"Like it or not, then, we must necessarily resort to periodization. But as a specialist in what is commonly known as the "Middle Ages," I have long been doubtful about the coherence of my own chose period, 500-1500, even as an artificial construct or a manageable chunk. Seventh-through tenth-century Europe was utterly unlike twelfth- and thirteenth-century Europe." 6

"The "Middle Ages" were invented in the year 1469 by the Italian humanist and papal librarian, Giovanni Andrea. But it was not until the seventeenth century that the concept "Medieval" emerged clearly—to describe and stigmatize an allegedly stagnant, thousand-year middle period between the fall of the western Roman Empire in AD 476 and the blockbuster events of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that supposedly ushered in "modernity." 7

"...Merovingian Francia was not a barbaric and downcast polity, ruled by long-haired nincompoops, such as historians have traditionally described it, but a regime that, as Henri Pirenne long ago argued, carried on much of the political, economic, and institutional legacy of the Roman Empire, and, as Pirenne did not argue, bore strong resemblances to the Carolingian regime that followed it—resemblances that were masked by early Carolingian propaganda." 10-11