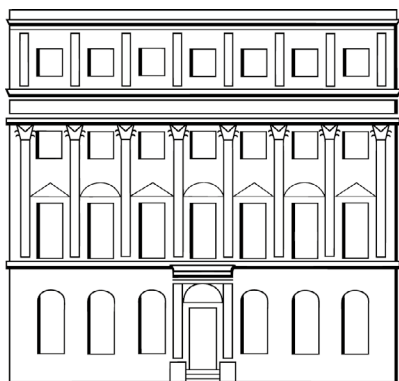


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Opposition to Charlemagne

by

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It is a tremendous honour to have been asked to give this lecture, and I must begin by warmly thanking the Director and his colleagues for their very kind invitation. Charlemagne's grandson, Charles the Bald, in a slightly garbled quotation of St John's Gospel, told an assembly in 843, 'we wish to honour those from whom we receive honour'; and that sentiment is certainly mine this afternoon. This Institute has long been a place in which I feel academically at home; and my debt to German medieval scholarship is, as the notes to this paper will indicate, one I can never repay. In 1994, Hagen Schulze, the GHIL's former director, with a nice combination of audacity and prudence, sketched what he called 'a provisional outline history of the state and the nation in Europe since the middle ages'. Proof of the breadth of his vision – if further proof were needed – is that he began that provisional history with some reflections on Charlemagne's revival of the Roman Empire: 'Because Europe had been so firmly lodged in the European mind by reason of its Carolingian revival, ... for all the European successor states, ... the myth of a Roman Empire had become the obligatory model. ... And so Europe did not disintegrate as the Carolingian Empire disintegrated... but achieved an inner cohesion, precisely because of its plurality of states'.¹ The message here is of glorious paradox: 'one of the major ironies of history'. Charlemagne's un-united states of Europe derived a kind of unity from their diversity. An *e pluribus unum* a thousand years ahead of its time.

Carolingianist historians since the Second World War have tended to take opposed views of Charlemagne's project. Some, especially in the post-war generation, inclined to gloom, thinking that once expansion stopped c. 800, and aristocrats ceased to benefit directly from the regime, underlying divisions became more

pronounced, magnates, always egotistic, now fastened oppressively upon their own regions revealing the superficiality of their commitment to Charlemagne's reform agenda and dooming the empire to division, decline and fall.² More recently a more optimistic assessment has gained ground, assigning some effectiveness to Charlemagne's government and some success to reform ideals that reconditioned aristocratic values and conduct.³ Summarising these positions, and concluding that 'both ... are largely accurate', Chris Wickham recently offered his own version of what I'll call Schulze's paradox: 'There was a constant dialectic between the state, with its enormous patronage powers, and local societies [run by] ... local powers'.⁴

Opposition to Charlemagne has been most often identified, and explained, by modern historians, German and French alike, as regional resistance, even quasi-national resistance, to a unifying imperial project. This scenario would cut Charlemagne down to size. But Charlemagne is quite simply unimaginable as a C. J. Friedrich-type solitary figure in a small clearing surrounded by impenetrable Germanic forests. His life was lived surrounded by other people: the paterfamilias of a large brood, beset by the shouts of petitioners thronging his palace, choosing to spend leisure hours bathing in the hot springs of Aachen with over a hundred companions, addressing assemblies of aristocrats and gentry, and then pitching into campaigns along with them. Cutting Charlemagne down to size is not my aim either. I want to try, instead, to see him in his own context, not viewed through the wrong end of a telescope.

Opposition belongs in that context. Opposition to Charlemagne was not that of a modern institutionalised 'loyal' kind, though this leader certainly had loyal critics, counsellors who dared to speak truth to power. The

type of opposition most often mentioned in contemporary accounts was that of societies and states that resisted annexation.⁵ Recalcitrant Aquitanians had been effectively crushed by Charlemagne's father and only a final mopping-up operation was required; Lombards surrendered in a near-bloodless campaign after their capital's defenders, including their king, had been weakened by an eight-month siege and ensuing illness; Bavarians, after their duke had been isolated, peacefully accepted Frankish rule without a battle, in a showpiece assembly where Bavarians and Franks together, and with Lombards and Saxons too, judged against the duke.⁶ Only Saxons – who were pagan – resisted violently, to be defeated, piecemeal, by Charlemagne's armies after thirty years of on-off warfare and finally by large-scale deportations.⁷ It was precisely because these 'societies' were not unitary but internally diverse, consisting of groups variously bound by ties of kindred, locality and/or shared lordship, that Charlemagne could readily divide and rule by winning over susceptible local elites, and in the Saxons' case, converting in stages, in families and groups. His pitch was one of association. Aquitanians, Lombards, Bavarians and Saxons, all kept their customary laws, with local courts presided over by their own leading men, bound to Charlemagne by personal and collective fidelity sealed by oaths. Resistance by those on the receiving-end of Frankish aggression is not a kind of opposition I want to consider in this paper.

You may have noted that my title looks as if it lacks a definite article. The omission was deliberate, because I wanted to avoid giving an anachronistic impression that there was a single, coherent, opposition persisting over a considerable time. The author of what I think is still the only book devoted to my subject called it

'oppositional groups'.⁸ That choice of title pointed in the right direction. Perhaps, though, it underestimates the extent to which opposition was positional, hence quite short-lived. Let me move to what Frankish authors generally categorised as *coniurationes*, against Charlemagne, and clearly regarded as extremely serious threats to his survival and that of his regime because they came from within his realm. *Coniurationes* are usually translated into modern English as conspiracies; but actually the word means what it says: a swearing-together.⁹ Two such, and only two, are mentioned in contemporary annals. The same two, and these only, are mentioned by Charlemagne's biographer, Einhard. Not constrained, as annal-authors were, by chronological sequence, Einhard mentions the later one first, in c. 20 of the *Life*.¹⁰ He had just described at some length, in c. 19 Charlemagne's successive wives and children. The next chapter begins rather abruptly:

He had a son called Pippin by a concubine – I have postponed mentioning him among the others till now – he was handsome but a hunchback. While his father was wintering in Bavaria,... Pippin feigned illness, and made a sworn association (*coniuravit*) against his father with some of the leading men of the kingdom who had drawn him into it with a vain promise of a kingdom (*regnum*). After the plot (*fraus*) had been uncovered, and the fellow-swearers (*coniuratores*) condemned, his father allowed him to be tonsured and, since he was willing, to devote himself to a religious life in the monastery of Prüm. There was also another, earlier (*prius*), powerful sworn association (*coniuratio*) against him in *Germania*. Of those responsible, some were blinded, some mutilated, others exiled, and only three were killed... But the cause and origin of both these sworn associations is thought to have been the cruelty of

Queen Fastrada. In both cases of conspiracy against the king, therefore, the reason was that he seemed to have abandoned the usual kindness and gentleness of his nature by consenting to his wife's cruelty. Otherwise, throughout his whole life, his behaviour in private and in public evoked such love and favour from everyone that never was even the least accusation of unjust cruelty made against him by anyone at all.¹¹

As elsewhere in the *Life*, Einhard seems to protest too much. He affirms Charlemagne's mildness too insistently, and Fastrada's cruelty too loudly. The telling about the second revolt, and then mentioning the earlier one as if by an afterthought, raises suspicions. Why did Charlemagne need to be whitewashed? Why was Fastrada made the scapegoat?¹²

Like Einhard, I will discuss Pippin's *coniuratio* first, not for Einhard's basically apologetic reasons, but because the explanation in this case is easier to seek. The developmental cycle of a royal family within the structure of dynastic politics made tensions inevitable: meaning that the likeliest source of opposition to Charlemagne lay in the heart of his family.¹³ Pippin was Charlemagne's eldest son, by a woman whom Einhard, as just quoted, and other ninth-century sources call a concubine, but whom Pope Stephen III, writing in 770, believed to be a wife.¹⁴ Einhard alone also labels Pippin a hunchback. Did the young man's medical condition only appear later in life?¹⁵ Or was this another retrospective defamation, justifying Pippin's exclusion to benefit the sons of Charlemagne's third wife, Hildegard? At the time of the revolt Pippin was aged 22, well and truly adult. His three younger half-brothers, Charlemagne's sons by a later wife, had already received subkingdoms; and one of them, who had been baptised Carloman, had been renamed Pippin in an elaborate

ceremony performed in Rome by the pope.¹⁶ This may not have implied that his elder namesake was to be sidelined, however.¹⁷ While the younger Pippin had been installed as king of Italy since 781 and come of age in (at the latest) 791, the older Pippin had retained high status at court. That the *ARF* make no mention of his campaigning in the 780s could well be the result, again, of the tailoring of the record following 792. A significant piece of evidence, because not subjected to retrospective tampering, is a set of liturgical acclamations (*laudes regiae*) from Soissons, datable to between 783 and 792, naming Pippin first among Charlemagne's sons, with the Young Charles' name following his.¹⁸ Pippin was presumably allowed a retinue of young nobles, or he would have lacked followers in 792. With Charlemagne's bloodless take-over of the large and strategically important region of Bavaria in 788, and a further four years of determined reconciliation of malcontents, and some local redistribution of office and power, Pippin and his supporters – who included 'many of the most noble young men and old men of the Franks'¹⁹ – could well have felt his hour had come, now that, with Tassilo's downfall, a 'realm' had as it were become available in the form of Bavaria, long eyed greedily by the Franks.²⁰ If another liturgical text, a list of those to be prayed for by clerics at Freising cathedral, can be dated to 791/2, then the community at that point acknowledged Pippin as *rex* and after his name came that of 'Karalus', presumably Charles the Younger. Bavarians would then have been among Pippin's key supporters.²¹

But support also lay further west. The two identifiable magnates involved were the bishop of Verdun and Count Theodold whose county probably lay in what is now northern France.²² This suggests that Bavaria was not the only or even the main objective. Another con-

temporary, the author of the Lorsch Annals, describing the *consilium pessimum* supplies more details about its aim: 'they [note that plural] wanted to kill the king (Charlemagne) and his sons by a lawful wife, and he [note the change of subject] wanted to reign in the king's place, just like Abimelech in the days of the judges of Israel who slew his brothers [half-brothers], 70 men upon a single stone, and reigned in the place of his father Gideon.'²³ You only need to recall cc. 8 and 9 of the Old Testament Book of Judges to get the coded message: Abimelech's coup had the support of his mother's brothers.²⁴ So, who was the mother? She was Himiltrude, and the writer of these annals had just named her in identifying Pippin as her son, in the same sentence as, a few words further on, he used the plural verb *voluerunt* – 'they wanted', as in, 'they wanted to kill Charlemagne'. I suggest that Himiltrude is the co-subject of that verb, along with her son. Whatever had happened to her since Charlemagne had formed what Einhard presents as successive relationships with bed-sharers two, three, and four – and historians politely guess that she must have been removed from court, and put into a convent – this well-informed source is telling us that she was with her son Pippin as he hatched his wicked plan, and by mentioning Abimelech, our source is adding that her brothers were involved too. It's a pity that we can't identify them, though various guesses have been offered, but we do know she and they were Franks. Einhard maybe contrasts the earlier revolt *facta in Germania* with this one, west of the Rhine. Fortunately one further fact is known about Himiltrude. She was buried at Nivelles, near Liège, where her grave was excavated in the 1970s.²⁵ Her bones show she was aged 35-40 at the time of her death: assuming she was in her early teens when the young Charlemagne fathered her

son in c. 769, she was quite probably still alive and kicking in 792.²⁶ Her presence at her son's side in the revolt is not impossible, then. Given the bucketloads of whitewash and screaming silences in Einhard's account, plus the fact that he was writing decades after 792, whereas the author of the Lorsch Annals was writing at the time, and is probably the best source we have, I would go as far as to say that Himiltrude's role is not just possible but probable. Now this gives a new twist to the idea of women having a strong presence in the politics of Charlemagne's reign. His daughters certainly did, but what about his sexual partners? Suppose we extend the notion of 'the court' (and remember that before the Aachen years, the court was a moveable feast) to include a major Carolingian convent, patronised, we know, by others among Charlemagne's women, and visited, in effect *ex officio*, by his fifth and last official partner Liutgard and his daughters on the Feast of the Assumption in 798.²⁷ I think we should call none of these women out of court unless and until we know they were dead. Silvia Konecny dared to suggest that Himiltrude might for many years after her 'repudiation' have been living at Nivelles, where presumably she was in close touch with Charlemagne's *aulici* including her own son. From Himiltrude's standpoint, anyway, the treatment of Pippin by his father surely looked like cruelty. This was not a 'national revolt', but a struggle (the kind in which women often played key roles) over the allocation of royal-family power in the *regnum* composed of plural *regna*. Some other Frankish magnates agreed with Himiltrude: at least they thought opposition was worth engaging in. Some Bavarians did too, and perhaps planned to restore Tassilo under Pippin's overlordship. Such wild surmises fall into the black

hole of *damnatio memoriae* to which Charlemagne consigned both his eldest son and his cousin Tassilo.²⁸

I turn now to the earlier sworn association, the one *in Germania*. I leave that phrase in Latin to signal that the geographical term refers to lands east of the Rhine. I have said, following Einhard, that this rebellion too came from within the empire. Not all historians would agree. The usual explanation offered for this revolt is regional separatism or even national resistance to Frankish rule.²⁹ The opposition, in other words, was really from without rather than from within. This claim relies on the report of contemporary annals from the monastery of Murbach in southern Alsace that 'Thuringians' – usually, but perhaps misleadingly, translated 'the Thuringians' – plotted to kill the king; but this writer names no names.³⁰ Other contemporary annals written in Francia credit the plot to East Franks and name the leader as a Frank called Hardrad.³¹ Were there two revolts, then? I'd rather not multiply them beyond necessity. There were, instead, two different perspectives on a combined uprising. Several annal-writers reported that the rebels were East Franks.³² The Murbach author chose not to mention East Franks, but relayed a dramatic story of a marriage-alliance between a West Frankish man and a Thuringian woman that went wrong, of Charlemagne's heavy-handed attempt to intervene (he sent an envoy demanding that the bride be sent over within the time specified by the law), of angry 'Thuringians' insulting Frankish nobles and Charlemagne alike, and then, terrified into bloodless surrender, being severely punished by the king. (I will come back to that presently). This unequivocally anti-Thuringian story was perhaps intended to deflect attention from East Frankish rebels to a group further east. But an East Frankish dimension to the revolt was sig-

nalled nonetheless, even by the Murbach author, when he reported that before surrendering to Charlemagne, 'Thuringian' rebels had fled to Fulda and the protection of St Boniface who was buried there, 'so that through his merits, the king might forgive their treachery' – adding that the abbot of Fulda had spoken peaceable and sweet words to them, while sending a messenger to tell Charlemagne everything. Clearly Baugulf, a Rhineland Frank from *Germania*, knew which side *his* bread was buttered.³³

Now before offering my own interpretation of what was going on here, I want to stand back from these grim events and make a point about method. It will strike early medievalists as fairly obvious. The annalistic sources for Charlemagne's reign are for the most part individually poor. The most famous are quasi-official, apparently inspired by the royal court (if not actually written there). Others, relatively underplayed in modern historiography, are regional productions which sometimes suggest different readings. Occasionally, they expand into a true narrative, like that of the Murbach annal for 786. Historians compare and contrast, and so produce reconstructions of *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* – as von Ranke did using precisely this evidence. But actually that will only get you so far: the *eigentlich* being construed in narrowly political terms of war, resistance, revenge. Is there any evidence for what Charlemagne and his aristocratic contemporaries did when not engaged in war and repression? The way to contextualise the annalistic record is to look at charters, documents recording transfers of property. These documents are even more resolutely local than annals; but if you view them synoptically, you get an impression of other highly relevant concerns and priorities.

An example from a rather later period exemplifies this point: it is Karl Leyser's examination of what he called 'the secular crisis of medieval Germany' in the eleventh century. The annals of that time record the appeals of Saxon rebels to liberty; the charters show that in affirming monarchic power the Salian kings meant business. Granting property *in proprietatem* might sound a more complete type of concession than ownership by hereditary right, but in fact such holdings were more precarious from the donor's standpoint, since, because originally given by a king, they were far more subject to revocation by the king as punishment for noble *infidelitas*, rebellion. Henry III called such punishment *ius regni*. Royal confiscations punishing *infidelitas* were the greatest of the grievances of the Saxon rebels in 1073.³⁴ In calling this the 'secular' crisis of the eleventh century, Karl Leyser meant to remind readers that the famous ecclesiastical crisis was not the only, or even the most important, one. Leyser's point was that narratives and charters must cross-inform each other as types of evidence, and that church history and secular history need to be viewed bi-focally.

Now, armed with these methodological exempla, I return to the eighth century and the opposition to Charlemagne in 785-6. There are very much larger numbers of private charters, that is, non-royal charters, from the reign of Charlemagne than from any earlier period – and from any later period before the twelfth century. This spike has often been attributed to general trends in charter-making and charter-keeping across Latin Christendom, which is certainly part of the story, but begs the question of why there was a spike in the gifts the charters recorded, namely, gifts to churches. Of course accidents of survival are always of some relevance in explaining absences. But three further expla-

nations can be offered for what has been preserved, and where. First, the habit of giving to churches and desiring records to be kept spread to lesser landowners in a trickle-down of practices hitherto confined to kings and great nobles: lesser landowners meant smaller gifts to lesser churches, but within the same strategic scenario of the deployment of family property among family members and clients.³⁵ Second, the spike is associated with specifically regional trends, the spreading and social deepening of Christianity east of the Rhine in the eighth century. The really huge charter-collections come from these regions, especially significant in the present context those of Fulda and Lorsch, monasteries founded in 744 and 764 respectively, situated in east Francia but with patrons further east in Saxony and Thuringia. From these two collections survive well over 3000 charters from the reign of Charlemagne.³⁶ Third, is the impact of Charlemagne himself, not just his political power but his cultural influence as a patron. A young colleague, Conrad Leyser once asked, provocatively, how would you have known you were living in Charlemagne's empire? My answer: You knew, and you couldn't help knowing, not just because of the demands his regime made but, in this context especially relevant, because of the tone-setting and trend-setting influences of his religious patronage. To see how that worked, and since joining up things that accidents of historiography have kept divided is among the most pressing tasks for an early medieval historian, we need to link the local charters with the charters of Charlemagne himself.

A glance at the charters of Charlemagne shows an interesting pattern of distribution in the early part of the reign, that is, in the 770s and early 780s. The total number of known charters for 769-783 (inclusive) is 97 (out of a total of 167 for the whole reign).³⁷ The excep-

tional figures for 775 (23) and 770 (1) apart, the annual figures fluctuate between 9 and 3. No charters at all survive for 784 and 785. Just a fraction under 60% of all Charlemagne's extant charters are from the first 15 years of his 46-year reign: not an unusual pattern for early medieval reigns. Virtually all these are grants to churches, and nearly all of those are confirmations of earlier kings' grants, or concessions of privileges, not of land. A small minority record Charlemagne's direct interventions in disputes over proprietary rights in churches; these can be supplemented by other interventions not evidenced in the charter record but in other sources. Some of these involved major churches: a judgement of 772 (D 65) removing the monastery of Lorsch from the ownership of its founding family was followed shortly afterwards (772 or 773) by Charlemagne's taking of Lorsch, *nostrum monasterium, ... in mundeburdem vel defensionem nostrum* 'into our protection or defence'.³⁸ In 782 a similar sequence brought the monastery of Mettlach out of its founding family's hands and into the lordship of the archbishopric of Trier, but, again, into royal lordship, in a royal judgement which, to quote Susan Wood, 'comes close to implying that the property of the bishopric [of Trier] itself is the king's to claim in law'.³⁹ In her recent searching analysis of this phenomenon, Wood points to the 'large number' of monasteries that were given to Charlemagne by their founders or founder-abbots:⁴⁰ they included Hersfeld, which its founder put (to quote Charlemagne) 'sub nostram tu[d]icionem filiorumque nostris et genealogia nostra' in 775.⁴¹ Two counts saw their tithe income transferred by Charlemagne to Hersfeld in 780 through a 'precept of our authority'.⁴² A few years later, a man named Alpad found himself investigated by a pair of Charlemagne's *missi* – one of them was the abbot of the Carolingian

family-monastery of Prüm – and deprived of substantial estates which were found to have rightfully belonged to the king himself, who promptly assigned them to Prüm.⁴³ Charlemagne was a lord of many great churches, that is, bishoprics and abbeys. But he ‘did not found monasteries, he acquired them’.⁴⁴ This was how he built up what German historians call his *Reichskirche* ‘especially in this crucial area between Middle Rhine, Saxony and upper Danube’.⁴⁵ The aspect of lordship most critical for the *Einstaatus* of the Church was the imposition of demands for military service from tenants of church lands.⁴⁶ The charter record shows that the great heave of royal policy in this direction occurred in the first third of Charlemagne’s reign.

Two other royal interventions bring us closer to 785. Fulda, in royal ‘defence’ since 765 (in the days of Charlemagne’s father Pippin) was assigned as its abbot, apparently in the later 770s, Baugulf, whom we have already met as a former count and trusty of the king but with roots in the aristocracy of the Middle Rhine, while the monastery of Murbach, where the *Annales Nazariani* were written and whence they were circulated, seems to have come into Charlemagne’s lordship c.782. A final piece of evidence is a charter dated December 781: Charlemagne’s gift to Fulda of the estate of Rossdorf.⁴⁷ Two places of that name occur among the charters of Fulda, one in Hesse in the Lahngau, the other in Thuringia: you can imagine the arguments historians have waged about which this is. Charlemagne says: ‘we have granted to the monastery of the Saviour on the river Fulda where lies St Boniface and where Baugulf is abbot, our estate called Rossdorf, which Hardrad gave by charters to that holy place, and afterwards our *missi* gained it by a judgement as ours (*ad opus nostrum conquisierunt*),⁴⁸ and also what the monks got through

[those] earlier charters in dues and renders from the people (*conlata populi*) on that estate, all of it in its totality, and we have conceded it as a whole to that abovementioned holy place, and we have handed it over whole and entire to that above-mentioned holy place for possessing in perpetuity.' The formulae here are oddly repetitive (do they protest too much?), but the gist is clear: Hardrad gave some land and rights to Fulda, Charlemagne's *missi* successfully laid claim to these as his, and *he* now gave them to Fulda. The question immediately comes to mind: is this the Hardrad of the 785 revolt? Curiously, the question-mark over the land's location (is 'Rostorp'/Rossdorf in Thuringia or Hesse?) is repeated over the donor: men called Hardrad/Haldrad/Aldrat are recorded in charters of Fulda and of Lorsch in the Lahngau and in Thuringia.⁴⁹ But perhaps it doesn't matter too much if this Hardrad is the 785 Hardrad (the man in Charlemagne's charter is not entitled count) or a kinsman of his, or even just a homonym. What matters in this charter is the detail about Charlemagne's work methods: the sending-in of *missi* to swing a judgement in a local court, the overriding of a local man's rights and gift, and the king's take-over of both the land and, by its re-donation on his own account, the spiritual benefits of the gift. Charlemagne did these things not by virtue of his lordship of Fulda, though no doubt the abbot was a willing enough ally, but by political intervention in the locality, and the local society, concerned, through what we might call acquisitive agents: *missi* who did not arrive unaccompanied. We recall the *satellites* whom Charlemagne sent in fury against the rebels in 786: men who 'in wise and trusty fashion devastated their estates and properties'.⁵⁰

Matthew Innes has justly written: 'Charlemagne was not trying to force the local aristocracy to its knees,

but to make local power-holders more answerable to the centre. Thanks to the successful prosecution of expansive warfare, and the possibility of high office through royal patronage, the aristocracy had a vested interest in the Carolingian system which eased the enactment of structural changes.⁵¹ But you could not build up a *Reichskirche* just by structural changes, or by being polite about easing their enactment, any more than you can make an omelette without breaking eggs. It is a matter of luck that Charlemagne's D 140 survives; but other charters point towards similar tactics. I suggest that a crisis point was reached in the early 780s: not just by obscure local acts of high-handedness, but after the judicial execution of a large number of Saxons at Verden in 782; after the subsequent issuing of draconian decrees for the government of conquered Saxony; and after Charlemagne's insulting personal intervention in the marriage-alliance between a leading West Frank and the daughter of a leading Thuringian. Of a piece with these acts of dishonouring and violence was the treatment meted out to the 785 rebels in a peculiarly brutal way: the *auctores* of the rebellion, that is, the leaders (numbers unspecified), having surrendered, were sent in groups, under the guard of Charlemagne's *missi*, to the shrines of the saints to swear fidelity to Charlemagne and his sons, but having done this, some had their eyes torn out on the return journey, others were judicially tried and condemned at an assembly at Worms, some then had their eyes torn out and the rest were exiled, 'and all their possessions and estates were taken into the royal fisc'.⁵² Blinding was in effect a new form of judicial punishment in Francia (earlier cases there and in Spain were far beyond the horizon of memory) though this punishment had recently got a new lease of life in Byzantium and in Italy. It was specified in Chris-

tian Roman Law as the punishment for *lèse majesté* represented in the Murbach annals as commuted by princely clemency.⁵³ I infer Charlemagne's determination to squeeze all the ideological capital he could from the 785/6 revolt.

There are important implications here for Charlemagne's increased reliance on oaths of fidelity.⁵⁴ Some historians have expressed surprise that the 785 rebels swore such oaths *only after* having rebelled, and *only after* having sworn were they brutally punished by Charlemagne's agents. The sequence of events, given that Charlemagne was placing a new emphasis on oaths precisely to promote loyalty, might, from a modern standpoint, be thought illegal, illogical and inept, the fates of the rebel leaders likely to generate cynicism rather than trust. But such reactions fail to take into account one of the oath's functions, which was to act as a test, a kind of ordeal, interpretable as proof of guilt requiring punishment rather as confession required penance. It is unlikely, therefore, that Charlemagne's contemporaries regarded the procedures of 785 as illegal; and indeed the *Chronicle* of Fredegar, a historical text known to Charlemagne and his *aulici*, depicts a comparable mid-seventh-century process as self-evidently justified.⁵⁵ Logic was in the eyes of beholders. As for political aptness, in the sense of effectiveness, proof of that was in the aftermath. Loyalty oaths were required, and taken, regularly after 786, though sworn associations had been prohibited in the Capitulary of Herstal (779). Such prohibitions grew more frequent and peremptory.⁵⁶ The *coniurationes* centred on Hardrad and Pippin were the last of their kind, so far as we can tell. After 792, there were no further sworn associations against Charlemagne or his sons. The fates of the rebel leaders in 785/6 did not, apparently, preclude the

engendering of trust. Rather, they showed the oaths of these rebels to be false. The repeated use of 'proof'-words, *conprobatur*, *noscuntur*, *cognoscentur*, *noscuntur*, leads up to a resounding *ergo* and a final *conprobatur*.⁵⁷ 'Therefore' the king is safe and sound: and the sequence of events proves that God protects the king. Charles, 'ruling in the best possible way', deserves a little paean of praise.

Finally, I want briefly to compare the *coniurationes* of 785 and 782. Any comparison of the actual seriousness of the two must start from the impression given by the contemporary sources that the 785 rebellion collapsed from loss of confidence on the rebels' part before it had properly begun. It should also take account of the sense of huge relief conveyed by the author of the Lorsch Annals under the year 793: 'when he had identified his faithful men ... who did *not* support Pippin in his most wicked plot, he rewarded them abundantly, with gold and silver, silk, and manifold gifts'.⁵⁸ While none of the contemporary sources for 792 mentions blinding, the so-called 'revised' version of the *ARF* mentions executions by the sword and the gallows and explicitly calls these punishments for *lèse majesté*.⁵⁹ Hardrad's revolt might be considered a local-provincial affair, whereas the 792 revolt involved a West Frankish count and a Frankish bishop as well as Bavarians. While rebels in both cases aimed to kill the king, in 792 the king's sons too were targets – all save Pippin called 'the hunchback', who was to rule in the stead of them all. It would be possible to conclude that the 792 revolt was much more serious than that of 785.

I incline, nevertheless, to the opposite conclusion. It is hard to find a happy royal family in any dynastic system (though as Tolstoy pointed out every unhappy family is unhappy in a different way). The tensions that arose

from conflict within the royal family were endemic in a set of practices that privileged serial monogamy for the king, hence produced a series of queens and of sons by different mothers. Tensions arose too from the partibility of large, composite kingdoms, and uncertainties about the succession. In Charlemagne's case, and in a broader comparative context, the impressive thing is his success in heading off filial revolt or conflict between his sons. Why, contemporaries might well have asked, had Pippin 'the hunchback' not rebelled sooner, and why did his half-brothers never rebel? That the mother of those half-brothers had died in 783, and that her brother died in 799; that Charlemagne's unmarried sister and unmarried daughters at or close to the palace worked to keep peace within the family; that no daughter-in-law resided in Charlemagne's palace to act as a focus for any rival faction; that Charlemagne controlled whether or not his sons married and if so when and to whom (whereas in Constantinople, the young emperor's determination to marry without his mother Eirene's approval sealed his fate, and perhaps, in fairly short order, hers): all these points may have much to do with the relative quiet on the western front.

The 785 revolt, on the other hand, seems to me so significant precisely because it arose as a provincial reaction against the political practices of the regime itself: practices so strongly in evidence in the years down to 783. Recall that for the years 784 and 785 no charter of Charlemagne's survives at all. Had the king forgotten the arts of patronage-management? Or was he simply too preoccupied with bringing the Saxon wars to what seemed at the time a good conclusion?⁶⁰ I would see his marriage to Fastrada in 783 as, if anything, an attempt to consolidate support *in Germania*; and the castigating of her *crudelitas* seems to me a rather crude attempt in

texts written exclusively after her death (in 794) to divert blame from where it belonged. The striking consequence of the 785 *coniuratio* was the way it set Charlemagne thinking about the management of dissent. In response to that revolt, remember, he required the former rebels to swear fidelity to himself and his children. Having those oath-swearers arrested on their way back to the palace, and having their eyes torn out, were acts of justifiable retribution, testimonies to Charlemagne's conviction that these oath-swearers were already forsworn. In the aftermath, Charlemagne reflected. And what he and his counsellors came up with was another case of something old: an oath of fidelity for all.⁶¹ Recent work on the Formulary of Marculf, which provides an oath-formula 'for the people to swear their submission to the king' strengthens considerably the case for regarding this Merovingian practice, complete with the sending-out of *missi* with relics for the oath-swearing, as only briefly, if ever, out of use.⁶² When Charlemagne decided to place a new emphasis on such oaths, in 789, he sent out *missi* instructing them to explain why these oaths were necessary: though similar oaths were of old custom, recently those faithless ones who had plotted to cause great strife in the kingdom and conspired against the king's life had said, when questioned, that they had never sworn fidelity to him.⁶³ Along with a number of other scholars, I date this to 789. The setting of the new oath-swearings is carefully specified: it is to be a local assembly, or rather a great number of assemblies, which the *pagenses*, the men of each county, attend in military gear. Many will complain that their law has not been fully kept. A dialogue is scripted here, between the armed plaintiffs and the *missi*, the representatives of the king, with the local count present as the regular officer responsible. The *missi*, in reassuring mode, must explain

that all may believe (and therefore trust) the king's wish that their law be kept, that is, that their rights by customary law be observed. *Missi* and count must take complaints on to the king. The oath will then be sworn, and the oath-swearers will go on to the year's campaign 'to help the lord king' (*in solatio domni regis*). The *pagenses* constitute in a sense an opposition – a loyal opposition: they oppose the regime's excesses. But they do so from a fundamental position of fidelity – now confirmed by oath. Charlemagne undertakes to be a listening king: a hearer of grievances, a corrector of injustice. These oath-swearings, these collective performances and experiences, were intended for replication all over the empire. These oaths manifested, and made, the connexions between local assemblies and regnal ones.

Charlemagne learned on the job – throughout his life. He responded to challenges by coming up with old solutions to which new contexts lent an aspect of newness. The oaths were a case in point. Charlemagne spent the last part of his reign remedying the flaws which had emerged in the first part. In his later public utterances, he highlighted the flaws, monitored his own performance, and promised improvement. Contrasting the Old Testament to the New, signalling a new kind of ethics and public-spiritedness, he implicitly renounced the mistakes of his own past.⁶⁴ You might almost see this as a second-term Charlemagne. There was a necessary complement: knowing his own capacity to adapt, and to change himself, he credited, and demanded, similar capacities on the part of his faithful men. Heinrich Fichtenau wrote in what I still think is the best book on Charlemagne's empire: 'The ageing emperor ... tried to strengthen the loosened ties between ruler and ruled... He tried to win back the grace of an enraged God through fasting and prayer. ... [But Charlemagne] was

forced to continue to govern with the help of the nobility... There was no change in personnel – the basic condition of all reform.’⁶⁵ Well, it depends what you mean by change in personnel. Human beings change, and Charlemagne was in the business of changing those he relied on. His latter years saw an astonishing project of renovating the elite from within, converting them to priorities which Charlemagne naturally wrote about in Christian terms – and not just the secular nobility but church leaders as well, who in some ways seemed to him the most unregenerate of the lot. Opposition was converted into negotiation, and thence, often, into active participation, and this mattered most at the regional or local level where things actually got done. Yet life at Aachen, Charlemagne’s de facto capital in the latter part of his reign, however intermittently experienced by most *fideles*, made this collective refashioning possible to think. Fichtenau’s last word was that there was some hope for Europe, *since* Charlemagne and also *because of* Charlemagne, in ‘disunity which has never dissolved into complete anarchy’.⁶⁶ Those words were written in 1949. The message is not a million miles away from Hagen Schulze’s in 1994: ‘Europe achieved an inner cohesion precisely because of its plurality’. Both formulations are, in the end, too abstract. I prefer to leave you hearing in your imaginations the plaintive *pagenses*, assembled amongst their peers with their clattering weapons and jingling harnesses, appealing to their law, giving their names and specific grievances to counts and *missi*, trusting that in far-away Aachen Charlemagne would be ready to hear. His strategic response to opposition was to make real and palpable the reciprocity implicit yet inherent in the oath.

References

¹ H. Schulze, *States, Nations and Nationalism From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford, 1996), first published in German 1994, trans. W.E. Yuill, citations from xi, 4-6.

² L. Halphen, *Charlemagne et l'Empire carolingien* (Paris, 1947), 2nd edn, with postface by P. Riché (Paris, 1968); H. Fichtenau, *Das karolingische Imperium. Soziale und geistige Problematik eines Grossreiches* (Zurich, 1949), partial English translation by P. Munz, *The Carolingian Empire* (Oxford, 1968); F. L. Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy*, trans. J. Sondheimer (London, 1971); also T. Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities* (Cambridge, 2006), chapters 13, 14 and 17, and, in rather more positive vein, chapter 11.

³ M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400-1000* (Cambridge, 2000); id., 'Charlemagne's Government', in J. Story (ed.), *Charlemagne. Empire and Society* (Manchester, 2005), 71-89; J. L. Nelson, *Charlemagne and the Paradoxes of Power, The Reuter Lecture 2005* (University of Southampton, 2006); ead., *Courts, Elites and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages. Charlemagne and Others* (Aldershot, 2007), chapters VIII-XVII.

⁴ C. Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome. A History of Europe from 400 to 1000* (London, 2009), 390-92.

⁵ For a short, sharp, narrative account of Charlemagne's campaigns, see M. Becher, *Karl der Große* (Munich, 1999), 40-74.

⁶ *Annales regni Francorum* (hereafter ARF) s.a. 788, ed. F. Kurze, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (hereafter MGH) *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum* (hereafter SRG) (Hanover and Leipzig, 1895), 80.

⁷ Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, cc. 7, 8, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH, SRG (Hanover and Leipzig, 1911), 9-11.

⁸ K. Brunner, *Oppositionelle Gruppen im Karolingerreich* (Vienna/Cologne/Graz, 1979).

⁹ See 'Conjuratio', in J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden, 1997), s.v., giving the primary meaning 'sworn association', so also King who translates *coniuratio* in ARF s.a. 785, 792, 'sworn association', 119, 124; cf. 'Conspiracies': in the

translation of the ARF by B. Scholz, *Carolingian Chronicles* (Ann Arbor MI, 1970), 63, 71, and also in the standard English translations of Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, by L. Thorpe, *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer. Two Lives of Charlemagne* (Harmondsworth, 1969), 75-6, E.S. Firchow and E.H. Zeydel, *Einhard, Vita Karoli Magni. The Life of Charlemagne* (Dudweiler, 1985), 81, 83, and D. Ganz, *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer. Two Lives of Charlemagne* (London, 2008), 33. German scholars (including those cited below) often translate as 'Verschwörung' but also 'Aufstand'; French scholars e.g. J. Favier, *Charlemagne* (Paris, 1999), 262, 339, 'complot', 368, 'rébellion'; Italian scholars, e.g. A. Barbero, *Carlo Magno. Un padre dell'Europa* (Rome, 2000), as 'congiura', 163-4. For reasons which will become clear, it seems advisable for a translator to retain the notion of (oath)-swearing.

¹⁰ Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, c. 20, 25-6. Walahfrid in his edition of Einhard's *Vita Karoli*, *ibid.*, 25, note **, numbered this c. 21, and gave it the title: 'De duabus coniurationibus contra eum factis celeriter et iuste terminatis'. See the new translation by Ganz, *Einhard and Notker*, 33.

¹¹ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 20, 25-6 (translation mine).

¹² See J. L. Nelson, 'The Siting of the Council at Frankfort. Some Reflections on Family and Politics', in R. Berndt (ed.), *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794*, 2 vols (Mainz, 1997), vol. 1, 149-65; F. Schmieder, 'Fastrada – Karl der Große, die Bayern und Frankfurt am Main', in W. Brandes et al., *Millennium 2/2005* (Berlin and New York, 2005), 329-35, at 332-34.

¹³ I borrow the 'developmental cycle' from J. Goody, 'Fission of Domestic Groups among the LoDagaba', in J. Goody and M. Fortes (eds), *The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups* (Cambridge, 1958), 53-91; cf. J. L. Nelson, 'Charlemagne – *pater optimus?*', in P. Godman, J. Jarnut and P. Johanek (eds), *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung* (Stuttgart, 2002), 269-81 (repr. Nelson, *Courts, Elites*, chapter XV). See further the fine analysis of R. Schieffer, 'Väter und Söhne im Karolingerhaus', in *id.* (ed.), *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Regnum Francorum*, Beihefte der *Francia* 22 (Sigmaringen, 1990), 149-64.

¹⁴ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*; Astronomus, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris* c. 6, ed. E. Tremp, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1995), 302; and for other

sources, see B. Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft. Untersuchungen zur Teilhabe am Reich in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit* (Hanover, 1997), 144, n. 28. Paul the Deacon, *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH Scriptores II (Hanover, 1929), 265, writing in 784/5, says that Charlemagne's relationship with Himiltrude occurred *ante legale connubium*: W. Goffart, 'Paul the Deacon's *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* and the Early Design of Charlemagne's Succession', *Traditio* 42 (1986), 59-93; J. L. Nelson, 'Charlemagne the Man', in Story (ed.), *Charlemagne*, 22-37, at 33-34. D. Kempf, 'Paul the Deacon's *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus* and the Role of Metz in the Carolingian Realm', *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004), 279-99, stresses the patronage of Paul by Bishop Angilbert who had custody of the tomb of the recently-dead Queen Hildegard and evidently was an early promoter of the claims of her progeny. For Pope Stephen III's testimony, see J. Jarnut, 'Ein Bruderkampf und seine Folgen', in G. Jena et al. (eds), *Herrschaft, Kirche, Kultur. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für F. Prinz* (Stuttgart, 1993), 165-76, at 168 and n. 16.

¹⁵ This is the surmise of Kasten, *Königssöhne*, 139, and Becher, *Karl der Große*, 46.

¹⁶ ARF s.a. 781, 56-7, reports the consecrations of Carloman/Pippin and Louis as kings of Italy and Aquitaine respectively. *Annales sancti Amandi, continuatio*, ed. G. Pertz, MGH Scriptores I (Hanover, 1826), s.a. 789, 12, and *Annales Mettenses Priores*, ed. B. von Simson, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1905), s.a. 790, 78, both indicate that Charles the Younger received a sub-kingdom in Neustria 'beyond the Seine'. For the context, see P. Classen, 'Karl der Große und die Thronfolge im Frankenreich', in Max-Planck-Institut (ed.), *Festschrift H. Heimpel*, 3 vols (Göttingen, 1972), vol. 3, 109-34.

¹⁷ See G. Thoma, *Namensänderungen in Herrscherfamilien des mittelalterlichen Europa* (Kallmünz, 1985), 77-80.

¹⁸ See B. Opfermann, *Die liturgischen Herrscherakklamationen im sacrum Imperium des Mittelalters* (Weimar, 1952), 101. The *letania* is conveniently edited as an Appendix to Holder-Egger's edition of Einhard's *Vita Karoli*, at 46-47, with interesting editorial

comment on the text's *sermo magis Italica quam Latina*. See further Classen, 'Karl der Große und der Thronfolge', 117-18.

¹⁹ *Annales Mosellani*, ed. J. M. Lappenberg, MGH *Scriptores XVI* (Hanover, 1859), s.a. 791, 498.

²⁰ See S. Airlie, 'Narratives of Triumph and Rituals of Submission: Charlemagne's Mastering of Bavaria', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, 9 (1999), 93-120.

²¹ C. I. Hammer, 'The Social Landscape of the Prague Sacramentary: the Prosopography of an Eighth-Century Mass-Book', *Traditio* 54 (1999), 41-80; id., "'Pipinus rex': Pippin's Plot of 792 and Bavaria', *Traditio* 63 (2008), 235-56. I thank Carl Hammer for keeping me abreast of his important work in advance of publication.

²² For Bishop Peter of Verdun, see *Capitulare Francofurtense*, cap. 3, MGH *Concilia II*, 1, ed. A. von Werminghoff (Hanover and Leipzig, 1906), 165-66, and R. Schieffer, 'Ein politischer Prozess des 8. Jahrhunderts im Vexierspiegel der Quellen', in Berndt (ed.), *Das Frankfurter Konzil*, vol. 1, 167-82; for Count Theodold, see Charlemagne's charter of March / April 797, exculpating him from participation in Pippin's plot and restoring to him all his inherited and acquired lands, *Diplomata* no. 181, ed. E. Mühlbacher, MGH *Diplomata Karolinorum I* (Berlin, 1906), 244-45, and published in facsimile by H. Atsma and J. Vezin in *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores XVI* (Dietikon / Zurich, 1986) no. 637, 92-95, with transcription at 93: 'dum ab omnibus non habetur incognitum qualiter, suadente diabolo, Pippinus filius cum aliquibus dei infidelibus ac nostris in vita et regno nobis a deo concesso impie conatus est tractare, et domino Iesu Christo miserante, nihil prevaluit eorum perfidia. Fuerunt namque aliqui ex ipsis in nostra praesentia convicti et secundum iudicium Francorum diiudicati; aliqui vero fideles per iudicium dei se exinde idonei averunt, sicuti Theodoldus, comes fidelis noster, visus est fecisse'. See further the donation of Theodald (sic), 20 December 797, of properties in the Chamblois (dep. Oise) to St-Denis, *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores XVI*, eds. Atsma and Vezin, no. 638, 96-99. Cf. R. Le Jan (- Hennebicque), 'Prosopographica neustrica: les agents du roi en Neustrie de 639 à 840', in H. Atsma (ed.), *La Neustrie: les pays au Nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, Beiheft

der *Francia* 16 (Sigmaringen, 1989), 231-70, at n. 273, identifying Theodald as count of Chambly, an inference which though possible is not compelling.

²³ *Annales Laureshamenses* (Lorsch Annals) s.a. 792, ed. Pertz, MGH *Scriptores* I, 35. For the exceptional importance of these annals because they can be shown to have been written up more or less contemporaneously with events, see R. McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004), 104-10.

²⁴ See Hammer, "'Pipinus rex'", 262.

²⁵ S. Konecny, *Die Frauen des karolingischen Königshauses: Die politische Bedeutung der Ehe und die Stellung der Frau in der fränkischen Herrscherfamilie vom 7. bis zum 10. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 1976), 65-66 with n. 9 at 193.

²⁶ That possibility was registered by Kasten, *Königssöhne*, 144; Hammer, "'Pipinus rex'", 251, n. 55.

²⁷ *Alcuin, Epistolae*, ed. E. Dümmmler, MGH *Epistolae karolini aevi* II (Berlin, 1895), no. 150, 246.

²⁸ Hammer, "'Pipinus rex'", 261-62.

²⁹ W. Schlesinger, *Die Entstehung der Landesherrschaft* (2nd edn Darmstadt, 1964), 50-51; Hägermann, *Karl der Große*, 233-34.

³⁰ *Annales Nazariani* s.a. 786, ed. Pertz, MGH *Scriptores* I, 41-43. R. McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Notre Dame IN, 2006), 81-89, categorises these as 'local annals'. Cf. Brunner, *Oppositionelle Gruppen*, 48-53.

³¹ *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a. 786, 32: 'Rebellare conati sunt quidam comites, nonnulli etiam nobilium in partibus Austriae; ARF 'revised' version s.a. 785, 71: 'Facta est eodem anno trans Rhenum apud orientales Francos adversus regem inmodica coniuratio, cuius auctorem Hardradum comitem fuisse constabat'; *Annales Fuldenses* s.a. 785, 11: 'Coniuratio orientalium Francorum, quae vocatur Hartrati, contra regem exorta et cito compressa est'.

³² As well as a third option of not mentioning it at all: an option taken by the authors of the *Annales Petaviani* and the so-called 'original' version of the ARF. M. Innes, 'Kings, Monks and Patrons: Political Identities and the Abbey of Lorsch', in R. Le Jan (ed.), *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne* (Lille, 1998),

301-24, at 314, surmises that these were 'disaffected' (East) Franks who 'deployed a Thuringian identity'. But he does not say why.

³³ On Baugulf, a count who became abbot of Fulda, see Innes, *State and Society*, 66, 87, 186, 188-89.

³⁴ K. Leyser, 'The Crisis of Medieval Germany', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 69 (1983), 409-43, repr. *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe*, ed. T. Reuter, vol. 2 (London, 1994), 21-49; and cf. id., 'From Saxon Freedoms to the Freedom of Saxony. The Crisis of the Eleventh Century', 51-67 (originally published as 'Von sächsischen Freiheiten zur Freiheit Sachsens: Die Krise des 11. Jahrhunderts', in J. Fried (ed.), *Die abendländische Freiheit vom 10. Zum 14. Jahrhundert: Der Wirkungszusammenhang von Idee und Wirklichkeit im europäischen Vergleich*, Vorträge und Forschungen 39 (Sigmaringen, 1991), 67-83.

³⁵ Innes, *State and Society*, 31-33, 73-74; S. Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford, 2006), esp. chapters 9 and 10.

³⁶ Innes, *State and Society*, 13-18; A. Rio, *Legal Practice and the Written Word in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2009), 11-20.

³⁷ I should like to correct an error in the bar-chart published as Appendix III of my 'Aachen as a Place of Power', 23, originally published in M. de Jong and F. Theuws with C. van Rhijn (eds), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2001), and reprinted (without correction) in my *Court, Elites and Gendered Power*, chapter XIV: the figure for the year 772 should be 9 (not 0). In what follows, Charlemagne's charters are cited by D-number from the edition of Mühlbacher, cited above, n. 22.

³⁸ DD 65 and 73.

³⁹ D 148, with Wood, *Proprietary Church*, 217.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁴¹ D 89.

⁴² D 129.

⁴³ D 165 (790).

⁴⁴ Wood, *Proprietary Church*, 226.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁴⁶ F. Prinz, *Klerus und Krieg im früheren Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1971), 91.

⁴⁷ D 140. See the edition of this same document, an original, in E. Stengel, *Urkundenbuch der Kloster Fulda*, 2 vols (Marburg, 1913-58), vol. 1, no. 147, 208-13, where, 209, 211, n. 'c', the editor explains that the third letter in the scribe's 'Hardradus' has been erased (when?) and 'l' substituted ('Haldradus'). Cf. in the same edition no. 119, 185-86, concerning a man named 'Altrat'. Though Stengel considers, but rejects, any identification with the rebel of 785/6, the evidence seems inconclusive.

⁴⁸ Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, s.v. 'conquirere', sense 2, citing D 140.

⁴⁹ See the comparable onomastic evidence in the name-registers in K. Glöckner (ed.), *Codex Laurensheimensis*, 3 vols (Darmstadt, 1933-1936) .

⁵⁰ *Annales Nazariani*, s.a. 786, 41: 'rex ... iratus est valde et indignans hoc missis ex satellitibus suis contra eos qui sagaciter et fiduciat[er] contra eos perrexerunt praedia possessionesque eorum devastantes'.

⁵¹ Innes, *State and Society*, 185.

⁵² *Annales Nazariani*, s.a. 786, 42.

⁵³ Theodosian Code IX. 14. 3. See G. Bühner-Thierry, "'Just Anger" or "Vengeful Anger"? The Punishment of Blinding in the Early Medieval West', in B. Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger's Past. The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 1998), 75-91, at 80-81. She does not note the contrast with 792, however: then, blinding is only mentioned in the *Annales Fuldenses* s.a. ed. F. Kurze, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1891), 12: 'auctoribus factionis partim morte partim exilio et caecitate damnatis', whereas other sources mention executions of various kinds.

⁵⁴ Fundamental is M. Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft. Untersuchungen zum Herrscherethos Karls des Großen* (Sigmaringen, 1993), esp. 79-87.

⁵⁵ Fredegar, *Chronicarum Libri IV*, ed. A. Kusternig (Darmstadt, 1982), 54, 216-18, tells the story of Godin, who allegedly plotted the king's death: the king then made him travel to the shrines of saints and swear oaths of fidelity at each, 'so that, at a suitable place, he could have him killed', which is exactly what happened. See further Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft*, 196.

⁵⁶ *Capitulary of Herstal*, ed. A. Boretius, MGH *Capitularia regum Francorum* I (Hanover, 1883), no. 20, c. 16, 51. I think the *Admonitio generalis* (789), *ibid.* no. 22, c. 29, 56, modelled on Council of Chalcedon (451) c. 18, was the model for the Capitulary of Frankfurt (794), *ibid.* no. 28, c. 31, 77: both referred to clerical or monastic plots. But of course an ecclesiastical regulation could be translated into secular contexts: as certainly in the *Duplex legationis Edictum* (789), *ibid.* no. 23, c. 26, 64, and the Capitulary of Thionville (805), *ibid.* no. 44, c. 10, 124 (referring to *conspiraciones* rather than *coniurationes*), both of which associate the prohibition clause with oaths of fidelity. Cf. Nelson, *Courts, Elites*, chapter VI. McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past*, 71-73, infers that these injunctions hint at 'pockets of disaffection ... on a far wider scale than the well-documented rebellions of the Saxon Widukind or the Friulan Rotgaud'. The comparison there would be rendered unapt by the distinction made in the present paper between 'external' resistance to annexation and 'internal' opposition.

⁵⁷ *Annales Nazariani*, s.a. 786, 42-3, conveniently and independently edited by McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past*, 86-7, with n. 73.

⁵⁸ *Annales Laureshamenses* s.a. 793, 35.

⁵⁹ ARF, 'revised' version, s.a. 792, 93. Cf. n. 52 above.

⁶⁰ ARF 'original' version, s.a. 785, 70.

⁶¹ Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft*, 145-47, 195-200.

⁶² Marculf I, 40, ed. K. Zeumer, MGH *Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi* (Hanover, 1886), 68. See now the annotated translation by A. Rio, *The Formularies of Angers and Marculf. Two Merovingian Legal Handbooks* (Liverpool, 2008), 175-76, on which I draw here. Cf. Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft*, 14-15.

⁶³ MGH *Capitularia* I, no. 25, 66-67. For discussion of the date, see Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft*, 79-87.

⁶⁴ See Nelson, 'The Voice of Charlemagne', in ead., *Court, Elites*, chapter XIII.

⁶⁵ Fichtenau, *Carolingian Empire*, 181.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.