

**THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE LOMBARDS**

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**Abstract**

The paper deals with the history of one of the Germanic barbarian kingdoms, which is the Kingdom of the Lombards, which had a political and military impact on the peoples of Europe in the Middle Ages, and which was able to impose its hegemony on the barbarian tribes surrounding it due to their violence and brutality in fighting battles. The Lombard people also influenced and influenced the Roman Empire, despite the ambiguity. The history that surrounded the Lombard Kingdom since its inception as a kingdom, but it was able to emerge as an influential force on the kingdoms close to it, and the Roman emperors did not hesitate to use the Lombard military power to confront the dangers surrounding the Roman Empire.

**Keywords:** Lombards, Germanic tribes, Roman Empire, Pannonia

**Introduction**

The reasons that led to the movement of the German tribes from their original homes beyond the Rhine and Danube rivers are not known, and the sources available to us do not mention those reasons, but some historians believe that the motive behind this movement was to get rid of severe pressures. Which came from barbarian races, due to its exposure to many incidents of famine and drought, which led it to put pressure on its neighboring tribes, especially the German ones (Tarkhan, Studies in the History of Europe in the Middle Ages (The Visigothic State), 1958), (Youssef, 1984).

While some other historians see another reason for the movement of the German tribes, that the continuous wars between them were what prompted the losing party to move south and wander behind the Roman borders (the Rhine and Danube rivers) to find the desired shelter, while others saw that the increasing population combined with the scarcity of supplies and hunting in a society characterized by Sexual fertility, as well as their love of adventure, war, and instability, all of these reasons seem to have prompted the Germanic tribes to move from their habitats (Mahdi, 2020) (Ali, 2011).

It is noteworthy that these tribes did not have definite political goals that they sought to achieve when they crawled deep into the Roman Empire, as we did not mean their attempt (when they appeared on the scene of events) to eliminate the Roman Empire, and they did not migrate for the purpose of colonization, but when As the tribes approached the borders of the Roman Empire, they were astonished by the prosperity, progress, prosperity, and pleasant, moderate climate they enjoyed. They were influenced by their conquests and peaceful wanderings, sharing the empire's

wealth and experiences on the one hand, and finding a safe place to live among its people on the other hand (Al-Huwairi, 1995).

Although there was no significant difference between the German tribes before their migrations, differences soon appeared between them after the migrations due to each tribe having to adapt its life to the environment in which it settled, while the groups of the Franks, the Suevi, and the Saxons intermingled. The Saxons and the Germans moved from their homes towards the south in lands that did not differ much in nature from their countries before they attacked the Roman Empire. Therefore, we find that the Goths, Vandals and Lombards on the eastern side migrated to the plains of the Black Sea, completely different from their environments, so they remained shepherds, striking in the land. They roamed the rugged terrain and forests in search of livelihood and pasture, and they were also very brave horsemen (Mahdi, 2020).

In line with what was mentioned, the East Germans in their state of nomadism did not suffer much change, and their raids were nothing but migrations and movements that began and ended with a search for new pastures and suitable habitats for that life, while the West Germans' invasions took the character of a permanent advance while preserving the origins and habitat that provided them with support and strength (Sheikh, 1975).

As for the relationship of the Germanic tribes with the Roman Empire, it went through different stages, and ended with the Germans invading the lands of the empire and establishing Germanic kingdoms among its regions. There is much evidence that indicates that the relationship of the Germans with the Romans, in its beginning, went through stages of peace and cooperation between the two sides that lasted for two centuries until the end of the second century AD (Tacitus, 1959). Here we can clarify an important point that the relationship between the Romans and the Germans was not marred by hostility at first, nor were there any ambitions for the Germans in the lands of the empire. Rather, all that both parties wanted was a safe and stable life in their country (Mahdi, 2020), and indeed an atmosphere of peace prevailed. Peace between the Germans and the Romans between the reign of Julius Caesar (100-44 BC / 50-44 BC) until the beginning of the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD / 161-180 AD). The Germanic tribes centered on The borders of the empire were then in a state of calm and stability, but this situation did not last long and began to change in the late second century AD, when German society was exposed to a kind of pressure and anxiety that caused it to move somewhat (Tacitus, 1959), (Ali, 2011), and that Because the Slavs and other eastern elements began to put pressure on the Germans from the east, at a time when the numbers of the Germans increased and their means of living became limited (Orton, 1952).

The Germans realized that the lands surrounding them were poor, covered by forests and surrounded by swamps, in addition to being at the mercy of nature and its harsh conditions, from dangerous floods to drought and famine, which put them in a state of distress and lack of sustenance. All of these things prompted them to move, and thus the Germans began to look to the lands of The Roman Empire attracted them to it with its stable system, its abundant resources, and its flourishing civilization (Ashour, 1972). Therefore, the Germans began to change their attitude towards the Roman Empire, during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, when some German

tribes known as the Marcomanni and the Magistrates allied themselves. The Quadi and the Sarmatians fought among themselves to attack the areas of the Upper Danube at Pannonia, but Aurelius was able to eliminate them all, destroy their power, and occupy the areas of those tribes for fourteen years (Tarkhan, *Studies in the History of Europe in the Middle Ages (the Visigothic State)*, 1958).

It is worth noting that the threat of the Germans to the borders of the Roman Empire did not cease after that, as their threat appeared again on the Roman Empire in the third century AD during the reign of Emperor Caracalla (188-217 AD / 211-217 AD), when it threatened The German tribes crossed the borders of the empire, but Emperor Caracalla was able to defeat them in 213 AD (Al-Nasiri, 1991). During his reign, the Goths also advanced south from the shores of the Baltic Sea, crushing the Sarmatians and attacking the territory of Dacia on the Danube. However, the Romans sensed their danger. The raiders allied with them in the year 225 AD, and paid them an annual tribute in exchange for the Goths protecting the borders of the empire against the Sarmatians, the barbarians who resided beyond the Goths. The latter remained for fifty years wreaking havoc in the Balkan region (Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia) until they were defeated by Emperor Claudius II the Goth (Cadius II) (214-270 AD / 268-270 AD) in the city of Naissus (269 AD) (Mahdi, 2020), (Hatamla, 1996). What concerns us regarding this early role in the war between the Goths and the Romans is that the Roman emperors chose to make peace with the Goths despite the superiority of the Romans in order to be a buffer state and protect the borders of the empire from the most barbaric tribes by using them as covenants. So they ceded to them the territory of Dakia and withdrew the Roman armies and employees from it. During the reign of Emperor Aurelian (215-275 AD/ 270-275 AD), the Goths settled after they stopped plundering and plundering. They also began to be influenced by Christianity and cultural trends, which paved the way for the establishment of the first Germanic kingdom within the borders of the Roman Empire (Ashour, 1972). Moreover, the danger that threatened the Roman Empire in those years did not come from the Goths alone, but rather the German, Frankish, Bavarian, Saxon, Thuringia, Friesen, and Vandal tribes launched several other separate attacks on the lands of the Roman Empire. Until the first phase of the German migration movement ended in the year 300 AD, a new phase of peaceful, calm relations began between the Romans and the Germans (Ashour, 1972). However, the incursion of the Germans into the borders of the empire did not stop in the new peaceful phase, but rather continued after it changed its character of attacks. From violent warfare to slow advances and quiet, peaceful infiltration, and therefore we note that the Roman Empire opened its doors to the Germanic immigrants, so it used them as soldiers in some Roman divisions, and granted those colonies and lands in which to reside within the Roman borders. Indeed, some of the prominent Roman army officers in those years took place. They have German blood in their veins (Mahdi, 2020), but the question remains in our minds: Why did the Roman government's position towards the German tribes change?

To answer that question, we say: In fact, using the Germans in the Roman army and allowing them to reside peacefully was not a new matter, as the roots of these measures go back to the days of Emperor Augustus (44 BC-14 AD / 27 BC-14 AD), but they It took on a widespread appearance

in the third and fourth centuries AD, when the relationship between the Romans on the one hand and the Germans residing among them on the other hand began to extend to intermarriage and social interaction, which left a long-term impact on the future of the Germans. In other words, the political borders of the Roman Empire in the fourth century were It separates the civilized Roman world from the barbarian world because both sides began to be influenced by and influence the other (Al-Huwairi, 1995).

German attacks on the borders of the Roman Empire took place once again in the year 375 AD, taking on a new character. Until that date, these attacks were sporadic military operations that were not connected by a single bond and were not united by a unified plan. It was enough for one tribe to be subjected to pressure from another tribe, or a Germanic region was afflicted with a drought or lack of food, or one of their ambitious leaders discovered a weak point in the Roman borders to launch a local attack on the lands of the empire, but the attacks of the barbarian tribes began to take the form of massive general raids, and they spread to a wide movement until the year (568 AD). That is, about two centuries in which many Germanic tribes were able to invade important Roman regions and establish new Germanic kingdoms within the lands of the Roman Empire, which completely changed the face of the ancient world and made the picture of Europe in the Middle Ages appear clearer (Mahdi, 2020), (Ali (2011), and this happened in the second half of the fourth century AD, when the Asian Hun tribe pushed through the outlet located between the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea towards southern Russia, and attacked the Visigoths, who were so violent and intense that they made the Romans and Germans join forces. All together to repel this common danger, and the pressure of the Huns caused a violent reaction among the Germans, which seriously affected the situation in the Roman Empire, because the Visigoths had no choice but to flee from the face of the Huns, so they asked Emperor Valens (328-378 AD): 364-378 AD) allowing them to cross the Danube to be safe from the danger of the Huns, and in fact the Emperor agreed to their request to use them as a curtain to protect the Roman borders from the danger of the Huns (Al-Sheikh, 1975). However, approximately 1,100,000 warriors from the Visigothic tribe crossed the Danube in the year (376 AD) where the Roman government allowed them to reside in the region of Dalmatia (Dalmacija) and Thrace (Thrace), which caused a violent shock in the body of the empire, because these intruders soon revolted against the empire, and inflicted defeat on Emperor Valens and killed him in the Battle of Adrianople in (378 AD) (Mahdi, 2020).

Emperor Theodosius the Great (347-395 AD / 378-395 AD) realized that it was not wise to antagonize the Visigoths and avoid entering into a confrontation with them, taking pride in those who preceded him, so he concluded a peace agreement with them, according to which they became covenants (foederati) of the empire, and he also allowed them to reside In the region of Thrace, the Goths enjoyed absolute authority in those territories that they occupied, so taxes were canceled from them in exchange for the military service that they pledged to provide to the empire (Al-Nasiri, 1991). Thus, we find that the relationship of the Germans with the Roman Empire went through different stages, as it was peaceful at its beginning until the end of the century. II AD, but their peaceful stance began to change towards the Roman Empire, during the reign of Emperor

Marcus Aurelius (Mahdi, 2020), and the threat of the Germans to the borders of the Roman Empire did not cease, to the point that some Roman emperors chose to make peace with them, and the Hun tribes and their pressure on the Germans It had a major impact on the conditions of the Roman Empire. The empire had barely caught its breath before it was subjected to a new invasion at the hands of one of the Germanic tribes known as the Lombards or Langobardorum. They represented the last Germanic peoples to move within the lands of the Roman Empire (A.D. the. Fisher, 1966), and that the early history of the Lombards is shrouded in a lot of ambiguity, despite all the archaeological research and studies that have been conducted on the Lombards, as the little information derived from archaeological discoveries dating back to the first and second centuries AD, vaguely indicated their presence and some of their names as well as their settlements. In the lower Elbe (J.T. Hallenbeck, 1982), (Neil Christie, 1995) (F. Curta, 2007)

The information provided to us by the Lombard sources about their origins was characterized by ambiguity, as it included myths and talk about some legendary heroes, as well as some inherited customs. Perhaps the reason behind this is the late writing of these sources, which date back to the seventh and eighth centuries AD. This means that the eighth century Only one century of their history has been narrated to us by the eyes of Lombard historians contemporary with the events. As for the first seven centuries of their history, we are forced to use memory in its mythical dimensions as a basis for constructing their history (J. Jarnut, 2003).

It is worth noting that there is another way from which we can derive some information about the early history of the Lombards, which is the little information scattered in the writings of contemporary Roman historians, such as Tacitus, Strabo, Ptolemy (Ball, 1907). Paterculus, and since the details contained in these sources shed light on a largely mysterious past, the danger behind them lies in giving a wrong picture that may be confusing in some cases. The two most prominent sources in this aspect are considered to be the first, the Book of Origins. The Lombard People by an anonymous author, and the second is the book History of the Lombards by Paul the Deacon, both of which state that the motherland of the Lombard groups was in Scandinavia, specifically in the region north of Gaul in the region The lower Elbe. The Roman sources agree with the sources of the Lombard historians in determining their first homeland, except that there is a slight difference between Strabo and Ptolemy regarding the area occupied by the Lombards on the banks of the Elbe River. Strabo identified it in the region of Holstein and Mecklenburg. (Mecklenburg) As for Ptolemy, he identified it on the eastern shore of the province of Hanover (Hanover, in the area extending from Luneburg) to Salzwedel (Thomas Hodgkin, 1895).

The References indicate that the Lombards were initially called Winnili, and then their name was changed to Lombards later under circumstances imposed on them by the war with one of the other neighboring German tribes, the Vandals. The story of that name may be considered a popular story. The Lombards inherited from their ancestors, as other Roman sources did not mention that name at all, but rather mentioned them as the Langobardi only. The oldest source that conveyed this story to us is the anonymous historian, and the historian Paul the Deacon quoted it from him in his history, and it is definitely a fictional story. Which revolves around the Winnili and the Vandals. When they prepared to fight each other, each of them turned to the gods to ask for victory. They

turned to Godan, and asked him to grant them victory. He replied that he would grant victory to whoever he saw in the morning, so Freya, his wife, indicated Jodan forced the Wanili to stand early in the morning under her husband's window, and for the women to wrap their hair around their chins until they looked like beards. Indeed, the Wanili stood as Freya pointed out. When Jodan looked out of his window in the morning, when he saw them he said: "Who are these people with long beards?" His wife replied, "He gives them victory, just as he gave them the name Langobardi," and they became known as the Langobardi (Anonymous, 1907), (Paul the deacon, 1907) (Thomas Hodgkin, 1895) (F.H. Dudden, 1905).

If the historian Paul expressed that story as a cause for ridicule and laughter, he considered the part regarding the change of name from the Vannili to the Lombard to be true, as he confirmed that: The Vannili called them the Langobardi, due to their long beards that were never shaved, because the word (Lang) in Their language means "Long", and the word "Bart" means "beard", and it seems that the historian Paul took that derivation from the historian Isidore of Seville (560-636 AD) (Shami Gosh, 2009) (A.H. Merrills , 2005), who narrated that the Langobardi were known by that name, because they used to leave their beards as they were and not shave them (Paul the deacon, 1907) (F.H. Dudden, 1905). On the other hand, some modern historians have attributed the origin of the word Langobard to another linguistic origin, and they believe that the name of the Lombards was Bards, which is derived from the ancient Germanic word (barta), which means an axe, and then the word Lang was added to it after that, and thus it became Their name is (the men with the long axes). As for the historian Leonard Schmidt, he states that the name came from (Lang Bord), which means (the men who live in Lang Bord), which is (the wide meadows of the Elbe), and although what modern historians have achieved is worthy of attention, In fact, what both historians Isidore of Seville and Paul the Deacon believed is considered the oldest, most accepted, and generally best of all derivations (Paul the deacon, 1907).

During the early period of their history, the Lombards were known for their violence, brutality, and ferocity, and their tendency to engage in battles and wars. This is supported by what the historian Paterculus mentioned, that the Lombards were one of the most brutal and ferocious German tribes (Velleius Paterculus, 1924) (LM. Hartmann, 1913). Thanks to this strength and brutality, the Lombards were able to establish for themselves an important position among the rest of the other Germanic peoples, and this is supported by their response to the Vandals when they wanted to impose tribute on them and to submit to their sovereignty, but they preferred to fight rather than pay tribute to their enemy. Because of the shame and disgrace they reject (Anonymous, 1907), (M. Pannone, 2008). Likewise, what the historian Tacitus mentioned in describing the Lombards, saying: "Although they were surrounded by powerful peoples, they enjoyed security, not by their surrender, but by their perseverance in facing the dangers of battles" (Tacitus, 1969) (L.M. Hartmann, 1913) (M. Todd, 2004).

Despite this, the differences between the German tribes are few and unclear, and the historian Christie pointed out this by saying: "Our historical sources for this era give us a vague and unclear picture of the tribal structure in the early period of German history" (Neil Christie (1995), and the historian Poulos states: "We cannot determine what the Lombards are and distinguish them from

other races, as there are groups of tribes that did not belong to the Lombards in the first place and then joined them” (M. Pannone, 2008) Here we can clarify an important point that perhaps we can distinguish them by their numbers, which were characterized by relative stability throughout the stages of their history, and they were excellent at riding horses, which is a rare feature among other West Germanic tribes (M. Pannone, 2008) (Neil Christie, 1995). It became clear from the analysis of the remains of the bones of the Lombards that they were tall and distinguished by muscular strength, and according to what was reported by the historian Kiszely, who pointed out that: “The Lombard men were strong, with strong muscles, and tall, while the women were graceful in body. It was clear from the shape of their bones that they did not participate in hard work” (Neil Christie, 1995). In addition, they were the most backward people in that early period, and the least affected by civilizational aspects, as they were still far from the influences of Roman culture and civilization in their early days (Thomas Hodgkin, 1895). In addition, the Lombards were still pagan, like the rest of the other Germanic peoples who inhabited distant places in Germania (Tacitus, 1969) (Stümpel Gustav, 1932) (Schulze Hagen, 1998) (Thomas Hodgkin, 1895). It is worth noting that there is a characteristic that was unique to the Lombards and that was associated with them throughout their history, which is their small numbers compared to their counterparts among the Germanic peoples, but this did not diminish their importance, as the historian Tacitus refers to this in his book “Germania” by saying: “And In contrast, the Langobardi are famous for their small numbers” (Tacitus, 1969) (L.M. Hartmann, 1913) (M. Todd, 2004) (Ali, 2011).

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