingdom was in an uncertain position. Theoretically at least, it still formed part of the Empire; and it was in their capacity of imperial magistrates that the *primiscrinii* and the *primicerii* mentioned by Cassiodorus carried out the traditional rites.

24 Without wishing to enter into a discussion on this subject that would be completely beside the point here, I need only observe that an Italian inscription gives Theodoric—who was certainly a *magister militum*, that is to say, an imperial official—the title of 'semper augustus': *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, X, 6851. Common custom did not therefore preclude such linguistic confusions in Romanized countries under barbarian rule. Of course, several points still remain obscure, especially as regard the precise title given to Clovis by the Emperor Anastasius in the text of Gregory of Tours.

25 On the politico-religious theories of the Carolingian epoch, there is a useful collection of references with some intelligent hints in H. Lilienfein, 'Die Anschauungen von Staat und Kirche im Reiche der Karolinger', *Heidelb.*

Abh. zur mittleren und neueren Gesch., 1, Heidelberg, 1902; unfortunately the author tends to explain everything by the antithesis between 'Romanism' and 'Germanism'. When will scholars make up their minds to drop this puerile dichotomy? I did not get much help from W. Ohr, *Der karolingische Gottesstaat in Theorie und in Praxis*, Leipzig, 1902.

26 I, I, 3, Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 98, col. 1014, 1015. Much later on, Frederick Barbarossa, who should nevertheless have had a good deal to reproach himself with on this subject, was not afraid likewise to criticize the use of the word 'saint' as applied to the Byzantine Emperor: see Tageno de Passau in *Monumenta Germaniae*, *SS.* XVII, p. 510, lines 51ff.

27 E. Eichmann, in his *Festschrift G. von Hertling dargebracht*, p. 268, n. 3, quotes some examples, to which many others could be added. It will be enough to refer the reader to the index of the *Capitularia regum Francorum* and of the *Concilia* in the editions of the *Monumenta Germaniae*. Cf. also Sedulius Scottus, *Liber de rectoribus christianis*, chap. 9, ed. S. Hellmann (*Quellen und Unters. zur latein. Philologie des Mittelalters*, I, 1), p. 47; Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, Book II, chapters 9 and 16, ed. Duemmler (Kgl. Preussische Akademie, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Abhandl., 1900, II), pp. 71, 85.

28 *De ordine palatii*, chap. XXXIV, ed. Prou (Bibl. Ec. Hautes Études, part 58), p. 90: 'in sacris ejus obtutibus'. This treatise by Hincmar is known to be no more than the redaction of an earlier work composed by Adalard de Corbie which has not survived. The expression I have just quoted would fit in better with Adalard's ideas than with Hincmar's. Perhaps the latter had derived it from this source.

29 It is found in use in Germany in the days of the Saxon emperors: Waitz, *Verfassungsgeschichte*, 2nd ed., VI, p. 155, n. 5; and it naturally took on a new popularity under the Hohenstaufens: cf. Max Pomtow, *Ueber den Einfluss der altrömischen Vorstellungen vom Staat auf die Politik Kaiser Friedrichs I*, Halle, 1885, particularly pp. 39, 61. See also above, p. 200.

30 Above, p. 265; for the controversy relating to the introduction of anointing in Byzantium, above p. 271.

31 Genesis 14: 18; cf. Psalm CIX, 4; the symbolical role played by Melchisedech is already abundantly displayed in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

32 *Mémoires de l'Acad. des Inscriptions*, XXXII, I, p. 361.

33 II, 10: 'Melchisedek noster, merito rex atque sacerdos, complevit laicus religionis opus'. There is an article by F. Kern on the iconographical role played by Melchisedech in the Early Middle Ages in 'Der Rex und Sacerdos, in biblischer Darstellung', *Forschungen und Versuche zur Geschichte des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit, Festschrift Dietrich Schäfel . . . dargebracht*, Jena, 1915. The word *sacerdos* applied to a lay sovereign recalls certain formulae of official adulation, traces of which are found in fifth century Byzantium, and to which the pontifical Chancery itself used sometimes at that period to condescend in addressing the Emperor; cf. below Book 2, Ch. III, n. 3 and especially p. 198. But between Fortunatus' poetry and the language freely used more than a century earlier to Theodosius II, Marcion or Leo I, the only link is no doubt the common habits of mind implanted in men by centuries of imperial religion.

34 The text of the letter from Addu-Nirari, J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*, Leipzig, 1915, I, no. 51, cf. II, pp. 1073, 1103. For unction in the Hebraic cultus, see among others T. J. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, under the word 'Anointing'. The Addu-Nirari letter naturally raises the question whether royal anointing was practised in ancient Egypt. On this subject, my colleague M. Montet has been kind enough to write to me as follows: 'In all the ceremonies of Egypt, they began by washing the hero of the feast, whether it was a god, a king, or dead body; then he was anointed with a perfumed oil . . . After that, the ceremony proper began. At the end of a coronation, there was much the same procedure: first the purifications and the anointings, then the handing over of his insignia to the heir to the throne. It was not then by unction that the heir and candidate for royalty was transformed into a Pharoah, Lord of the Two Lands.' The Tell-el-Amarna tablet certainly seems to allude to a rite in which unction played a more important part, no doubt a Syrian rite, with which the consecrating Pharoh had perhaps complied.

35 L. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, 5th ed., 1920; cf. *Liber Pontificalis*, II, 1892, p. 38, n. 35. For the character of unction given to catechumens in the Gallican Rite—the unction that Clovis received at Rheims—a controversy has arisen between liturgiologists—or rather, theologians—which does not concern us here: see the articles by Dom de Puniet and R. P. Galtier, *Revue des questions historiques*, vol. 72 (1903), and *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 13, 1912.

36 For everything concerning the beginnings of royal unction, see the references and discussion in Appendix III, p. 262.

27 Cf. P. Fournier, 'Le Liber ex lege Moysi et les tendances bibliques du droit canonique irlandais', *Revue celtique*, 30, 1909, pp. 231 ff. It may be pointed out that the comparison of the king with David and Solomon is a commonplace in all the consecration rituals. The Popes, too, used it freely in their correspondence with the Frankish sovereigns: see some collected examples, *Epistolae aevi carolini* (*Monumenta Germaniae*), III, p. 505, n. 2; cf. also E. Eichmann in *Festschrift G. von Hertling dargebracht*; p. 268, n. 10. Did not Charlemagne call himself—in his familiar circle—by the name David? A comparison needs to be made between the history of royal unction and the history of tithe, which was also borrowed from the Mosaic Law. For a long time it had been simply a religious obligation, enforceable only by ecclesiastical penalties; it was Pepin who gave it the force of law.

38 *Monumenta Germaniae*, *Diplomata Karolina*, I, no. 16, p. 22, 'divina nobis providentia in solium regni unxisse manifestum est'.

39 See above, Appendix III, p. 268.

40 See above, p. 266.

41 It can be remarked that in spite of the dynastic troubles of the ninth and tenth centuries, the only king of France who died a violent death—and that was on the battlefield—was a notorious usurper, Robert I. Among the Anglo-Saxons, Edward II was assassinated in 978 or 979; but he was made a saint—St Edward the Martyr.

42 *Quaterniones*, Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 125, col. 1040: 'Quia enim—post illam unctionem qua cum caeteris fidelibus meruistis hoc consequi quod beatus

apostolus Petrus dicit: "Vos genus electum, regale sacerdotium", episcopali et spirituali unctione ac benedictione regiam dignitatem potius quam terrena potestate consecuti estis'. The Council of St-Macre, Mansi, XVII, 538: 'Et tanto est dignitas pontificum major quam regum, quia reges in culmen regium sacrantur a pontificibus, pontifices autem a regibus consecrari non possunt'. Cf. in the same sense a Bull of John VIII, addressed in 879 to the Archbishop of Milan, *Monumenta Germaniae, Epist.*, VII, i, no. 163, line 32. The importance attributed by Hincmar to anointing comes out particularly in the *Libellus proclamationis adversus Wenilonem*, drawn up in the name of Charles the Bald, but whose real author was undoubtedly the Archbishop of Rheims: *Capitularia*, ed. Boretius, II, p. 450, c.3.

43 Moreover, it is as well not to forget that in Eastern France, or Germany, tradition during this time appears to have insisted less forcibly on anointing than in France proper. Nevertheless, Conrad, Henry I's immediate predecessor, had certainly been anointed, and his descendants and successors in their turn were to be so likewise. For Henry I's refusal, see the references and discussion in Appendix III, p. 270.

44 Cf. Lilienfein, *Die Anschauungen vom Staat und Kirche*, pp. 96, 109, 146. The same idea had already been forcibly expressed—on the subject of the Byzantine emperor's pretensions—by Pope Gelasius I in a passage of *De anathematis vinculo* often quoted in the course of the great polemical battles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries: Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 59, col. 108–9. Cf. also, contemporary with Hincmar himself, Nicolas I; Mansi, *Concilia*, XV, p. 214.

45 We are still without a really critical survey of the *ordines* of consecration for all the countries. I have therefore had to confine myself here to some rapid and certainly very incomplete comments, but enough, after all, for the object I have in view. The ancient Gallican ritual published by Dom Germain Morin, *Revue bénédictine*, 29, 1912, p. 188, gives the benediction: 'Unguantur manus istae de oleo sanctificato unde uncti fuerant reges et profetae'. The prayer 'Coronet te Dominus corona gloriae . . . et ungat te in regis regimine oleo gratiae Spiritus sancti sui, unde unxit sacerdotes, reges, prophetas et martyres', was used for Charles the Bald (*Capitularia regum Francorum*, ed. Boretius, II, p. 457) and Louis the Stammerer (ibid., p. 461); it recurs in a Rheims Pontifical: G. Waitz, 'Die Formeln der deutschen Königs- und der Römischen Kaiser-Krönung' (*Abh. der Gesellsch. der Wissensch. Gottingen*) 18, 1873, p. 80. It perhaps originated in a *Benedictio olei* (deliberately, of course, without reference to royal unction) given in the *Gelasian Sacramentary*, ed. H. A. Wilson, Oxford, 1894, p. 70. The Anglo-Saxon prayer 'Deus . . . qui . . . iterumque Aaron famulum tuum per unctionem olei sacerdotem sanxisti, et postea per hujus unguenti infusionem ad regendum populum Israheleticum sacerdotes ac reges et prophetas perfecisti . . .: ita quaesumus, Omnipotens Pater, ut per hujus creaturae pinguedinem hunc servum tuum sanctificare tua benedictione digneris, eumque . . . et exempla Aaron in Dei servitio diligenter imitari . . . facias', in the Egbert *Pontifical*, ed. by the Surtees Society, 27, 1853, p. 101; Robert de Jumièges' *Bénédictional*, ed. H. A. Wilson, Henry Bradshaw Society, 24, 1903, p. 143; the Leofric *Missal*, ed. F. E. Warren, Oxford, 1883, p. 230; with a few differences, also

in the so-called Ethelred *ordo*, ed. J. Wickham Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, Henry Bradshaw Soc., 19, 1900, p. 56; these last two collections preface this prayer by another, which is very closely reminiscent of the Carolingian prayer used for Charles the Bald and Louis the Stammerer; perhaps there was a choice between the two. The poet of the *Gesta Berengarii*, in a paraphrase of the consecration liturgy, mentions that the holy oil was used among the Hebrews to anoint their kings and *prophets* (IV, v. 180: *Monumenta Germaniae, Poetae Latini*, IV, i, p. 401).

46 *Gesta Berengarii*, IV, v. 133–4 (*Monumenta Germaniae, Poetae Latini*), IV, i, p. 399.

47 The libellus had been drawn up by Paulinus of Aquileia. *Monumenta Germaniae, Concilia*, II, i, p. 141: 'Indulgeat miseratus captivis, subveniat oppressis, dissolvat fasciculos deprimentes, sit consolatio viduarum, miserorum refrigerium, sit dominus et pater, sit rex et sacerdos, sit omnium Christianorum moderantissimus gubernator . . .' It may be noted that through a kind of contradiction quite frequent in such cases the bishops had, in the previous sentence, opposed the battle waged by the king with the *visible* enemies of the Church to the bishops' struggle against her *invisible* enemies—which amounts to a clear opposition between the temporal and the spiritual. See above, p. 111.

48 Jaffé-Wattenbach, 2381; the original text is I Peter 2: 9. The quotation recurs in Hincmar, *Quaterniones* (the passage reproduced above, n. 45), but applied to all the faithful with whom the kings share their first unction (baptismal unction); thus it cannot be doubted that Hincmar was very consciously taking the biblical words back to their primitive meaning for the special instruction of Charles the Bald.

49 *Histor. de France*, 10, letter XL, p. 464 E; LXII, p. 474 B. Fulbert (L. LV, p. 470E and LVIII, p. 472 C) likewise calls royal letters 'sacra'—according to an old Roman imperial custom, revived during Carolingian times (e.g. Lupus of Ferrières, *Monumenta Germaniae, Epist.*, VI, 1, no. 18, p. 25). Later on, Odo of Deuil (*De Ludovici Francorum Regis profectione in Orientem*, Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 185, I, 13 and II, 19), seems to reserve this word for *imperial* letters (with reference to the Byzantine Emperor).

50 *In gloria martyrum*, chap. 27; *De virtutibus S. Martini*, I. chap. II.

51 Jacques de Vitry, *Exempla ex sermonibus vulgaribus* ed. Crane (Folklore Society), London, 1890, p. 112, no. 268.

52 Jaffé-Wattenbach, no. 5164; Jaffé, *Monumenta Gregoriana* (*Bibliotheca rerum germanicarum*, II), p. 413: 'Illud interea non praetereundum sed magnopere apostolica interdictione prohibendum videtur, quod de gente vestra nobis innotuit: scilicet vos intemperiem temporum, corruptiones aeris, quascunque molestias corporum ad sacerdotum culpas transferre . . . Praeterea in mulieres, ob eandem causam simili immanitate barbari ritus damnatas, quicquam impietatis faciendi vobis fas esse, nolite putare'.

53 Jacques de Vitry, loc. cit.

54 For the medical superstitions relating to sacred things, there is a very useful collection of facts in the two works by S. Franz, *Die Messe im deutschen Mittelalter*, Freiburg, 1902, pp. 87, 107, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*, Freiburg, 1909, especially II, pp. 329, 503. Cf. also A. Wuttke,

Der deutsche Volksaberglaube, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1869, pp. 131 ff; and for the Eucharist, Dom Chardon, *Histoire des sacrements*, book I, section III, chap. XV in Migne, *Theologiae cursus completus*, XX, col. 337 ff. The Eucharist and holy water have both been thought of as being useful for malevolent magical purposes; and in this guise they played a considerable role in the real or supposed practices of mediaeval sorcery. See numerous references in J. Hansen, *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozess im Mittelalter* (*Histor. Bibliothek*, 12), 1900, pp. 242, 243, 245, 294, 299, 332, 387, 429, 433, 450.

55 P. Sébillot, *Le paganisme contemporain*, 1908, pp. 140, 143; A. Wuttke, loc. cit. p. 135. For the wine used in the Mass, Elard Hugo Meyer, *Deutsche Volkskunde*, 1898, p. 265.

56 *In gloria martyrum*, chap. 84. The persons concerned were a Breton 'count' and a Lombard 'duke', both of whom, quite independently of each other, were supposed to have had this strange fancy.

57 Apart from the works quoted above, n. 54, see Vacant and Mangenot, *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* under the word 'chrême', Dom Chardon, loc. cit., book I, section II, chap. II, col. 174, and for the use of holy oil in malpractices, Hansen, *Zauberwahn*, pp. 128, n. 3, 245, 271, 294, 332, 387. It may also be recalled that Louis XI, when on his deathbed, sent from Plessis-les-Tours for the Holy Phial from Rheims and the miraculous balm the Virgin was supposed to have given St Martin, and caused himself to be anointed with these two chrisms, hoping that they would restore him to health: Prosper Tarbé, *Louis XI et la sainte ampoule*, Rheims, 1842 (Soc. des bibliophiles de Reims) and M. Pasquier, *Bullet. histor. et philolog.*, 1903, pp. 455–8. The connection between the healing power claimed by the kings and the power commonly attributed to the Holy Chrism has already been pointed out by Leber, *Des Cérémonies du sacre*, pp. 455 ff. But unction was not, of course, the only source of this power, or of the notion commonly held of it, since not all anointed kings exercised this power; a particular hereditary virtue was thought to be needed as well. Cf. above, p. 130.

58 *Lettres*, ed. J. Havet (Collection pour l'étude . . . de l'histoire), no. 164, p. 146. For the opposition to the early Capetians, see especially Paul Viollet, *La Question de la légitimité à l'avènement d'Hugues Capet*, Mém. Académ. Inscriptions, 34, I, 1892. I need hardly remind the reader that for the events of 987 and the early days of the Capetian dynasty, reference must always be made to the classics by M. F. Lot, *Les Derniers Carolingiens*, 1891, and *Études sur le règne de Hugues Capet*, 1903.

59 IV, 11; 'Sed si de hoc agitur, nec regnum iure hereditario adquiritur, nec in regnum promovendus est, nisi quem non solum corporis nobilitas, sed et animi sapientia illustrat, fides munit, magnanimitas firmat.'

60 *Canones*, IV (*Histor. de France*, X, p. 628): 'Tres namque electiones generales novimus, quarum una est Regis vel Imperatoris, altera Pontificis, tertia Abbatis'.

61 After the Hundred Years' War, when the English kings still claimed as part of their official style and title the title king of France, it was readily believed in Europe that it was because of this claim that they put themselves forward as healers of the scrofula. See—among other reformers—the letter relating to James I from the Venetian envoy Scarramelli and the account of John

Ernest of Saxe Weimar's journey quoted below, Book 2, Ch. V, n. 80. The facts related above make it unnecessary to discuss this theory.

62 See especially the 4th treatise, *De consecratione pontificum et regum*, in which there is a running commentary on the consecration: *Libelli de lite* (*Monumenta Germaniae*), III, pp. 662ff. On the 'Anonymous' of York, cf. H. Boehmer, *Kirche und Staat in England und in der Normandie im XI. und XII. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, 1899, pp. 177 ff. (previously unpublished extracts, pp. 433 ff.).

63 Cf. H. Boehmer, loc. cit., pp. 287 ff.; and my Introduction to Osbert of Clare, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 1923, p. 51.

64 J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums* (*Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, H. 3, Berlin, 1887), p. 142. Cf. G. W. Freytag, *Arabum proverbia*, I, Bonn, 1838, p. 488; E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* I, 7, Leipzig, 1884, p. 2626, 2nd col. The superstition must be pre-Islamic in origin. The same power—attributed to the blood of the Banou-Sinan—is mentioned in an ancient poem included in the *Hamasa*, translated by G. W. Freytag, II, 2, Bonn, 1847, p. 583.

65 As was frequently noted by writers of the *ancien régime*; they saw this observation as an excellent argument against the naturalist thesis according to which the healing power was a family attribute of the royal line, more or less physiological in character (cf. below, p. 235): e.g. du Laurens, *De Mirabili*, p. 33. I am of course well aware that in the time of Robert II or Henry I of England the principle of primogeniture was as yet far from being universally established; but it already received solid support, and in France it had been applied, in spite of the Carolingian traditions, from the time of Lothair's accession in 954. As far as I know, no serious study has ever been made of the introduction of this novel idea into monarchical law; but this is not the place to undertake it. It must suffice to note that the very weight of monarchical conceptions led certain minds to consider as worthy of the throne, not the eldest son, but the son—whatever might be his place in the family—who had been born after his father's proclamation as king, or his consecration as such. In the eyes of these jurists, in order to be really a royal child it was necessary to be born not merely of a prince, but of a king. This conception never acquired the force of law; but it served as a pretext for the revolt of Henry of Saxony against his brother Otto I (cf. Boehmer-Ottenthal, *Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Herrschern aus dem sächsischen Hause*, pp. 31, 33), and there are echoes of it in various documents: e.g. Eadmer, *Vita S. Dunstani* (*Memorials of St Dunstan*, ed. Stubbs, Rolls Series, p. 214, c. 35); Matthew Paris, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. Madden, Rolls Series, I, p. 353, and *Chronica majora*, ed. Luard, Rolls Series, IV, p. 546.

BOOK 2 CHAPTER 1 *Touching for scrofula*

1 Here is an example of the therapeutic use of the sign of the cross: in *Garin le Lorrain* (*Li Romans de Garin le loherain*, ed., P. Paris: *Les Romans des douze pairs*, I, p. 273), we see the doctors, after placing a plaster on the Duke of Bégon's wound, make over it the sign of the cross. The sign of the cross was so much a matter of course as a rite of benediction and exorcism in all