Carolingian culture: emulation and innovation

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I

Introduction: the Carolingian Renaissance

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The origins of the Carolingian Renaissance

The 'Carolingian Renaissance' may be defined as the revival of learning in conjunction with a movement to reform (to 'correct') both the institutions of the Church and the lives of the Christian peoples living under Carolingian rule. The ideal was by no means new: it was implicit within the pastoral responsibility of Christian ministers of every rank, and, from the time of Constantine onwards, within that of the Christian ruler also, the *minister Dei*. The Christian soul relied ultimately for its *reformatio* or *renovatio* on divine grace, but *correctio*, *emendatio*, by the relevant authorities was important in order to create the context in which that divine grace could operate since human will alone could not be relied upon.

In the pagan period the emperor, as *pontifex maximus*, had already been held 'responsible for the religious well-being of his subjects and answerable to the deity for their transgressions'; but from the fourth century onwards 'the monarch's duties towards God assumed an unprecedented seriousness'. Eusebius of Caesarea identified the task of Constantine as one of renovation and purification, of 'cleansing all the filth of godless error from His kingdom on earth'; he was 'the good shepherd', 'the teacher of knowledge about God'.[1] Here in the fourth century, as later in the eighth, there is a perception of the close link between the revival of learning and wisdom and the revival of morals, an idea that Christian Rome indeed took over from its pagan predecessor. Aponius, early in the fifth century, held that the function of the ruler ('vicegerent of God on earth, head of the Christian people') was to reform the 'body of the Church to its pristine purity'.[2] The Civil Code of Justinian (527–34) shows up very

[1] J. Procopé, 'Greek and Roman political theory', in: *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought*, ed. J. Burns (Cambridge, 1988) pp. 21–36 at pp. 27, 32 and 34. Also G. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959) pp. 41 (n.9), 119–23.

[2] Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, p. 131 n.66.

clearly the responsibilities of the emperor towards his Christian people. Here the emperor underlines his commitment, in general terms, to 'correct what is necessary', and in the preface to 'Novel' 6 voices his commitment to ensure the purity of both religious doctrine and clerical morals.[3] At the end of the century Pope Gregory the Great could, as a matter of course, use the word *rector* to describe both secular and ecclesiastical rulers, thus underlining starkly the pastoral responsibilities of the former.[4] Gregory was especially fond of lecturing kings (and bishops) on their duties.

Evidence for the application of the 'Christian reform idea' in practice, for efforts to give substance, via conversion, pastoral care, education and preaching, to the ideal of a Christian society, is most plentiful for the Frankish kingdoms under Merovingian rule from the late sixth century onwards, and for the Visigothic kingdom of Spain and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Britain in the seventh century, when, indeed, everywhere in western Europe 'kings move into an ecclesiastical atmosphere'.[5] The influence of Roman practice is plainly discernible, but so too, increasingly, is that of the Old Testament, indicated by the frequent references to paradigmatic figures of kingship like David and Solomon. Among the Franks and the Anglo-Saxons at least, the idea of a barbarian *gens* as the New Israel was already gaining ground. The anointing of Visigothic kings from 672 suggests a similar process at work in Visigothic Spain. Isidore of Seville, for whom kingship was a *praesulatus* for the ruling of the people, recognised that the kingdom and its rulers, both royal and ecclesiastical, as in other *membra Christi* in Gaul, Italy and elsewhere, would be judged by God according to how effectively and how efficiently He saw that the faith had been preached. A king was 'useful' in so far as he established the 'norms of correct living' (*norma recte vivendi*) in his laws: 'he who does not correct does not rule', he wrote. The rapid and widespread dissemination of Isidore's works in the later seventh and early eighth centuries indicates how much others, both in Spain and outside, shared his sense of priorities. If the superficially impressive culture of seventh-century Visigothic Spain was, in reality, merely 'the culture of a few great bishops and abbots and an occasional lay noble', at least they recognised that the way forward, the prospects for effective reform, lay with educated clerics and more of them.[6] What they managed to achieve before the eclipse of their kingdom and its culture is less clear. This was a path that Charlemagne was to tread more energetically and, apparently, with greater success. What is important for our present purposes is that the Visigothic kings with the help of their bishops, in the interests of political unity and the Christian *utilitas* of their

[3] P. Stein, 'Roman law', in: *Medieval Political Thought*, ed. Burns, pp. 42–6; G. Ladner, 'Gregory the Great and Gregory VII: a comparison of their concepts of renewal', *Viator* 4 (1973) pp. 1–26 at pp. 24–6.
[4] R. Markus, 'The Latin fathers', in: *Medieval Political Thought*, ed. Burns, pp. 92–122 at pp. 119–20.
[5] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), p. 47.
[6] B. Bischoff, 'Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla', in: *Isidoriana* (León, 1961) pp. 317–44, reprinted in Bischoff, *MS* I, pp. 171–94, and J. N. Hillgarth, 'Popular religion in Visigothic Spain', in: *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches*, ed. E. James (Oxford, 1980) pp. 1–60 at p. 18.

people, promoted religious reform in a manner that in important respects anticipates that of the Carolingians.

In the religious culture of the 'Northumbrian Golden Age' of the late seventh and early eighth centuries in England, as exemplified in the writings of Bede, we meet the same concerns: an exclusive interest in learning that was relevant and useful, a dependence on patristic authority, a commitment to furnish an educated and disciplined clergy as the means to correct the lives of the population at large. Among his contemporaries there is also an evident concern for correct Latinity, both in speech and writing, and a desire to reform liturgical practices in line with those in use in Rome. Bede's ideals may have had limited application in the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon kingdoms but they had considerable impact in Francia, both through the rapid dissemination of his writings there in the generation after his death by Anglo-Saxon missionaries and through the person of Alcuin, a key figure at the court of Charlemagne from the early 780s. Like Isidore of Seville, Bede believed that the unity of a people was grounded in its religion: this idea also was to have an important place in the Carolingian reforms. In short, these reforms, when they begin, are moving along lines already mapped out by the Visigoths and the Anglo-Saxons.

In Gaul, as in Spain, the culture of the late Roman world, and its educational tradition, survived more or less intact into the seventh century when episcopal schools were still functioning, Church councils continued to debate religious doctrine, theological works continued to be written, and when there is still fairly widespread evidence of literacy of some kind amongst kings and the lay aristocracy, not least in the continued use of the written word in business of all kinds, a fact only now being fully appreciated.[7] Pope Gregory the Great's famous letter condemning Bishop Desiderius of Cahors for lecturing on classical texts says as much about how the onus for preserving classical learning had fallen into the hands of the Church as about Gregory's own attitude to secular learning ('the same lips cannot sing the praises of Love and the praises of Christ').[8] As the seventh century opened it is clear not only that episcopal schools continued to function but also that classical learning, albeit in the service of religious education, could still find a place in them.

It is for these reasons, and because of a new understanding of Christian culture in the British Isles in the seventh century and its export to the continent in the wake of missionaries and *peregrini*, that many historians have come to question seriously the traditional view of the period 630–780 as a dark age in Europe; and by extension, necessarily, the concept of a 'Carolingian Renaissance'. The implication is that there was no Carolingian Renaissance, at least not in Charlemagne's time, because there was no long dark night which preceded it.

It is instructive to see the Carolingian revival of learning in these terms and

[7] See McKitterick, *Carolingians*, pp. 2–3 and 23–4, with many references to recent research, and I. N. Wood, 'Administration, law and culture in Merovingian Gaul', in: *Uses of Literacy*, pp. 63–81.
[8] Ep. xi, 34, MGH Epp. II, p. 303, lines 14–15.

Charlemagne's role in the movement as a whole needs to be kept in proportion. There are clear elements of cultural continuity in Francia over the period 650–750; the recent *La Neustrie* exhibition mounted in Rouen, the two volumes published in the *Beihefte der Francia* series under the same title, and the publication of the relevant volumes in the *Chartae latinae antiquiores* series have emphasised how strong these elements were.[9] It has been suggested that if there are, after about 700, no more legal documents or judgements issued in the name of the Merovingians, and very few *diplomata*, this has as much to do with the collapse of royal government as the collapse of learning.[10] Certainly there are centres, like the monastery of Corbie near Amiens, for example, where, from the testimony of the surviving manuscripts and their scripts, there is evidence of just such continuity.[11] The steady evolution of minuscule scripts, and other calligraphic techniques, at monasteries such as Corbie and Luxeuil, and elsewhere, from *ca* 700 onwards certainly argues for a decent, organised, level of literary and scribal activity in these centres.[12]

The influence of the *Annales* school is clearly evident in this interpretation of events, with emphasis placed on substructural developments of *la longue durée*. For all its merits, however, revisionism of this kind runs the risk of overemphasising continuity at the expense of change; and of failing to acknowledge the depths of the nadir to which learning and the welfare of the Church had sunk across the Frankish territories as a whole in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Isolated pockets, or *foyers*, of culture may indeed be discerned here and there, but overall the picture is bleak: the (limited) activity of these centres apart, there is little evidence either of the copying of manuscripts or of the composition of new works of any kind. The evidence for cultural activity on any significant scale in the Frankish monasteries and episcopal churches of the late Merovingian period is simply not there; and what evidence there is, in the form of manuscripts copied at this time, is notoriously difficult to interpret: very few eighth-century manuscripts can be dated with any precision or located to a particular centre with any reasonable degree of certainty. The arguments in favour of significant continuity in the sphere of cultural activity over the period 650–750 in Gaul rest on very uncertain foundations.

The abbey of St Denis may serve as an example. The evidence for literary activity here, at the greatest of all Neustrian houses, greater even than Corbie in terms of wealth and status, in the first half of the eighth century is confidently asserted by Riché principally on the basis of three assumptions: firstly that the historical source known as the *Liber historiae francorum* was put together here in

[9] P. Perrin, and L.-C. Feffer, *La Neustrie* (Rouen, 1985) and *La Neustrie. Les Pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, ed. H. Atsma, Beihefte der Francia 16, 2 vols. (Sigmaringen, 1989), especially the papers by Vezin, McKitterick and Riché. See also *ChLA*, vols. XIII–XIV, XVII–XIX, ed. H. Atsma and J. Vezin (Zurich, 1981–7).

[10] J. Nelson, 'Literacy in Carolingian government', in: *Uses of Literacy*, pp. 258–96 at p. 261.

[11] D. Ganz, 'Corbie and Neustrian monastic culture, 661–849', in: *La Neustrie*, ed. Atsma, II, pp. 339–48.

[12] See McKitterick, below, chapter 8, pp. 221–47.

the late 720s, secondly that the young Pippin III was sent to be educated here by his father Charles Martel, and thirdly that a sacramentary was written and illuminated here during Pippin's reign.[13] In fact recent opinion locates the origin of the *Liber* rather at Soissons (Notre-Dame? St Médard?).[14] Pippin's 'education' at St Denis is deduced from his own testimony that he was *enotritus* (sic: *nutritus*) here, and that *ab sua infantia* he had seen the monks extracting tolls and taxes from merchants coming to the October fair.[15] Subsequently there is no sign of this education; there is no evidence that Pippin could either read or write nor as mayor did he take a personal initiative in promoting learning at his court. The abbey of St Denis was a favoured royal residence; there was a palace here (rebuilt by Abbot Fardulf for Charlemagne) where Pippin's wife Bertrada evidently spent much time.[16] The word *nutritus* here may refer simply to an awareness on Pippin's part that the saint had sustained him, both materially and spiritually: what he has in mind is the time he spent at St Denis as a boy rather than any education received of whatever kind whilst he was there. The origin of the eighth-century Gelasian Sacramentary referred to by Riché (Vat. Reg. lat. 316) is now thought to be either Chelles or Jouarre, not St Denis.[17] Other evidence cited is as tenuous: it is very unlikely that the *passion anonyme* of St Denis cited by Riché (the so-called *Post beatam ac gloriosam*) was written before the last quarter of the eighth century.[18] There is no evidence that the magnificent late-antique half-uncial manuscripts of Vergil and St Hilary of Poitiers were at St Denis before Charlemagne's reign. In fact there is no concrete evidence of manuscript copying at St Denis before the reign of Abbot Fardulf (792–804), although a royal diploma of December 774 (not actually discussed by Riché) grants valuable woodland and hunting rights to the monks 'for the covering of books'.[19] This hardly seems enough to justify the description of the abbey in the first half of the eighth century as a great centre of learning. The potential and resources of other institutions cited as *foyers* of culture at this period seem to be exaggerated in like fashion, with too much weight being placed on the available evidence. It may be that the declining number of royal documents in the late Merovingian period in Francia must be attributable first and foremost to the decline of royal power as Janet Nelson suggests; but the few royal charters that we possess from the first half of the eighth century are very

[13] P. Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, trans. J. J. Contreni (Columbia, S. C., 1976) pp. 442–3 and P. Riché, *Écoles et enseignement dans l'haut moyen âge, fin du Ve siècle – milieu du XIe siècle* (2nd edn Paris, 1989) p. 66

[14] R. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987) pp. 146–59 (St Médard?) and J. Nelson, *TLS*, 11–17 March 1988, p. 286 (Notre Dame?).

[15] MGH Dip. Kar. I, no. 8, line 7, p. 13 (29 July 755) and no. 12, line 2, p. 18 (30 October 759).

[16] *Miracula sancti Dionysii* I, c. 16, ed. J. Mabillon, AASS OSB, saec. III, pars. 2, p. 348 and Fardulf, MGH Poet. I, pp. 353, 408–10.

[17] See R. McKitterick, 'Nuns' scriptoria in Francia and England in the eighth century', *Francia* 19/1 (1992) pp. 1–35.

[18] See G. Brown, 'Politics and patronage at the abbey of St Denis (814–98): the rise of a royal patron saint', unpublished D. Phil. thesis (Oxford, 1990) pp. 230–44, 281.

[19] MGH Dip. Kar. I, no. 87, line 35, p. 126.

inferior productions, both in terms of Latinity and scribal technique, to those of the preceding or succeeding periods.

The extent to which cultural activity was maintained, and widely diffused, in the churches of late Merovingian Gaul is therefore debatable. What is clear, however, is that the 'Christian reform idea', and the Christian culture which was characteristic of it, were not inventions of the Carolingian Renaissance since this culture is already evident in Visigothic Spain and in Anglo-Saxon England in the wake of conversion during the seventh century. It had also taken firm root in Merovingian Gaul. Merovingian kings, at least until the mid-seventh century, were concerned about the *correctio* of their people as a series of edicts makes clear.[20] What these surviving edicts show, and we may assume that there were once more of them, is that the Merovingian kings, in public at least, were committed to shaping a Christian society pleasing to God, where the clergy lived disciplined lives according to the dictates of canon law, and where the laity, abandoning all vestiges of their pagan past, held fast to the moral standards of the Christian faith; against a background of peace, discipline and just laws, all were to prosper together, pleasing God and working out their salvation. This is the kind of all-embracing social programme associated with the Carolingians, and in particular with Charlemagne; the frequent use of fundamental concepts like *emendatio*, *admonitio* and above all *correctio* is common to both. The only difference seems to be that the Carolingians pursued the ideal with more purpose, more success and greater resources. In the absence of more source material the Merovingian reform effort, in its scope and impact, is hard to assess. But what can be said of it is this: if the Carolingian reforms, and the ideals behind them, were anticipated in late Roman imperial practice, in Visigothic Spain and in Anglo-Saxon England, it is above all from the effort of their Merovingian predecessors, themselves conscious of the norms of Christian Roman rulership, that the Carolingian programme seems to draw inspiration.

The canons of the councils of the Merovingian Church held in the same period show how the institutions of the Church and the lives of the clergy were to be reformed so as to further these aims. There survive from the period 511–*ca* 680 the records (partial or complete) of more than twenty councils in which more than one province of the Church of Gaul was represented; besides that the records of two provincial councils and one (only) diocesan synod. From these we know that efforts were made to establish a Church hierarchy, to secure the rights of metropolitan bishops over their diocesans, and the supervisory rights of these diocesans over their priests and abbots, to ensure the appointment of educated clergy, to safeguard their economic welfare and to discipline their conduct, to regulate the lives of monks, to provide some uniformity in liturgical matters. As for the laity, efforts were made to suppress their pagan practices and

[20] MGH Cap. I, no. 2, pp. 2–3; no. 5, pp. 11–12; no. 7, p. 15; no. 8, p. 18; no. 9, pp. 20–2.

to ensure worship on Sunday rather than Thursday ('Jove's Day'), to make the payment of tithe obligatory, to regularise marriage according to the dictates of canon law. Once again these are all concerns which anticipate Carolingian practice.

This is true also of another feature which requires special emphasis, namely the desire to regulate norms of practice and behaviour so as to accord more closely with Roman practice. Roman influence was particularly marked in the southern province of Arles during the time of Bishop Caesarius, papal vicar; but veneration for the Church of Rome is apparent across Merovingian Gaul as a whole. Church dedications to Sts Peter and Paul far outnumber those to native saints, particularly in the seventh century: the majority of the new monastic foundations of the period were dedicated to these Roman martyrs even if the cult of a local saint quickly came to have greater prominence. Merovingian councils acknowledged Rome's right to pronounce on doctrinal matters, and by the seventh century were advocating the division of episcopal revenues according to the Roman pattern. Roman influence on the liturgy of the Frankish churches was strong but not uniform, a patchwork of local variations giving rise to that 'fruitful confusion so characteristic of Merovingian liturgy'.[21] The spread of the Rule of St Benedict in seventh-century Gaul is surely to be related likewise to its links with Rome and Pope Gregory the Great.

Thus a council held at Autun (663–675) could enjoin that all monks followed the Rule of St Benedict.[22] The eighth-century popes rightly calculated that they could depend on the Franks and their Carolingian mayors because, as Pope Gregory II (715–31) put it, they venerated St Peter as if he were a god on earth.[23] 'In other words, it was not from the Anglo-Saxons that the Franks learnt about the cult of St Peter and the primacy of Rome.'[24]

The councils of the Merovingian Church have much to say about the problem of persisting pagan practices after the official conversion of the Franks under Clovis at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries. The Church had to contend with a pattern of customs and tradition engrained over centuries. 'You will never uproot our customs', St Eligius was rudely told; 'we will go on with our rituals forever . . . No man will ever be able to stop us doing what we love and what we have done for so long.'[25] Even among the Roman population vestiges of pagan ritual still endured in the middle of the eighth century, a state

[21] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983) pp. 118–19.
[22] MGH Conc. I, p. 22, line 16.
[23] Letter of Gregory II to the Emperor Leo III, ed. J. Gouillard, 'Aux origines de l'iconoclasme: le témoignage de Grégoire II', in *Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation byzantines, Paris, Travaux et mémoires* 3 (1968) 243–307 at p. 297, line 261.
[24] Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 113.
[25] *Vita Eligii*, II, c. 20, MGH SRM IV, pp. 711–12, trans. P. Fouracre, 'The work of Audoenus of Rouen and Eligius of Noyon in extending episcopal influence from the town to the country in seventh-century Neustria', in: *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. D. Baker, Studies in Church History 16 (Oxford, 1979) pp. 77–91 at p. 82.

of affairs that greatly concerned St Boniface.[26] Eligius was operating around Noyon in the 660s. Thereafter the situation was unlikely to improve. From around this time the Frankish Church ceased to convene in council; at least no records survive to indicate that it did. In 742 Boniface claimed to be reliably informed by 'old men' that the Franks 'have not held a council for more than eighty years', nor had an archbishop, 'nor have they established or restored in any place the canons of the Church', and that *ecclesiastica religio* had been completely neglected for fifty or sixty years.[27] The evidence indicates that the Frankish Church suffered greatly as a result of the collapse of Merovingian power. In the first place it was the king who guaranteed the existence of the Church as an independent body with the institution of the immunity. Broadly speaking the right of immunity gave churches, both monasteries and bishoprics, the right to govern their own affairs independently of the local lay official, the count. The system depended entirely on the king to uphold it, abbots and bishops being given access to appeal directly to the king if their immunity were being encroached upon. The inability of the central power to guarantee the immune status of churches opened the door to the loss of their lands and revenues, to secularisation, with offices held by laymen and lands given over to the support of an armed following, a process which could threaten the very existence of a church. The Frankish Church ceased to hold synods and councils, and ceased to have a consciousness of itself as an independent institution, at the same time as it ceased to be one. The struggle for mastery between the Carolingians and their rivals, now given free reign in the absence of a royal authority to keep it in check, encouraged the wholesale alienation of church lands to support *milites*. Without lands a monastic community was forced to disperse, and a bishop was denied the means to support diocesan organisation and activity, in short the work of *correctio*. Few resources remained for the production of books. Charters and diplomas attest that the standard of written Latin had sunk to an alarming level. Against this background, and with so few indications that manuscripts continued to be copied and new works composed, it would seem unwise to place much emphasis on the continuity of learning and cultural activity over this period.

Some qualifications must of course be made to this generally gloomy picture. There were many variations within this overall pattern. Some parts of Gaul suffered more than most, notably Aquitaine, subject firstly to Moslem invasion then Carolingian reconquest and subjugation: here long gaps in the episcopal lists indicate that from the 720s the Aquitainian Church had practically ceased to exist. In the north some churches were less affected than others: magnates no less than kings required the intercession of saints as well as the support of soldiers and

[26] Boniface to Pope Zacharias, Ep. 50, ed. M. Tangl, *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, MGH Epp. Sel. I (Hanover, 1916) p. 84.

[27] Ibid., p. 82; Eng. trans. C. H. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (2nd edn London, 1981) no. 27, p. 99.

a favoured church might be spared for that reason. A monastery close to the Carolingians, Echternach for example, appears to have got off lightly. Here manuscripts continued to be copied.[28] An important Neustrian shrine like that of St Denis where Charles Martel was buried and his son Pippin *enotritus* may also have been favourably treated. On the other hand churches occupied by opponents of Carolingian domination, for example the Burgundian episcopal church of Auxerre and its neighbours, appear to have been systematically stripped of their possessions with the aim of emasculating resistance. There was also a difference between regularised alienation (often *pro verbo regis*) for which (in theory) a rent was to be paid, and outright despoliation. The former could even be justified according to contemporary standards (if not those of the ninth century): thus Carloman I, ruling as mayor in 742 or 743, explained that ecclesiastical lands had been redistributed 'on account of the imminent wars and persecutions of other peoples all around us'.[29] The Carolingian mayors were also patrons of the Church in the sense that they supported missionary work in Alemannia, in the German lands east of the Rhine, and on the lower reaches of the Rhine and Maas rivers, in Frisia and Toxandria. In this they had taken over a responsibility exercised by earlier Merovingian kings such as Dagobert I. It was another way in which, as *principes*, they came to exercise the function of royalty long before they acquired the name of it. There were political as well as spiritual rewards to be gained here; the extension and consolidation of the Christian faith among the Germans, the Alemannians and the Frisians went hand in hand with the extension and consolidation of Frankish political authority in these regions, the latter two conscious of their traditions of semi-independent rule under native dukes who had successfully cast off Frankish overlordship as Merovingian rule became more remote. Missionary work could only be effective if backed up by military force as St Boniface, in a letter to Bishop Daniel of Winchester, made clear: 'without the patronage of the Frankish prince I can neither govern the faithful of the Church nor protect the priests, clerics, monks and nuns of God, nor can I forbid the practice of heathen rites and the worship of idols in Germany without his orders and the fear he inspires'.[30] The reality was that conversion took place at the point of a sword, as St Lebuin, in the later eighth century, sought to impress upon the Saxons: 'if you are not willing to become adherents of God ... there is a king in the neighbouring land who will enter your land, conquer and devastate it'.[31] Missionaries who trusted too exclusively in the power of the Gospel were inclined to fail.

Many of the leading figures in this missionary work from the late seventh century onwards were Anglo-Saxons, who like an earlier ascetic and reformer St Columbanus, the Irishman, took to heart God's command to Abraham to go

[28] R. McKitterick, 'The diffusion of Insular culture in Neustria between 650 and 850: the implications of the manuscript evidence', in: *La Neustrie*, ed. Atsma, II, pp. 395–432 at pp. 422–9.

[29] Capitulary of Leptinnes, MGH Cap. I, no. 11, c. 2, p. 28.

[30] Boniface, Ep. 63, ed. Tangl, *Briefe*, p. 130; Eng. trans. Talbot, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*, no. 30, p. 117.

[31] *Vita Lebuini antiqua* c. 6, MGH SS XXX, p. 794.

council held at Leptinnes (or Les Estinnes) in 744, also convoked by Carloman, and a third, in the same year, summoned by his brother Pippin at Soissons for the Neustrian lands under his control. Both date and content make it clear that the brothers were here working in partnership. The concern of all three councils was that the Church should function 'according to the canons'. Both rulers ordained that henceforth synods were to be held annually, in Carloman's territory under the aegis of Boniface, *qui est missus sancti Petri*.[39] If these annual synods were held there is no sign of them, a salutary reminder that these beginnings were modest, and that what these early Carolingian councils really amount to are statements not of achievement but of intent. The degenerate state of the Frankish Church in Carloman's kingdom is highlighted by the fact that so few bishops were called upon to attend: only seven, for example, attended the *Concilium germanicum*, at least three of whom (the bishops of Buraburg, Würzburg and Eichstätt) were Boniface's disciples; of the others perhaps only Regenfrid of Cologne was a Frank. We must assume that Boniface considered the other bishops in Carloman's territories to be useless to the work of reform. In Neustria things were better: as many as twenty-seven (unnamed) bishops attended Pippin's council at Soissons. The focus at these gatherings was squarely on the Church and its reform: 'so that the resolutions of the canons and the laws of the Church may be restored and the Christian religion emended'. It was to be de-secularised and reconstituted as an independent and distinctive institution: clerics were to live and dress distinctively, not carrying arms; above all they were to be celibate. It was vital that they set a good moral example. Both monks and nuns were to observe the Rule of St Benedict, at least in Carloman's territory. They were to have enough land to fulfil their vocation but were entitled to no more: the surplus should be rented out (in a controlled fashion) to support *milites*. Candidates for the priesthood, and bishoprics, should be examined by a synod to ensure they were not ignorant. Priests were to be subject to bishops. Both were to ensure *diligenter* that pagan practices were outlawed and heresies suppressed. Carloman, at Leptinnes, maintained that in ordering the suppression of paganism he was continuing what his father had started. Here the fundamental aim was spelt out: 'so that the Christian people may achieve salvation'. The reform of the Church was the precondition for the salvation of the people. Laymen must not fornicate, nor swear false oaths; they must look after the Church of God: counts (or *graviones*) were to co-operate with bishops in their pastoral work; indeed they were urged to see themselves as office-holders with a key role to play: they were protectors of the Church. At Soissons the role of secular authority is forcefully stressed: the prince (*princeps*) and his counts, as well as his bishops, are ready to discipline anyone who disregards this decree. Here, too, there is a conception of the different orders (*ordines* of the Christian

[39] *Concilium germanicum* c. 1, MGH Cap. I, no. 10, p. 25; Capitulary of Soissons, c. 2, MGH Cap. I, no. 12, p. 29.

society, an idea that figures prominently in the imperial legislation of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious.[40]

Already in the 740s then we meet the concerns that will animate subsequent Carolingian legislation: the regulation of marriage according to the demands of the Church, ecclesiastical discipline, order and hierarchy, a commitment to an educated priesthood, uniformity of religious observance (for example in the stipulation that the Benedictine Rule alone was to be observed in monasteries), the suppression of pagan practices, and above all a determination to organise life, in every department, according to canon law. The programme, in its overall aim and in the stated means to achieve it, is no different in substance from that set down in the edicts of earlier Merovingian rulers. The Carolingian reform initiative owes as much to native Frankish tradition as it does to Anglo-Saxon influence.

One other issue must be stressed, namely the restoration of the wealth that had been stolen from the Church in the previous generations. If the church was to be de-secularised it needed to be independent of lay control, and for this it needed independent means. From his correspondence we know that Boniface envisaged wholesale restitution of church lands; we know too that Carloman and Pippin resisted this: it could not be done without distraining the *milites* (warriors) on whom Carolingian authority relied. But at Leptinnes and Soissons it was stipulated that the Church was to be 'consoled' for its losses according to its needs; beyond that surplus wealth was to be given over *in adiutorium exercitus nostri* (that is, for military purposes, at least 'for a little while', says Carloman) but the Church's proprietary right to it was to be recognised by the payment of a rent.[41] To what extent this principle was put into practice at this point must be doubtful: the reiteration of the injunction time and time again by eighth- and ninth-century councils that this rent, ninths and tenths (*nona et decima*), was to be paid suggests that it was difficult to enforce. Moreover settlements of this sort required detailed surveys of ecclesiastical property of the kind that became possible only in the next generation. Nevertheless the principle that underlay it, enunciated here for the first time at the councils of Soissons and Leptinnes, known as apportionment (*divisio*), namely that because of pressing secular needs churches were entitled only to that proportion of their landed resources necessary for the proper fulfilment of their function, was one that was to have an important future in the Carolingian period.

In 747 another council was held, probably in the aftermath of Carloman's departure for Rome, and covering both territories now united under the rule of Pippin. No formal record of its proceedings has survived; but it is referred to by Boniface in a letter to Archbishop Cuthbert.[42] Evidently it covered the same

[40] See *Concilium germanicum*, preface and cc. 1–5, 7 and 10, MGH Cap. I. no. 10, pp. 25–6; Capitulary of Soissons, cc. 2–4, 6–9, *ibid.*, no. 12, pp. 29–30; Capitulary of Leptinnes, cc. 1–2 ibid., no. 11, pp. 27–8.
[41] Capitulary of Leptinnes c. 2, ibid., p. 28; Soissons c. 3, ibid., p. 29.
[42] MGH Conc. II.i, no. 6(A), pp. 45–8; Eng. trans. Talbot, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*, no. 35, pp. 129–34.

ground as the previous councils but, at least on some points, in more detail. More significant is the fact that all the attendant bishops swore in writing 'that in all things we shall obey the orders of St Peter . . . to these declarations we have all agreed and subscribed, and we have forwarded them to the shrine of St Peter'. This amounted to a formal profession of unity with Rome under the jurisdiction of St Peter; that at least is how it appeared to Pope Zacharias who congratulated the Frankish bishops on joining with *nostrae societati in uno pastorali ovili*.[43] All shared one lord in St Peter, the 'prince of the Apostles'. The procedure adhered to by the Carolingian reformers reflected this state of affairs: they proceeded to renew pre-existing *regulae et canones*, and when in doubt turned to Rome. As Pope Zacharias himself neatly expressed it: 'we have no right to teach anything except the traditions of the Fathers, but if some new situation arises through the wiles of the devil and no solution is suggested in the provisions of the Church canons, do not hesitate to refer the matter to us'.[44] Papal letters of the period, preserved in the later *Codex Carolinus*, show indeed the extent to which both rulers had looked to Rome for guidance. We know, for example, that at about this time Pippin received from Pope Zacharias manuscripts of canon law (part of the collection put together by Dionysius Exiguus which Charlemagne was to receive in its entirety in 774) to assist in the organisation of the Christian society.[45] These letters also show the extent to which Pippin was acting and planning independently of Boniface. Pippin's closest counsellors in the business of reform were both Franks, namely Chrodegang, bishop of Metz from 742, who was to succeed Boniface as papal legate in Francia, and Fulrad, abbot of St Denis from 749 or 750. Both had close ties with Rome, and exploited this privilege to acquire from there books and relics. The translation to Francia of relics of Roman saints, now as later, was construed by contemporaries as an integral and important part of the drive to centre and focus the Frankish Church on Rome. In time it was a vital part of the notion that (Christian) Rome had been reborn or revived in Francia.

In 751 Pippin was crowned king of the Franks, and anointed; he became thereafter king by the grace of God (*rex Dei gratia*). The use of this title served to highlight the fact that the royal office was a *ministerium* but in essence this was what it had always been. However, it suited the Carolingians, for political reasons, to stress that their kingship, which was neither hallowed by blood nor grounded in tradition, derived its authority from God and St Peter. Pippin had been chosen, it was argued, because he was useful for furthering the interests of the Church: these included not only the defence of the Roman Church against Lombard aggression and the expansion of the frontiers of Catholic Christianity (centred on Rome), but also the *correctio* of the Frankish people and their allies.

[43] MGH Conc. II.i, pp. 48–50 at p. 49 (Letter of Zacharias, May 748).
[44] Boniface, Epp. 51, ed. Tangl, *Briefe*, p. 91–2; Eng. trans. Talbot, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*, no. 28, p. 106.
[45] *Codex Carolinus* no. 3, ed. W. Gundlach, MGH Epp. III, pp. 476–657 at pp. 479–87. See also MGH Conc. II.i, p. 31.

Self-interest and idealism fitted compactly together. Reform may have been in the Carolingian interest but that does not mean that it was not sincerely and conscientiously pursued.

With Chrodegang at the helm, the papal alliance consolidated by a second anointing at St Denis in 754, and a king marked out and consecrated by God, the series of reforming councils was continued with conventions held at Ver in 755, Verberie in 756, Compiègne in 757, and Attigny in 760 or 762.[46] The business at Verberie and Compiègne was almost exclusively concerned with the proper regulations for marriage; here the lead was taken by George, bishop of Ostia, the papal legate. The concerns of the synod of Ver were wider-ranging, reflecting those of the earlier reform councils of the 740s: here the focus was on clerical discipline and the clergy's responsibility to correct and emend, not only the laity but each other. The preface to the text of the proceedings celebrates the advent of a new 'golden age' of reform under Carolingian rule. A vision of a Christian society and the harmonious working of its parts is emerging. Metropolitans, bishops, priests, monks and canons all have duties; monks and canons, here distinguished for the first time in the Frankish world, must follow their respective Rules or *ordines*. Priests too have an *ordo*, or code of conduct fitting to their station and function. At Gentilly in 767 some kind of formal debate was staged between the rival Roman (iconophile) and Byzantine (iconoclast) parties on the question of images in the presence of the king. Two years later twelve Frankish bishops, described as 'most expert and erudite', joined thirty-nine Italian bishops in debating the same issue in a synod convened by the new pope, Stephen III, in Rome.[47] Their erudition may have been exaggerated but the participation both here and at Gentilly of Frankish clergy in doctrinal debate is an indication of the progress that the reform movement had made during the course of Pippin's rule. At Attigny in 760–2 the forty-four assembled bishops and abbots had bound themselves together in a confraternity of prayer, a concrete indication of growing confidence and self-awareness.[48]

After Pope Stephen's visit to Francia in 753–4, and Pippin's formal anointing at St Denis, a concerted effort was made to reform the liturgy of the Frankish Church in accordance with Roman practices. Many contemporary sources bear witness to such an initiative; and Charlemagne too explicitly acknowledged that his work in this field was but a continuation of his father's.[49] In about 760 Pope Paul I reported that he had despatched to the Frankish court a group of liturgical texts: an *antiphonale*, a *responsale* and an *horologium nocturnale*.[50] Two of the leading figures in this work of reform were Chrodegang of Metz (also the author of a *regula* for canons based on that of St Augustine) and Pippin's own

[46] MGH Cap. I, nos. 14–16 and 106, pp. 33–41, 221–2.
[47] MGH Conc. II.i, no. 14, pp. 74–92, especially p. 74, line 24 and p. 75.
[48] Ibid., no. 13, pp. 72–3, on which see O. G. Oexle and K. Schmid, 'Voraussetzungen und Wirkung des Gebetsbundes von Attigny', *Francia* 2 (1974) pp. 71–121.
[49] See, for example, the *Admonitio generalis* (789) c. 80, MGH Cap. I, p. 61.
[50] *Codex Carolinus*, no. 24, ed. Gundlach, MGH Epp. III, p. 529.

half-brother, Remedius (or Remigius) of Rouen who set up schools of chant run by Roman personnel, or Frankish personnel trained at Rome, at their episcopal churches. The liturgy in question was enshrined chiefly in a type of sacramentary known as the 'Gelasian of the eighth century', cobbled together from various elements, not all of which in fact were Roman, by someone close to Pippin's court (perhaps at Flavigny under Abbot Manasses), and a deliberate, if limited, effort seems to have been made to copy texts of this type for general use. The ultimate aim was to introduce into the Frankish churches, hitherto attached to variant liturgical customs – some Roman, some Frankish (or 'Gallican') – one uniform, standard liturgy which conformed more closely to contemporary Roman practices. The initiative was to be continued by Charlemagne. To some extent this liturgical reform was reflected in contemporary architectural projects, for example at St Denis where Fulrad, a man with close Roman ties, was abbot, at Metz, Chrodegang's own see, and at Lorsch, his own foundation.

Pippin's reform of the Church thus aimed at the correction of morals, the restoration of ecclesiastical discipline, the establishment of a Church hierarchy, the uniformity of religious observance in accordance with Roman practice. These were the objectives; but how far were they achieved? The consensus of opinion among scholars is that real progress on all these fronts was only made by Charlemagne and after him by his son Louis the Pious. What Pippin had achieved above all was the availability of material resources. If any religious house found that it could not fulfil its function (its *ordo*) then the bishops were to examine the case and report the matter to the king who would emend the situation.[51] In 765, in the wake of a famine which was construed as divine chastisement, Pippin reminded his bishops in a circular letter, in no uncertain terms, that all men were to pay tithes (as the Israelites had done) 'whether they like it or not'.[52] By such means was the material welfare of the Church guaranteed. Without resources nothing could have been achieved. It would never do to underestimate the significance of the material base on which the Carolingian Renaissance and its achievement rested.

For their part both Charlemagne and his son Louis the Pious were ready to acknowledge that their work for the reform of the Church was only a continuation of Pippin's. Initially Charlemagne was more concerned with neutralising what he perceived as a threat from his brother Carloman; but his destruction of the Saxon cult-site at the Irminsul in 772 recounted in the Royal Frankish Annals, must be seen in the context of a desire to suppress paganism as well as a desire to acquire plunder and booty. His campaign into Italy in 773–4, and his successful annexation of the Lombard kingdom, similarly must be seen first and foremost as an indication of his commitment to take over his father's responsibility for protecting the Roman Church, a responsibility which indeed

[51] MGH Cap. I, no. 14, c. 6, p. 34.
[52] Ibid., no. 17, p. 42.

he had shared since his anointing at the hands of Pope Stephen in 754. At Easter of the year 774 in Rome Charlemagne received from the pope a complete text of the collection of canon law put together in the early sixth century by Dionysius Exiguus, augmented with subsequent additions, and known as the *Dionysio-Hadriana* on account of this gift. The reception of this text by the Frankish ruler, undoubtedly with great publicity, indicates that a further programme of reform was envisaged.

The first fruits of such a programme are apparent within five years. In 779 Charlemagne promulgated his first significant piece of legislation, the so-called 'Capitulary of Herstal'. The themes of the capitulary are at once familiar: order, authority and obedience to it 'according to canon law', justice and morality. Clerics must be subject to their bishops, bishops to their archbishops, all are reminded of their duty to 'emend and correct'. A cleric from one diocese cannot move to another; all must pay tithes and these the bishop will control. Monasteries must follow rules. Other provisions show a determination to eradicate perjury, and to have courts dispensing justice.[53] Evidently this capitulary was regarded as an important document, a copy of which, moreover, was kept at court, for later capitularies often refer to it.

Ten years later, in 789, follows a greater piece of legislation, the so-called *Admonitio generalis*. Here we have eighty-two clauses compared to the twenty-three of the Herstal capitulary, the first fifty-nine of which draw extensively from the *Dionysio-Hadriana*. However 'it was no mere re-issue of these canonical regulations for the clergy, but a considered and careful re-use of a selection of . . . [those] most relevant to the situation in the Frankish Church at the end of the eighth century'.[54] The text as a whole is well constructed, preceded by a lengthy preamble or preface, well written, and laced with biblical quotations: in short it testifies to the significant increase in the level of culture and learning at Charlemagne's court which we know from other sources to have taken place in the 780s.

It has been said that the *Admonitio* 'contains the most complete statement of all the proposals [of Charlemagne] for the reform of the Church and its ministers and for the education of the people'.[55] The preface states clearly that Charlemagne's fundamental responsibility as ruler is the salvation of the people. This is to be achieved by *admonitio* (hence the title given to the text); 'they must be admonished, exhorted and if necessary compelled' to observe the 'canonical prohibitions', the 'ancient institutes of universal councils'. The enterprise is a joint one shared by the bishops and their king whose *missi* will be despatched to assist them in the work of 'correcting those things which need correcting'. 'For we read in the Books of Kings how the holy Josiah strove to recall the kingdom

[53] Ibid., no. 20, cc. 1, 3, 7, 10 and 21, pp. 47–9, 51.
[54] Ibid., no. 22, pp. 52–62; R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789–895* (London, 1977) pp. 1–8 at p. 4.
[55] McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, p. 1.

given to him by God to the worship of true religion, by visitation, by correction, by admonition', and 'it is incumbent upon us always, and in every way, to follow the *exempla sanctorum*'.[56] The Franks then under their anointed kings were the New Israel, as a succession of popes had been keen to stress. This idea of a Christian people following in the footsteps of the Israelites of the Old Testament was not a new one. But the notion of the Franks as a chosen people, a *gens sancta*, marked by divine favour and prepared for a providential mission, was naturally fostered by the triumph of Carolingian arms over successive generations and over fearsome pagan peoples like the Arabs and the Saxons. Thus here in the *Admonitio* the king was 'considering . . . the abundant favour of Christ the king towards us and our people'. There were other exempla of rulership in mind here besides those of the Old Testament: in the stress on the royal duty of *correctio* there are clear echoes, conscious or otherwise, of late Roman Imperial edicts.

In the *Admonitio* we have firstly, as before, a strong emphasis on obedience, hierarchy and order within the structure of the Church, and proper discipline according to canon law. In addition, however, there is a detailed discussion of the function of the priesthood, a function now considered to be of utmost significance. Priests, as befits their holy function, are to live exemplary lives; their faith is to be 'diligently examined' by their bishops, and they must not be ignorant of the 'institutes of the holy canons'.[57] The bishops are to oversee their priests' correct celebration of the mass, their correct administration of baptism, their correct singing of psalms and the *gloria* (*cc.* 6–7, 70). Bishops themselves must not 'dare to innovate' (*c.* 8). Neither should priests introduce anything 'new and uncanonical' into their preaching; rather they must preach 'rightly and honestly' and the bishops must see to this too (*c.* 2). Preaching (*praedicatio*) is now seen as a prime function of the clergy, for Christ himself is the 'great preacher' (*magnus praedicator*). The king here lays down what they are to preach: the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, stressing the nature of the Trinity, the meaning of the Incarnation, the threat of judgement and the promise of resurrection, warnings against mortal sins (here listed); also they are to 'admonish' the people about the need to love God and their neighbour, about faith and hope, humility and patience, chastity and continence, goodness and compassion (*cc.* 32, 61, 82). The Christian faith, its essential message of love – *Deus caritas est* (*c.* 61) – and redemption as well as its moral precepts, is to be preached *diligenter* and to *omni populo*. The clergy are also to set down, and monitor, clear moral guidelines: avarice, usury, bestiality, homicide, theft, homosexuality, corrupt judicial processes, perjury are all condemned, as are sorcery, augury, unknown angels, 'false martyrs and uncertain shrines' and other pagan practices (*Deo exercrabilis*) like praying at trees, stones or springs.[58] Clear directions are given as to what work

[56] MGH Cap. I, pp. 53–4; Eng. trans. P. D. King, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources* (Kendal, 1987) p. 209.
[57] MGH Cap. I, no. 22, cc. 26, 72, 2, 70 and 55 respectively, pp. 56, 59–60, 54, 59 and 57.
[58] Ibid. (on preaching), cc. 5, 33, 39, 49, 67–8, 63–4, pp. 54, 56–9: and (augury etc.) cc. 18, 65, 16, 42, pp. 55–6, 58–9.

can and cannot be done on Sundays; children are to honour their parents (*cc.* 69, 81). Concern for the clergy's function of *praedicatio* is from now on a consistent theme of royal legislation. A letter of Charlemagne's dating from the period 801–10, for example, addressed to Bishop Gerbald of Liège though probably in fact the only extant copy of a circular letter sent out to all bishops, explains to him what he and his clergy are to preach and reminds him that 'often in our councils and assemblies we have drawn your attention to preaching in the Church'.[59] Subsequently Charlemagne was to set down in law that it was the responsibility of god-parents to teach to the young the Creed and the Lord's prayer as well as Christian moral standards.[60]

According to the *Admonitio* of 789, 'peace, concord and unanimity' among the whole Christian people are thus to be fostered by the Christian virtues outlined above, for these bind the Christian society together and create an environment in which salvation may be won. For 'nothing is pleasing to God without peace' (*c.* 62). Conversely the *corpus Christi* is rent asunder by sin. These moral themes, emphasising virtue as the means to unity, reappear constantly in Charlemagne's legislation, especially in the years afater 800, and in that of Louis the Pious also.

These prescriptions presuppose one vital requirement: that the parish clergy, from whom so much is now expected, are educated in Christian doctrine, and possess not only decent copies of the key Christian texts – biblical, canonical, penitential and liturgical – but also the literacy to use them. Here in the *Admonitio generalis* we run up against the key role of learning and literacy in the programme of reform. In clause 72 it is enjoined that both monasteries and cathedral churches should set up schools to teach the psalms, musical notation, singing, computation and grammar. This is no humanistic programme of education. It is not expressly stated who these *pueri* are but evidently they are destined for careers in the Church. The needs of the liturgy are uppermost in the king's mind. This is clear from what follows. Monks and clerics are instructed to 'correct properly the catholic books', and the reason given here is crucial to understanding the role of learning in the work of reform, and consequently the very nature of the Carolingian Renaissance: 'for often, although people wish to pray to God in the proper fashion, they yet pray improperly because of uncorrected books'. The text then runs on: 'and do not allow your boys to corrupt the books when they copy them; and if it is necessary to copy the gospel, psalter or missal, let men of full age do the copying, and with great diligence'. Faulty, corrupt texts (it is implied) are not only displeasing to God and cause him not to answer prayers; they also foment heretical beliefs. Key Christian texts may therefore be copied only by experienced scribes. The Roman Cassiodorus, writing in Ostrogothic Italy, had placed similar emphasis on the

[59] MGH Cap. I, no. 122, p. 241.
[60] *Capitulare generale* (813) c. 29, ed. H. Mordek and G. Schmitz, 'Neue Kapitularien und Kapitulariensammlungen', *DA* 43 (1987) pp. 361–489 at p. 421.

careful copying of manuscripts at his community of Vivarium for identical reasons.[61] The logic is this. The suppression of heresy and the triumph of orthodoxy require uniformity of faith. This depends upon uniformity of observance. Both of these depend upon corrected texts and the widespread availability of them. It is acknowledged, therefore, that the programme of reform depends upon the availability of such texts, and thus upon the availability of trained, learned scribes. We see clearly in the *Admonitio* how learning was understood as the servant of reform and not vice versa, as a means to an end and not as an end in itself.

Similar principles are enunciated in the other key text concerning the revival of learning under Charlemagne, namely his letter to Abbot Baugulf of Fulda, known as the *Epistola de litteris colendis* ('Letter on the cultivation of learning').[62] The letter, although undated, can be closely related to clause 72 of the *Admonitio* just discussed, and thus datable to the same period, the late 780s or 790s. It is argued that the letter was in fact a circular which Charlemagne intended every bishop and abbot to receive. Here Charlemagne, having consulted his advisers, states that, besides their duty of following the religious life according to their profession, these ecclesiastical communities also have a responsibility to provide tuition in the study of letters to all in the community who are able to learn. Learning is pleasing to God, and the ideal monk is the learned monk who speaks well: 'those who seek to please God by correct living ought to please him also by correct speaking' since, according to scripture: 'by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned' (Matthew 12:37). Thus reform is needed here because, as Charlemagne notes in another context: 'no-one finds salvation unless they please God'. Education is important for the clergy because 'knowing comes before doing'. If faith is the key to understanding, understanding, it is here argued, is the key to faith.

Christian learning is thus of crucial importance for monks, nuns and canons. In the first place their correct Latinity, in speech or writing, is pleasing to God. Secondly it unlocks for them the mysteries of the scriptures in the Latin Bible and enables them to make proper and effective use of biblical handbooks or commentaries. Thirdly they are less likely to fall into doctrinal error. All this enhances their prospects of salvation. There could be no clearer statement of the close link between relevant learning and Christian reform. The correct Latinity of Carolingian clergy was important for another reason. Their prayers were considered to be vital for the prosperity of the *regnum* both in war and peace. If intercession were to be efficacious, both the Latinity of the participants and the texts that they used had to be correct, principally because of the notion that the Church straddled both heaven and earth, and that angels and men participated in

[61] Cassiodorus, *Institutiones* I, 30.i, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, *Cassiodori senatoris institutiones* (Oxford, 1937) pp. 75–6.

[62] MGH Cap. I, no. 29, pp. 78–9 and P. Lehmann, 'Fuldaer Studien', *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl.* (1927) pp. 3–13; Eng. trans. King, *Charlemagne*, pp. 232–3.

a single liturgy at the same time. Thus the demand for a uniform liturgy based on Roman practice (linked to which was the desire to make all monastic houses conform to the Rule of St Benedict), and also the necessity for accurate time-keeping (*computus*).

In the *Admonitio generalis* Charlemagne had confirmed what his father had instituted, namely that 'all the clergy ... are to learn the Roman chant thoroughly and that it is to be employed throughout the office, night and day, in the correct form, in conformity with what our father of blessed memory, King Pippin, strove to bring to pass when he abolished the Gallican chant for the sake of unanimity with the apostolic see and the peaceful harmony of God's holy Church', affirming explicitly that Roman practice was to be followed regarding the kiss of peace and the reading of the names of those to be commemorated during the mass (cc. 53–4, 80). Subsequent legislation reiterates these demands, either in general or in particular terms. Bishops were constantly reminded, as in the *Admonitio*, to oversee their priests, and particularly their celebration of the liturgy, presumably to ensure not only that it was 'correct' but also that it was Roman. The evidence suggests that Charlemagne's churchmen responded to his directive. Archbishop Arn of Salzburg for example, in his provincial council at Rispach in 798, ordered his suffragans to ensure that every priest had a good copy of the appropriate sacramentary, that they could read and understood the scriptures, and that they could celebrate the liturgy 'according to the tradition of the Roman Church'. They were to set up schools, under the direction of a 'teacher learned in the Roman tradition' for this purpose. Other bishops, it seems, were likewise busy ensuring that their priests were taught the liturgy 'according to the practice of Rome'.[63]

Charlemagne's commitment to introducing a uniform liturgy in the territories under his rule went further than simply legislating for it. Sometime in the 780s he had commissioned from Paul the Deacon, a Lombard scholar then resident at his court, a homiliary, or lectionary, containing readings culled from the Fathers for use in the night office. A circular letter addressed 'to the religious lectors' authorises Paul's homiliary for general use on the grounds that existing texts of the kind were inappropriate and strewn with errors.[64] According to the manuscript evidence, Paul's homiliary (or rather Charlemagne's effort to popularise it) was a success. In 787 the king took advantage of a visit to Monte Cassino to ask the monks for a careful copy of the manuscript of St Benedict's Rule which the abbey preserved as an autograph of the saint himself, a text which, to judge by an extant Carolingian copy (St Gall MS 914), does indeed seem to have been a purer version than any in circulation in Francia at that time.[65] This initiative can also be related to Charlemagne's concern for one standard, uniform liturgy.

[63] MGH Cap. I, no. 116, c. 4, p. 234: also no. 117, c. 9, p. 235; McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, p. 135. Council of Rispach, MGH Conc. II.i, no. 22 (C), cc. 4–5, p. 198.

[64] MGH Cap. I, no. 30, pp. 80–1.

[65] MGH Epp. III, pp. 519–24.

A few years earlier the king had asked Pope Hadrian, again via Paul the Deacon, for a pure, authentic copy of the sacramentary reputedly 'put in order by Pope Gregory'.[66] What the pope in fact sent was a type of Gregorian sacramentary known, through its association with him, as the *Hadrianum*: but it was not the 'pure, authentic' exemplum asked for, nor was it suitable for Frankish use in its received form; nor was it, being at least a hundred years old, even representative of current Roman practice. Nevertheless its putative association with Gregory the Great ensured that it was kept with honour at court, in the *bibliothecae cubiculus*, as one of a series of 'authentic texts' available for copy, along with Paul the Deacon's homiliary, the Cassinese copy of the Benedictine Rule, and the *Dionysio-Hadriana* canon law manuscript received in 774. In due course, early in the ninth century, a supplement together with a preface (known from its opening as the *Hucusque*) were added to it by Benedict of Aniane (not Alcuin as was previously thought) in order to render this text suitable for Frankish use; at the same time the author corrected the grammatical faults of the text to accord with improved Carolingian taste. Whether or not Benedict (if it were he) was commissioned to draw up his supplement by either Charlemagne or Louis the Pious is unclear. Certainly it did not enjoy wide currency before Louis' reign. Even then it never became a standard, uniform text: certainly both the *Hadrianum* and Benedict's supplement were extensively copied in ninth-century Francia but the copying was 'far more varied and "irregular" than the familiar picture of Carolingian standardization would suggest', and more especially other kinds of sacramentary, notably the 'Gelasian of the eighth century', evidently remained in use.[67] Thus Charlemagne too failed in his aim of introducing one standard liturgy into Francia. The initiative was continued in the next reign, by Helisacher, Louis' archchancellor, and Amalarius of Metz, but again with only limited success.

To this concern for a standard, correct liturgy can also be related Charlemagne's sponsorship of Bible reform. Eighth-century Francia used several different Latin translations of the Bible in varying manuscript traditions, many of which were seriously vitiated by omissions and corruptions. Against this background, and given both the unique importance of Holy Writ and the emphasis being placed on liturgical conformity, biblical reform and the acquisition of a standard, 'authentic' text was an indispensable need. Careful copying of the kind envisaged in the *Admonitio* of 789 was no more than a partial solution to the problem. There is no evidence of any initiative undertaken by Pippin III to reform the Bible; but Charlemagne seems to have taken the matter in hand relatively early in his reign, probably in the 780s. His circular letter addressed 'to the religious lectors', referred to above, authorising the use of Paul the Deacon's

[66] Ibid., p. 626. See C. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy. An Introduction to the Sources* (Washington D.C., 1986) pp. 79–81, 123–4.

[67] D. Bullough and A. Harting-Correa, 'Texts, chant and the chapel of Louis the Pious', in: *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 489–508 at p. 494 (with n.16); also McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, pp. 133–5 and Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, p. 92.

homiliary, claims that he has already (indeed 'long ago') ensured the correction of both Old and New Testaments. The letter can only be roughly dated to the period 786–800, but whatever its date 'long ago' seems something of an exaggeration. In fact Bible reform was taken in hand by several institutions and individuals in the last quarter of the eighth century, including Corbie (under Abbot Maurdramnus), Metz (under Bishop Angilramn, the king's court chaplain), at Orleans (under Theodulf) and pre-eminently by Alcuin at Tours. According to Thegan this concern still preoccupied the emperor's mind as the reign drew to its close.[68] Alcuin is known to have sent a presentation copy of his bible to Charlemagne on the occasion of his imperial coronation in Rome on Christmas Day 800.[69] Subsequently Tours was busy providing texts of Alcuin's bible for other churches, many lavishly illustrated. Despite its worth and popularity, however, Alcuin's text continued to co-exist with its rivals rather than replace them. Once again correction was easier to achieve than uniformity. It is hard to see how significantly more could have been achieved by the Carolingian reformers given the conditions under which they worked.

The imperial coronation of 800 brought about no substantial change to the objectives or content of the reform programme. Whatever one chooses to make of this coronation and its significance, it remains the logical consequence of what had gone before rather than a point of new departure. The emperor's responsibility for his Christian people was no different from that of the Christian king. What we can say, however, is that the imperial coronation gave further impetus to the reform programme, enhancing Charles' sense of his *ministerium* just as the elevation to kingship, and the administration of unction, had enhanced his father's.

The events of 802 bear this out. In that year, the Lorsch annalist reports, 'the Lord Charles Caesar stayed quietly at the palace of Aachen with the Franks; there was no campaign'.[70] This suggests that discussions were going on about the implications of imperial rule. The same source says that in October Charlemagne held a gathering of bishops, priests and deacons 'and there caused to be read to them all the canons'. Abbots and monks were given a recitation of the Benedictine Rule. In each case the readings were followed by detailed discussion and exposition. What followed was, in the words of the annalist, 'a command (*iussio*) of general application to . . . the entire clergy, that as clerics they were to live in accordance with the canons, each in his own station . . . as the holy fathers laid down; and that they were to correct in accordance with the precepts of the canons whatever faults or shortcomings might appear in the clergy or the people; and that they were to have corrected in accordance with the Rule of St Benedict whatever might be done in monasteries or among monks in contravention of that same Rule . . . '

[68] Thegan, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris* c. 7, MGH SS II, p 592.

[69] MGH Epp. IV, no. 261, p. 419.

[70] MGH SS I, p. 38; Eng. trans. King, *Charlemagne*, pp. 144–5.

In fact 'general orders' of this kind, the *Capitulare missorum generale* and *Capitularia missorum specialia*, had already gone out. Shortly after Easter the new emperor had despatched his *missi*, now chosen from the *optimates*, to all parts of the empire.[71] They were asked to look into a variety of issues, most of which had been the king's concern in earlier capitularies. In particular they were urged to ensure that effective justice was available to all, especially to the *pauperiores*, and to find out if bishops, abbots, counts and vassals were living in *concordia et amicitia* with each other. In general their brief was to discover if the various parts of Charles' empire were functioning properly and in harmony:

> all men, in accordance with God's command, are to live in an entirely just manner, with just judgement, and everybody is to be admonished (*admonere*) to persist wholeheartedly in his way of life and calling (*in suo proposito vel professione*): canons are to observe the canonical life in full . . . ; nuns are to maintain their way of life under diligent supervision; laymen and members of the secular clergy are to keep their laws properly without wicked fraud; and all are to live in perfect charity and peace (*in caritate et pace perfecte*) one with another.

Here there is a clear conception of a Christian society where each category of person has a definable code of conduct (*ordo, professio, propositum*), and an obligation to live by it. Monks, nuns and canons must follow their rules, clerics must abide by the canons. Laymen must avoid sin and vice, venerate the Church, protect the poor and live in charity with one another; the emperor wants to know 'above all how each is striving to keep himself in God's service (*in sancto Dei servitio*). All are to take a new oath of loyalty to Charles as emperor, an oath which not only binds them to fidelity to him but also lays upon them the obligation to behave like true Christians: 'Concerning the fidelity to be promised to the lord emperor . . . all should know that oath to contain the following meaning within it: first, that everybody is personally to strive, to the best of his understanding and ability, to maintain himself fully in God's command and his own promise.' This is because, although it is the emperor's obligation to correct his people, he 'cannot himself provide the necessary care and discipline for each man individually'. Those who depart from their *professio* displease both God and emperor at the same time. In other words the purpose of the oath is to impress upon the people that disloyalty to their God is also disloyalty to their ruler – and, by implication, vice versa.

This vision of the Christian society and its parts can be traced in the legislation of Charles' father Pippin but here, in the aftermath of the imperial coronation, it appears in its most developed form to date. The same idea can be traced in the writings of Boniface, one of the architects of Pippin's legislation. 'There is one faith in the Church', he wrote, 'but different ranks, all having their own obligations', probably with his eye on similar words of St Paul in I Corinthians.[72] The stress placed by the Carolingians upon the duties and responsibilities of the 'order of laymen' is a distinctive feature of their programme of *correctio*, and one which distinguishes it from similar reform initiatives undertaken in the late Roman world, in Visigothic Spain and Merovingian Gaul: as Alcuin said, Christ had entrusted talents of money to all of whatever station, not just to bishops and priests.[73] But the idea of a Christian society embracing all social orders working in harmony together, animated by peace and justice, was not new. Its chief theorist was St Augustine, and it is for this reason that the Carolingian reform programme has been described as an example of 'l'Augustinisme politique'.[74] In his *De ordine*, Augustine had written: 'order (*ordo*) is that which if we follow it in our lives will lead us to God'.[75] Given the underlying aim of Carolingian rulership, namely the salvation of the people, then the preoccupation with *ordo* and *ordines* is easy to comprehend. Earthly order reflected heavenly order; God's Church was functioning properly only if, in its organisation, its habits and its worship (hence once more the desire for a uniform, Roman liturgy), it reflected heavenly practice. Thus the deposition of the last Merovingian could be justified by the 'Royal Frankish annalist' *ut non conturbaretur ordo*. It is no coincidence that one of the writers who most fascinated Charles the Bald and his court was the Pseudo-Dionysius with his exposition of the hierarchies of heaven and earth; nor is it surprising if Einhard thought it appropriate for his hero to have found 'great pleasure in the books of St Augustine and especially in those which are called "The City of God"'.[76]

Other directives from the period 801–14 underline Charlemagne's concern that his people should faithfully serve God in their respective *ordines*. These were years in which Charles' *missi* were especially active. It was this same concern which animated the two great reform councils convened at Aachen by Louis the Pious in August 816 and July 817.[77] Monks, canons and nuns were all to follow prescribed *ordines* or *regulae*, here set out at great length and after much discussion, as in 802. All the indications are that a determined effort was made to enforce these prescriptions, certainly that monks should follow the Rule of St Benedict (as revised and modified at Aachen) and no other; but once more the drive for uniformity was, it seems, only partially successful.

Another significant piece of legislation drafted by Louis and his advisers is the so-called *Admonitio* (or *Ordinatio*) of 823–5.[78] Its importance is underlined by the fact that (according to the manuscript evidence) it was evidently designed to

[71] MGH Cap. I, nos. 33 (Programmatic Capitulary; Eng. trans. here from King, *Charlemagne*, pp. 234, 242) and 34, pp. 91–102; see also MGH SS I, p. 38 (s.a. 802).

[72] Sermo ix, PL 89, col. 860B–C; compare I Cor. 2:12.
[73] MGH Epp. IV, no. 111, p. 160.
[74] H.-X. Arquillière, *L'Augustinisme politique. Essai sur la formation des théories politiques du moyen âge* (Paris, 1934) pp. 105–21, 152–4.
[75] *De ordine* I, 9, 27 ed. P. Knoll, CSEL 63 (Vienna, 1922) p. 139, lines 11–12.
[76] Einhard, *Vita Karoli* c. 24, ed. L. Halphen, *Eginhard, vie de Charlemagne*, (Paris, 1981) p. 72; Eng. trans. L. Thorpe, *Two Lives of Charlemagne* (London, 1969) p. 78.
[77] MGH Conc. II.i, nos. 39–40, pp. 307–466; MGH Cap. I, no. 170, pp. 343–9. K. Hallinger, *Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum* I (Siegburg, 1963) pp. 433–563.
[78] MGH Cap. I, no. 150, pp. 303–7, 414–19.

circulate together with Charlemagne's *Admonitio generalis* of 789, and some other material, in a collection put together by a man close to Louis' court, Abbot Ansegisus of St Wandrille. Here in this second great *Admonitio* Church and state are defined as one and the same (*c.* 1). Three *capitula* are described as being of paramount importance: that all look after the defence and the *honor* of the Church and its officers, that all live in peace, and that justice prevails everywhere in all things (*c.* 2). The regnal duty is to admonish, to correct and to emend; but this is a *ministerium* in which all share, each in their own *ordo*: thus Louis is the *admonitor*, but his subjects are his *adiutores*, a notion with evident constitutional implications (*cc.* 1, 3). Subsequently each 'order' in turn is reminded of its responsibilities, defined as they have been in earlier capitularies. Bishops, for example, must support schools 'to teach and instruct the sons and ministers of the church' (*c.* 5). Counts must be not only the *adiutores* of the ruler and sponsors of the Church; they are also to be 'guardians of the people' dispensing justice equally and looking after the poor (*c.* 6). Laymen in general must show due respect for the Church and its preaching (*c.* 7). There is much talk of the *communis utilitas* (e.g. *c.* 13). One of those who helped to draft this impressive piece of legislation was Bishop Jonas of Orleans. Other writings of his reveal the extent to which he shared this view of the Church as a *corpus Christi* in which each member had a role to play, a *regula*: the ruler had to correct what needed correcting, the layman had to uphold justice and to defend the peace of the Church with arms, monks must seek quiet in order to pray, bishops (and priests) were to superintend all the rest, correcting them where necessary *ad lineam rectitudinis*.[79] A highly developed view of the Christian society, its parts and their responsibilities is emerging.

The capitularies record the attempts made by the Carolingians to regulate the structure and behaviour of the Christian society entrusted to them by God. At the same time related efforts were made, particularly after 800, to codify, complement and amend the customary laws of the Franks and of the other peoples under Carolingian rule. This was all part of the royal duty of *correctio et emendatio*; but it also evoked the imperial tradition of Constantine, Theodosius II and Justinian. The aspect of these emperors' activity which most impressed the Carolingians was their law-making, in short their work of *correctio*. Thus Bishop Freculf of Lisieux, writing a 'World history' for the young Charles the Bald in the 830s, described Theodosius II, the codifier of Roman law, as 'a man necessary for restoring the state', who 'corrected many laws, and added to them ... Whatever laws he saw in the city to be pernicious or redundant ... he authorised to be removed; and he saw to it that whatever laws were necessary to help the state were added.'[80] Einhard reports how Charlemagne tried to live up to the imperial tradition:

[79] Jonas of Orleans, *De institutione regia* c. 8, ed. J. Reviron, *Les Idées politico-religieuse d'un évêque du IXe siècle: Jonas d'Orléans et son De institutione regia* (Paris, 1930) p. 158; *Vita secunda sancti Hucberti*, AASS, Nov. I, col. 817B–C.

[80] *Chronicon* III, 27, PL 106, col. 1226.

> Now that he was emperor, he discovered that there were many defects in the legal system of his own people ... He gave much thought to how he could best fill the gaps, reconcile the discrepancies, correct the errors and rewrite the laws which were ill-expressed. None of this was ever finished; he added a few sections, but even these remained incomplete. What he did do was to have collected together and committed to writing the laws of all the nations under his jurisdiction which still remained unrecorded.[81]

Einhard's testimony is confirmed by the Lorsch annalist who in his entry for the year 802 records how Charlemagne 'assembled the dukes, counts and the rest of the Christian people, together with men skilled in the laws, and had all the laws in his realm read out, each man's law expounded to him and emended wherever necessary, and the emended law written down'.[82]

The manuscript evidence bears witness also to the scale of Charlemagne's effort, for the version of the *Lex Salica* associated with the reform effort of 802 as described above by the Lorsch annalist, the so-called 'K' version, survives in a very large number of ninth-century copies, indicating widespread circulation. Capitulary legislation confirms the statement of the Lorsch annalist to the effect that Charlemagne intended his *iudices*, namely the counts and their representatives, to consult legal written texts in the course of their everyday business; and the manuscript evidence suggests that such texts, containing not just the *Lex Salica* but other legal material besides, were widely disseminated.[83] On at least five occasions between 816 and 820 Louis the Pious followed Charlemagne in making further amendments and additions to the law-codes of his people. Recent research has indicated that his court made successful efforts to distribute copies of these changes throughout the empire: many of the manuscripts containing these texts can be traced to a scriptorium linked with Abbot Fredegisus, Louis the Pious' archchancellor.[84] A well-known property dispute between the abbeys of Fleury and St Denis in the 820s proves that such amendments were being taken account of, and adhered to, very soon after their promulgation.[85]

There is little doubt that the written word was used extensively in the business of Carolingian government. But it did not replace the spoken word, nor was it intended that it should. If Carolingian counts were expected to keep and use their capitularies and law-codes they were also, it seems, expected to know them by heart.[86] The revival of learning not only provided priests who could read and write and scribes to copy the manuscripts they needed for their work in the field. It meant also that greater use could be made of the written word in government: rulers could count on scribes being available to copy

[81] Einhard, *Vita Karoli* c. 29, ed. Halphen, pp. 80–2; Eng. trans., Thorpe, *Two Lives*, p. 81.

[82] MGH SS I, p. 38; Eng. trans., King, *Charlemagne*, p. 145.

[83] McKitterick, *Carolingians*, pp. 40–4

[84] Ibid., pp. 58–9.

[85] G. Schmitz, 'The capitulary legislation of Louis the Pious', in: *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 425–36 at pp. 433–4.

[86] *Capitula a missis dominicis ad comites directa* (801–13), MGH Cap. I, no. 85, p. 184 and *Responsio misso cuidam data* (801–14), cc. 2 and 4, ibid., no. 58, p. 145.

injunctions (either at court or, more likely, in the household of a bishop or the *mallus* of a count) and at least a basic measure of literacy on the part of those who were to receive them. Once again the interests of Church and royalty dovetailed neatly together. Louis the Pious may have turned a deaf ear to the plea of Agobard of Lyons that he should unite his subjects under one secular law-code, but as Christians sharing one Bible and one canon law they were already integrated into one *corpus Christi*.[87] This integration is now seen as one of the major achievements of Louis' reign. Ironically it came about just at the time when the empire, as a political unit, was breaking up to accommodate dynastic rivalries, but it ensured that the notion of empire and a sense of Frankish unity, remained vital and meaningful for at least another half-century.

Learning and scholarship in the Carolingian Renaissance

The role of Charlemagne

In his *Admonitio* of 789 and his circular letter *De litteris colendis* Charlemagne urges his prelates to supervise the restoration of learning in the dioceses and monasteries in order to further the work of reform. The 'letter to the religious lectors' (786 – 800), another circular directive, likewise underlines the role of learning in this context.[88] Here the king says that in order to improve the state of his Church he has taken steps to revive learning, hitherto practically defunct; and to this end he has encouraged those with the necessary skills in the business of teaching the liberal arts to others. This seems to refer to an invitation to scholars to attend his court and to make it a centre of learning. No doubt the needs of the reform movement were in the king's mind; but the patronage of learning at court served to enhance his dignity by linking him with late Roman and earlier Merovingian practice.[89] For ninth-century writers it was axiomatic that Charlemagne had indeed revived learning after a long period of neglect; modern opinion, however, regards the king's own statement here that he found the study of letters 'almost obliterated because of the neglect of his predecessors' as too sweeping and exaggerated. Nevertheless it remains true that it is only from the time of Charlemagne's reign that we have firm evidence of activity in ecclesiastical scriptoria on a significant and widespread basis.[90] His patronage of learning at court certainly entitled him to claim, as he does in the 'letter to the religious lectors', that he has led the way by example.

The development of Charlemagne's court as a centre of learning seems to postdate the annexation of the Lombard kingdom in 774, and the two events are commonly linked. Nothing is more likely, certainly, than that the acquisition of

[87] Agobard, *Liber adversus legem Gundobaldi*, PL 104, col. 115.
[88] MGH Cap. I, no. 30, pp. 80–1; Eng. trans. King, *Charlemagne*, p. 208.
[89] Emphasised, for example, by H. Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire* (Oxford, 1957), p. 91.
[90] B. Bischoff, 'Panorama der Handschriftenüberlieferung aus der Zeit Karls des Grossen', Bischoff, *MS* III, pp. 5–38.

a second kingdom should have encouraged the patrician of the Romans to act in a way which identified him more closely with late Roman traditions. The Lombard rulers had had some kind of resident palace complex at Pavia, as Charlemagne was later to have at Aachen, where it seems men of learning could be found.[91] From 774 we find a group of scholars from outside Francia converging on Charlemagne's court as it became clear that he not only enjoyed divine favour but also, and increasingly, great wealth. One of the first was the Italian Paulinus, the leading religious poet of Charlemagne's reign, and, moreover, a teacher of grammar. Subsequently Charlemagne appointed him patriarch of Aquileia (north-east of Venice), the foremost ecclesiastical post in the Lombard kingdom. Peter of Pisa, formerly an important figure at the court of the Lombard king Desiderius, also arrived at Charlemagne's court very shortly after 774.[92] Einhard tells us that he taught grammar to Charlemagne himself; we know too that he wrote a manual on the subject, based largely on the *Ars minor* of Donatus.[93] At least two other Peters, both Italians and presumably valued for their learning, were also at Charlemagne's court at this period, being rewarded at a later date with the bishoprics of Pavia and Verdun.

All these may have come willingly from Italy to Charlemagne's court; others, for example the Lombard Fardulf, abbot of St Denis from 792 or 793, came originally as hostages. Fardulf may also have been a man of learning because the scriptorium of St Denis was certainly very active under his charge, developing a house style of its own. Another hostage was the brother of Paul the Deacon. Paul himself travelled to the Frankish court shortly after 776 to plead for his brother's release. Once there, he too stayed. Paul, like Peter of Pisa, had formerly been an important literary figure in the circle around the court of King Desiderius. A poem composed by him in 763 indeed honoured Adalperga's husband, Arichis of Benevento,[94] with the assertion that he was 'almost the only prince of our age to hold the palm of wisdom'. It may be that the spoils of Charlemagne's conquest included not only scholars and poets but also books, since the beautiful and much-vaunted manuscript art associated with Charlemagne's court evidently derives to some extent from Greco-Roman models, especially that of the Aachen period after 794, in particular the art of the so-called 'Coronation Gospels' now in Vienna and the Gospels preserved in the cathedral treasury at Aachen. What we know of eighth-century church building and decoration in Italy suggests that antique cultural traditions remained strong here; it is thus not surprising if, after 774, we find Charlemagne behaving in a more self-consciously Roman way. The first of these court manuscripts, as remarkable for their

[91] D. Bullough, 'Urban change in early medieval Italy: the example of Pavia', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 34 (1966) pp. 82–131, especially pp. 94–102.
[92] D. Bullough, '*Aula renovata*: the Carolingian court before the Aachen palace', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 71 (1985) pp. 267–301 at pp. 279 (with n.1), 284–5, reprinted D. Bullough, *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester, 1991) pp. 123–60.
[93] Einhard, *Vita Karoli* c. 25, ed. Halphen, p. 74.
[94] Not Desiderius as Godman mistakenly assumed. *Carmina* 2, ed. K. Neff, *Die Gedichte des Paulus Diaconus*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen philologie des Mittelalters (Munich, 1908) p. 12.

lavish use of purple and gold as for the quality of their workmanship, was written for the king shortly after 781, a magnificent illustrated Gospel lectionary written mostly in uncial ('Roman letters'), but with some pages in caroline minuscule script, by one Godescalc.[95] The dedicatory verses to the manuscript emphasise the richness of the materials used in its production as befitting the status of the gospel text; similar principles underlie Charlemagne's own emphasis on the careful copying and emendation of biblical texts.[96]

Godescalc's verses also celebrate Charlemagne's great enthusiasm for learning.[97] The same point was emphasised by Adam, abbot of the monastery of Masmünster, who in 780 had made a copy of the grammar of Diomedes at Charlemagne's request.[98] Adam's work, taken in conjunction with the grammatical interests of men like Peter of Pisa and Paulinus, suggests that some kind of grammatical instruction, in other words, teaching, was taking place at Charlemagne's court in the late 770s. A letter written in 799 refers explicitly to Peter's teaching of grammar at court.[99] Further evidence for the study of grammar, and indeed of other components of the liberal arts curriculum, at Charlemagne's court is furnished by Paul the Deacon's despatch to the king of his reworking of Festus' grammatical work, 'On the significance of words', and the presence here, by 791, of a text like 'The ten categories', a fourth-century introduction to the concepts and terminology of Aristotelian logic.[100]

Italians were not the only migrants to Charlemagne's court even if, at least in the 770s, they had the highest profile. Already in the later 770s Beornrad, an Anglo-Saxon, appears at Charlemagne's court; the king's valuation of him is indicated by his gift firstly of the abbacy of Echternach (a house with a strong Anglo-Saxon link going back to its founder Willibrord) and subsequently the archbishopric of Sens. Another Anglo-Saxon, Cathwulf, was also close to the king on the evidence of his letter of advice written *ca* 775.[101] In 781 Charlemagne met Alcuin, not for the first time, at Parma in northern Italy and engaged him in his service.[102] Others recruited from the British Isles to teach, to learn, or simply to add lustre now included Joseph the Deacon, Cadac-Andreas, Candidus, Dungal – an expert in astronomy, a key subject of the *quadrivium* – and Dicuil (either of whom is to be identified with *Hibernicus exul*).

Like Peter and Paulinus, Alcuin was a teacher. His activity and expertise in

[95] Fine illustrations in F. Mütherich, 'Die Buchmalerei am Hofe Karls des Grossen', in: *Karl der Grosse* III, pp. 9–53 between pp. 32 and 33.
[96] See Henderson, chapter 9 below, pp. 248–73.
[97] MGH Poet. I, p. 94, esp. line 7.
[98] Ibid., p. 93.
[99] MGH Epp. IV, p. 285. A splendid copy of Peter's grammar, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale II. 2572 (CLA X, 1553) may have belonged to the king himself. On grammar, see Law, chapter 3 below, pp. 88–110.
[100] MGH Epp. IV, p. 508, and see Marenbon, chapter 6 below, pp. 171–92.
[101] MGH Epp. IV, pp. 501–5.
[102] *Vita Alcuini* c. 9, MGH SS XV.i, p. 190. See D. Bullough, '*Albuinus deliciosus Karoli regis*: Alcuin of York and the shaping of the early Carolingian court', in: *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Josef Fleckenstein zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. L. Fenske, W. Rosener and T. Zotz (Sigmaringen, 1984) pp. 73–92.

this field is underscored firstly by the fact that among his works, written either at court or subsequently at Tours, are an *Ars grammatica*, a *De dialectica*, a *De orthographia* ('On spelling'), and a *De rhetorica*; and secondly by the fact that almost every significant scholar of the next generation was apparently taught by him at some stage (as Notker noted), although whether at court or at Tours after 794 is rarely clear.[103] We may deduce, therefore, that the emphasis at court, in the 770s and 780s, was on instruction. In the words of Angilbert, writing in the 790s, 'David (i.e. Charlemagne) wishes to have wise-minded teachers to lend distinction and fame to every discipline at his court.'[104]

But who was taught at court, and precisely in what context, is less clear. What exactly did Alcuin have in mind when he referred to the king's *scola palatii*?[105] References abound certainly to the teaching of boys (*pueri*) at court.[106] Angilbert, the future lay abbot of St Riquier, was evidently one such *puer*, and Fredegisus, Alcuin's compatriot, another. For the instruction of these boys, who were being lined up for careers in royal administration, we may assume that there was formal tuition in a *scola*, perhaps affiliated to the royal chapel, and perhaps located (before 794) at Herstal, a favoured residence. This was no more than a Merovingian king such as Dagobert I had provided. Whether the *scola*, as an organised institution, amounted to anything more exalted than that, given the itinerant nature of Charlemagne's court before the Aachen period began in 794, by which time the scholars and *magistri grammatici* who had given it lustre in the later 770s and 780s had dispersed, is questionable. Alcuin's title of *magister* seems to have been honorific rather than formal or official since he continued to employ it after he had left the court. Certainly he described the court as an academy; but this must be seen in the context of the efforts made by courtiers such as he and Theodulf to flatter the king by exaggerating his own intellectual and academic expertise, undoubtedly with the aim of presenting him as a latter-day Solomon presiding over a court whose ruling virtue was Christian *sapientia*. The court could certainly be the scene for set-piece debate, with prepared texts, on special occasions such as the meetings convened to discuss images (*ca* 790–2), Adoptianism (800), and *computus* (809). It is evident, moreover, that much informed discussion on various aspects of learning also took place at Charlemagne's court on a regular but less formal basis. To Alcuin and others the gathering of such a learned circle constituted a 'school' where his own position was, at least for a while, pre-eminent and where other courtiers, such as Riculf who left in 787 to become archbishop of Mainz, could be seen as his *discipuli*.[107] But this was *ad hoc* rather than institutionalised debate. Just as the

[103] *Gesta Karoli* I, c. 2, ed. H. Haefele, MGH SRG (Berlin, 1959) p. 3; also K.-F. Werner, '*Hludovicus Augustus*: gouverner l'empire chrétien – idées et réalités', in *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 3–123 at pp. 38–9 n.124.
[104] Eng. trans., Godman, *Poetry*, pp. 114–15.
[105] Alcuin, *Disputatio de arte rhetorica* c. 35, ed. W. Howell, *The Rhetoric of Alcuin and Charlemagne. A Translation with an Introduction, the Latin text and Notes* (London, 1941) p. 128, line 938.
[106] For example, MGH Epp. IV, pp. 285, 518 and Notker, *Gesta Karoli* c. 1, ed. Haefele, MGH SRG n.s. 12 (Munich, 1959) p. 2.
[107] MGH Epp. IV, no. 13, p. 39, line 7.

projection of a unified, cohesive group of court poets is an illusion, so too, it seems, is the portrayal of an institutionalised 'court academy' or 'palace school'.

Even if he is no longer seen as the 'head of Charlemagne's palace school', or the inventor and propagator of Caroline minuscule script, Alcuin remains one of the key figures at court and one of the foremost architects of the reform movement. His prominent role in the drafting of documents such as the *Admonitio generalis* (789) and the *Epistola de litteris colendis* has been strongly advocated.[108] Sentiments similar to those outlined in these two texts regarding the importance of careful copying and correct orthography for the proper performance of the liturgy are to be found in other writings of Alcuin's, particularly in his *De orthographia* where detailed guidance is given on such matters. Alcuin was not alone in these concerns, and his role in the direction of affairs must not be exaggerated; nevertheless it remains true that his master Charlemagne presided over the crucial phase in the process whereby Carolingian Latin was reformed to accord more closely with classical models, even if improvements in this field are already detectable under Pippin.[109]

Alcuin's other writings also show the extent to which learning was directed to serve the interests of reform: these include biblical commentaries, saints' lives, moral writings on the Virtues and the Vices and on the Soul, and works on the Trinity and against Adoptianism. He worked closely within the reform tradition as mapped out by Bede, his inspiration.[110] After 796 Alcuin worked not at court but at Tours, a transfer which implies neither lessening of favour nor a reduction of interest in or appreciation of his qualities on the part of the king. Instead it can be seen as part of a wider pattern whereby the court scholars, both masters and pupils, were despatched to fructify the branches of the Frankish church. Thus many churches over which former court scholars presided became important centres of Christian learning and book production at this time, as envisaged by the *Epistola de litteris colendis*. These included Lorsch (Ricbod and Adalung), St Martin's Tours (Alcuin), St Riquier (Angilbert), St Amand and Salzburg (Arn), St Wandrille (Einhard) and Lyons (Leidrad), to which may perhaps be added also St Denis (Fardulf), and Fleury, Orleans and St Aignan (Theodulf of Orleans). It seems clear that these scholars worked to order. Alcuin wrote to assure Charlemagne that 'in accordance with your instructions I am attempting to administer to some here at St Martin's the honey of holy scripture; others I would like to intoxicate with the pure wine of holy wisdom; others I feed with the fruits of grammatical subtleties; to others I teach astronomy'.[111] The accent is very firmly on relevant, Christian learning: 'above

[108] L. Wallach, *Alcuin and Charlemagne* (2nd edn Ithaca, N.Y., 1968) pp. 198–226 and Bullough, '*Aula renovata*', p. 284.

[109] See *Latin and the Romance languages in the early Middle Ages*, ed. R. Wright (London, 1991) for full references.

[110] A. Thacker, 'Bede's ideal of reform', in: *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society. Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. P. Wormald (Oxford, 1983) pp. 130–53, especially pp. 151–3.

[111] MGH Epp IV, pp. 176–7.

all else', he says, 'I am trying to train them to be useful to the holy Church ...' Similarly Leidrad, appointed by Charlemagne to the see of Lyons in the 790s (the exact date is unclear) wrote a long letter to the king reporting on the progress that he had made in restoring the ecclesiastical communities in his diocese, male and female, and in the setting up of schools for the training of scribes and clergy.[112] Just as *missi dominici*, after 802, were expected to report on their work to the king in writing so too, it seems, were prelates expected to keep in touch on the progress of reform. Here, as elsewhere one feels the driving thrust of Charlemagne himself behind the work of reform.

With the court scholars went books. It is thought likely that in around 780 Charlemagne sent out a general request for books, on the evidence of verses at the head of a Commentary on Genesis by Wigbod to the effect that Charlemagne, by his decree, had brought together books from many lands.[113] In other words a concerted attempt to build up a court library was being made. The overriding concern seems to have been to acquire 'authentic', in other words uncorrupt, texts that could either be copied at court or borrowed for copying elsewhere. Charlemagne's court library included a fine collection of pagan as well as Christian Latin authors. A list of books in a Berlin manuscript (Diez B. Sant. 66), which has been linked with Peter of Pisa, is thought to record only some of those pagan texts available at Charlemagne's court. The authors listed include Lucan (*Civil War*), Terence (*Andria* and *Eunuchus*), Statius (his epic poem *Thebaid*), Claudian (poems), Juvenal (*Satires*), Tibullus (poems), Horace (*Ars poetica*), Martial (*Epigrams*), Cicero (*Prosecutions of Catiline and Verre*) and Sallust (parts of both *The Catiline Conspiracy* and *The History of the Jugurthine War*). The fact that some of these texts reappear at Lorsch, Corbie, Tours or Fleury in the next generation suggests that copies were taken there by court scholars like Ricbod, Adalhard (Charlemagne's cousin), Alcuin and Theodulf, appointed abbots of Lorsch, Corbie, St Martin's and Fleury respectively by the king. Given the Merovingian evidence, the interest shown in such authors at Charlemagne's court constitutes a marked revival. Likewise the series of illustrated Gospel Books made at Charles' court were distributed around the major churches of the empire, the last of them apparently to St Médard at Soissons by Louis the Pious in 827.[114] The plan, it seems, was that the court should constitute the source for the revival of relevant learning in the churches of the kingdom; and the evidence does indeed suggest that Charlemagne's court played a key role, as a source of both scholars and manuscripts, in the early phases of the revival of learning. By such means what began as a renaissance that was, to some degree, centrally planned, came to take on a momentum of its own.

[112] A. Coville, *Recherches sur l'histoire de Lyon* (Paris, 1928) pp. 283–7.

[113] On this and what follows see B. Bischoff, 'Die Hofbibliothek Karls des Grossen', in: *Karl der Grosse* II, pp. 42–62, especially pp. 45–6 and 57–61, reprinted in a revised version in Bischoff, *MS* III, pp. 149–70. See also McKitterick chapter 8, below, pp. 221–47.

[114] See McKitterick, 'Royal patronage of culture in the Frankish kingdoms under the Carolingians: motives and consequences', *Settimane* 39 (Spoleto, 1992) pp. 93–129.

The nature of Carolingian culture

The activities of scholars, rising standards of Latinity and increasing levels of literacy, not only in the Church but also in the lay community, at least in its upper echelons, all testify, if indirectly, to the effective functioning of Carolingian schools, and thus to the success of the initiative to revive learning as set out in clause 72 of the *Admonitio generalis* and the *Epistola de litteris colendis*. So also does the very large number of manuscripts which survive from the ninth century. For the first eight hundred years of the Christian era some 1,800 western manuscripts or fragments of manuscripts remain, while over 7,000 survive from the ninth century alone. It may be argued that Carolingian manuscripts are more likely to be preserved than those of preceding centuries on account of their improved Latinity, better texts, more consistent orthography and punctuation, and clearer script, but this still remains a staggering contrast. Moreover these manuscripts were highly costly to produce.[115] The greatest contribution made by the Carolingian rulers to the revival of learning in their territories was thus less in legislating for it than in guaranteeing the Church's enjoyment of the requisite material resources in the face of various conflicting interests and pressures.

The contents of these manuscripts make it abundantly clear that the revival of learning, as reaffirmed at the Synod of Savonnières (859), was aimed at cultivating that 'useful learning, both divine and humane, through which the fruit of God's church may be increased'.[116] Learning was to serve God and the work of reform. Thus biblical and liturgical texts predominate, followed by biblical commentaries, usually patristic but also those of more recent or contemporary authors, saints' lives and canon law. *Florilegia* and *compendia* of all kinds of information thought useful or relevant abound, many of which bear witness to the level of effort invested in providing parish priests with the tools essential to their task of *correctio*; there are also glossaries, word-lists and various encyclopaedias. A wide variety of schoolbooks, grammatical texts to the fore, are also extant, providing further evidence of the functioning of Carolingian schools.[117]

Ninth-century book-lists and library catalogues likewise record the overwhelming preponderance of religious over secular learning.[118] The best-documented libraries are those of the Alemannian monasteries of St Gall and Reichenau, both renowned centres of learning in this period. A mid-ninth-century catalogue from St Gall lists nearly 400 manuscripts, interspersed among

[115] McKitterick, *Carolingians*, pp. 153–64.
[116] MGH Conc. III, p. 478.
[117] One such manuscript is discussed in detail by R. McKitterick, 'A ninth-century schoolbook from the Loire valley: Phillipps MS 16308', *Scriptorium* 30 (1976) pp. 225–31.
[118] G. Becker, *Catalogi bibliothecarum antiqui* (Bonn, 1886) and P. Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz I Die Bistümer Konstanz und Chur* (Munich, 1918); see also McKitterick, *Carolingians*, pp. 169–210.

which are only four pagan classical authors: Vergil, Servius, Justinus and Josephus (thrice). Included in this list (no. 288) are some *capitula Caroli imperatoris* bound together with *glossae* from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth and Kings, a reminder that Carolingian capitularies and Old Testament law were seen as stemming from one tradition.[119] Of the sixty-seven books which Hartmut the librarian of the house acquired during the reign of Abbot Grimald (841–72), only five contained the works of pagan authors: Josephus again (thrice), Festus Pompeius and a *Gesta Alexandri*. Abbot Grimald's private book collection comprised thirty-five books, including one volume of Vergil's poetry and Vegetius' *Art of War*; the remainder (with one exception) were all religious texts. A book-list from Reichenau, dated 821 or 822, numbers over 400 manuscripts.[120] The only pagan classical authors represented are Vergil and Josephus (twice each). In addition there is a Latin translation of pseudo-Dares Phrygius on the fall of Troy and a treatise *De architectura*. Another list from the same monastery, datable to the second half of the ninth century, is more forthcoming.[121] Here, among 384 books, we find more pagan classical texts: Macrobius, Chalcidius, Vegetius, Aristotle's *Categories* (in translation), Claudian, Festus Pompeius, Seneca, Sallust and Ovid (*Metamorphoses* and *Art of Loving*).

The number of classical texts of the pagan period in the Carolingian libraries of St Gall and Reichenau was thus a very insignificant part of the whole. The pattern is repeated elsewhere. Of the fifty-odd manuscripts that can be associated with Carolingian St Denis, for example, all but four contain works of exclusively Christian learning, the exceptions being Josephus, Vegetius' *De re militari* and some medical texts.[122] Likewise an inventory of books from St Riquier, dated 831, contains over 500 titles in 256 manuscripts and only a handful of pagan authors: the ubiquitous Vergil, Josephus and the grammarians, also Cicero, Pliny and again some medical writings.[123] Other monasteries such as Lorsch, Corbie, Fulda and Fleury had more significant holdings of classical authors, as of course did Charlemagne's palace library.[124] We do not know whether lists of this kind represented the sum total of books in a given library. Our knowledge of the holdings at Fleury encourages circumspection: here one ninth-century book-list contains mostly theological works while another from the next century is almost entirely made up of pagan authors. But the pattern is

[119] Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge*, pp. 71–84 at pp. 82–4
[120] Ibid., pp. 240–52.
[121] Ibid., pp. 262–8.
[122] D. Nebbiai dalla Guarda, *La Bibliothèque de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis en France du IXe au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1985) pp. 289–317.
[123] Hariulf, *Chronicon Centulense* III, c. 3, ed. F. Lot, *Chronique de l'abbaye de Saint-Riquier Ve siècle–1104* (Paris, 1894) pp. 88–94
[124] L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars. A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (3rd edn Oxford, 1991) pp. 97–101. B. Bischoff, 'Hadoard and the classical manuscripts from Corbie', in: *Didascaliae. Studies in Honor of Anselm M. Albareda*, ed. S. Prete (New York, 1961) pp. 39–57, revised German version in Bischoff, *MS* I, pp. 49–63; D. Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance*, Beihefte der Francia 20 (Sigmaringen, 1990) pp. 93–7.

clear: the focus of interest was primarily, and almost exclusively, on Christian learning, and especially on that of the patristic period, of the fourth and fifth centuries. Thus a ninth-century catalogue from Lorsch contains close to 600 titles arranged in sixty-three sections, no fewer than eighteen of which are devoted to Augustine and six to Jerome.[125] Similarly an early ninth-century list from Fulda or one of its dependencies lists 110 titles of which thirty-six are works by Jerome. The Reichenau list of 821 or 822 is especially interesting because the texts are noted according to a rough hierarchy of importance. Listed first are the thirty-five biblical manuscripts. Then come the commentaries on the Bible listed according to author: Augustine first (twenty-eight manuscripts), then Jerome (twenty-eight), Gregory (nineteen), and a handful by other writers. Then follow eighteen manuscripts containing lives of the early saints of the Church. Next come the abbey's collection of 137 liturgical texts: fifty-eight sacramentaries, fifty Psalters, twelve lectionaries, and ten antiphonaries. After this are listed various works by authors of the fourth to eighth centuries, homiliaries, manuscripts of canon law, monastic rules, more saints' lives and grammars (ten in all). A similar scheme is apparent in the contemporary St Riquier inventory, except here Jerome (twenty-two manuscripts) precedes Augustine (twenty-nine manuscripts).[126] The number of books may not seem very large by modern standards. But whatever the total number what is certain is that libraries were much better stocked in the ninth century than they had been in the eighth.

The texts used in the Carolingian schools as schoolbooks for those learning to read, texts which survive in considerable numbers, underline this emphasis on relevant Christian learning, an emphasis which the Carolingian era, as we have seen, took over from those which preceded it. For the most part they were texts written between the fourth and sixth centuries, focused primarily on the Bible, in an effort to provide a distinctly Christian educational tradition, but preserving, and thus teaching to their readers, the literary values and standards of that pagan Roman culture. Such texts included Avitus of Vienne's poem on the Creation, Juvencus' verse conflation of the four Gospel stories, Sedulius' 'Easter story', in prose and verse versions, which contained Old and New Testament passages relating to Christ's coming and Resurrection, Arator's epic which told the story of the Acts of the Apostles, Defensor of Ligugé's *Liber scintillarum*, a collection of extracts from the Old and New Testaments, and Paulinus of Nola's verse paraphrase of the Psalms. The aim of those late Roman authors, as Sedulius explicitly stated, was to render accessible the substance of the classical poetic tradition for the delectation and instruction of readers in an acceptably Christian guise.[127] Other popular texts focused on moral virtues, for example Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, an account of a pitched battle fought between the

[125] B. Bischoff, *Lorsch im Spiegel seiner Handschriften* (Munich, 1974) pp. 18–28.
[126] On these libraries see McKitterick, *Carolingians*, pp. 179–82 and her references.
[127] Ed. J. Heumer, CSEL 24 (Vienna, 1891) pp. 4–5.

virtues and the vices, and the *Disticha Catonis*, a collection of sayings and aphorisms. Such texts as the above appear constantly in the library catalogues and book-lists of the Carolingian period.

With this solid grounding in Christian culture, and fortified by the memorisation of key parts of the Bible such as the Psalms, the student then proceeded to study the seven liberal arts, firstly the *trivium*, namely more grammar together with rhetoric and dialectic or logic, then the *quadrivium* – arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. The key textbooks here were those of Isidore of Seville, namely his *Etymologies* and his *De natura rerum*, and Martianus Capella's *On the Marriage of Mercury and Philology* in which the sevenfold structure of the liberal arts was set out, followed by Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* and Cassiodorus' *Institutiones* (part II). By no means were all the *artes liberales* considered to be of equal use, however. The study of grammar (in particular), rhetoric and dialectic were considered essential tools in unlocking the meaning of the Bible, and revealing the divine will.[128] For scripture, as Cassiodorus observed, is 'succinct in its definitions, beautiful in its ornaments, outstanding in the propriety of its usage, skilful in contriving syllogisms, sparkling in its use of every technical skill'.[129] Here again, in the emphasis placed on grammatical studies, the Carolingians were closely aligning themselves with late Roman traditions of learning. *Grammatica* meant more than simply learning to write: 'the art of grammar', wrote Marius Victorinus, citing Varro, 'which we call literature (*litteratura*), is the science of the things said by poets, historians and orators; its principal functions are: to read, to write, to understand and to prove'.[130] The Christian exegetical tradition, from Origen and Augustine and taken further by Gregory the Great and Bede, held that every word of the Bible was of profound significance and capable of interpretation on several levels: the literal, the allegorical, the anagogical and the moral (or tropological). These various levels of meaning were, to Gregory the Great, 'bright green plants' to be picked and chewed by exposition. Knowledge of these ancient disciplines was also vital if proper use was to be made of the patristic commentaries which, according to Cassiodorus, constituted the rungs on Jacob's ladder by which the human soul might ascend to heaven.[131] New texts for teaching the *trivium* were provided by Carolingian scholars like Alcuin. By contrast study of the *quadrivium* was limited. Arithmetic was learned in the context of *computus*, music as a means to augment the impact of the liturgy, astronomy as a means to detect the providential plan in the movement of the planets, and geometry hardly at all since it was difficult to apply usefully in the context of Christian learning. This had been the case at least since the decline of the public schools in Gaul and Italy in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. What is immediately obvious at

[128] See Law, chapter 3, below, pp. 88–107.
[129] *Expositio psalmorum*, preface c. 15, CCSL 97 (Turnhout, 1958) p. 19, lines 50–3; Eng. trans. G. Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge, 1986) p. 34.
[130] *Ars grammatica*, I, 6–7, ed. I. Mariotti, *Marii Victorini Ars grammatica* (Florence, 1967), pp. 65–6.
[131] *Institutiones* I preface c. 2, ed. Mynors, p. 4, lines 6–8.

every turn, and requires emphasis, is that the culture of the Carolingian Renaissance was firmly grounded in, and grafted onto, that religious culture which had taken shape in the late Roman world of the fifth and sixth centuries, and continued to develop in the seventh century in Merovingian Gaul, Visigothic Spain and Anglo-Saxon England. What was achieved by the Carolingians was the vigorous renewal of this tradition, the reformation of a Latin religious culture that was to form the bedrock of the civilisation of the Latin west down to the sixteenth century and beyond.

The Carolingians' attitude toward pagan Latin learning conformed similarly to that enshrined in this tradition. Where possible pagan culture could be given a Christian gloss; where not it might be tolerated because it was useful. Thus to Hraban Maur 'the useful elements in the secular poets are so much grist to the human mill: what is not useful we wipe from our minds, and that applies above all to any mention of the heathen gods or of love'. Similarly Hadoard of Corbie, the ninth-century scholar, recalls how he had feared to read authors whom he knew to be outside the Christian enclosure and whose souls languished in outer darkness; yet he acknowledged that their works contained hidden treasure or, using a classical metaphor, base metal that could, by Christians such as himself, be turned to gold.[132] Pagan authors, moreover, contained much practical knowledge that was worth having: Vitruvius on architecture, Vegetius on war, Palladius on plants, Pliny on the natural world, Galen on medicine were all texts which were copied in the Carolingian period. Other texts might be enjoyed for special reasons: Vergil's *Aeneid*, for example, on account of its epic format and the martial prowess of its hero, and because it was from the Trojans, the seed of Aeneas, that the Franks traced their descent; Josephus' *Histories* because they focused on the Jewish people, the *gens sancta* whose mantle the Franks had assumed; and also Cicero's writings because he had been lavishly praised, and used as a source for Christian philosophy, by St Augustine.

It is clear from a variety of sources, however, that pagan texts could be read with pleasure as well as profit in the Carolingian period, and that there was some degree of interest in many facets of the pagan Roman past among the educated elite, not least in the pagan myths themselves. It was, of course, customary to deride and condemn such interest; but the warnings delivered by such as Bede, Alcuin, Hraban, Hadoard, Paschasius Radbert, Lupus of Ferrières, Paul Albarus and Notker against the dangers faced by the Christian soul acquainted with the pagan tradition must be seen to some degree merely as a form of literary cliché inherited from the patristic culture which the Carolingians strove so hard to recreate. Thus, to his hagiographer, it was appropriate that Alcuin should have been admonished in a dream for his love of Vergil as Jerome had been for his love of Cicero.[133] In short the attitude of the Carolingians towards pagan Latin

132 Hraban Maur, *De institutione clericorum* III, 16, PL 107, col. 394; Hadoard, MGH Poet. II, p. 685, especially lines 93–4.

133 *Vita Alcuini*, MGH SS XV.1, p. 185; Jerome, *Epistolae* XXII, 29, PL 22, col. 416.

learning was no less ambivalent than that of the fathers themselves. Evidently Charlemagne's court poets, Alcuin included, were well acquainted with the work of their pagan counterparts; and the significant holding of classical writings at Charlemagne's court has already been referred to. Ninth-century Carolingian scholars may have derived the greater part of their classical learning from anthologies, or second-hand from the Christian writers of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries; but interest in the authors of pagan Rome remained alive. Even if these authors were not studied for their own sake, their works were recopied where time, resources and occasion allowed, and it is clear that some scholars at least, for example Lupus of Ferrières or Heiric of Auxerre, were sufficiently interested, and had the opportunity, to read a number of these works in their entirety. The pagan Roman Empire was as much part of the providential plan as the Incarnation, and for this reason, besides its utility, its learning might be preserved. Moreover this learning bestowed dignity upon those who had knowledge of it as also upon the ruler – *rex francorum et langobardorum ac patricius romanorum* – who sponsored its preservation at his court.

Accordingly, although pagan classical texts held only a very limited place in the framework of Carolingian studies, this was sufficient to ensure that a substantial part of the classical heritage was preserved and passed on to medieval Europe. The Carolingian period witnessed a revival of interest in this heritage which, although modest, was nevertheless vital for its preservation. By 900, as a result of careful Carolingian copying in a script that was clear, and offset by disciplined orthography and punctuation, authors such as Vergil, Horace, Lucan, Juvenal, Persius, Terence, Statius, Cicero (philosophical works), Sallust, Pliny the Elder, Justinus and Vitruvius were assured of survival. Works of Seneca, Quintilian, Martial and Suetonius were available but rare and for the most part incomplete; those of Plautus, Lucretius, Livy, Pliny the Younger, Ovid, Tacitus, Columella, Petronius and Ammianus Marcellinus rarer still. The survival of other works balanced on a knife edge: the poems of Tibullus, Catullus and Propertius, and some works of Tacitus and Livy, for example, were barely preserved, some in a single manuscript only. This serves as a reminder not to exaggerate this interest in, and appreciation of, pagan classical literature, even at the court of Charlemagne. Significantly, before Adam of Masmünster presented his copy of Diomedes' grammar to Charlemagne in around 780 he had taken care to remove many quotations from pagan authors.[134] Like Bede's, this was a Christian society concerned primarily with saving souls through preaching, pastoral work or prayer; in this context pagan learning and literature was at best only of limited, secondary importance as the library catalogues and book-lists of the period already discussed make plain.

We have only to look at the work of Carolingian scholars to appreciate the force of this statement. Alcuin's writings, exclusively concerned as they are with

134 Bischoff, 'Hofbibliothek Karls', p. 45 with n.19.

'useful', Christian learning, have already been referred to. His pupil Hraban Maur was perhaps the best-respected of Carolingian scholars, and for this reason the range and character of his work is worth looking at in some detail. In the first place he was prolific, his surviving works filling no fewer than six large volumes of Migne's Patrologia latina. Before 806 he had been a pupil of Alcuin, probably at Tours, who it seems gave him the nickname of Maurus, the name of St Benedict's favourite pupil; thereafter he returned to Fulda where he became abbot in 822, before becoming archbishop of Mainz in 847. He died in 856. Even more than Alcuin's, his writings clearly demonstrate the extent to which learning was valued for its usefulness and relevance in advancing the objectives of Christian society.

In the first place much of it was focused on the Bible. He composed commentaries on no less than twenty of its books, commentaries which were evidently highly valued and widely read: his commentary on Matthew alone survives in over 70 copies, at least fifteen of which date from the ninth century.[135] In his choice of books it is clear, as Le Maître has stressed, that Hraban saw himself as the disciple of Bede and Alcuin, completing a project that they had begun, namely, to provide a contemporary commentary on the scriptures based upon patristic wisdom, but updating that wisdom and rendering it the more familiar and the more accessible to a contemporary audience.

It is here, in the context of biblical exegesis, that the Anglo-Saxon contribution to the religious culture of the Carolingian Renaissance is most clearly apparent. Like those of Bede and Alcuin, the greater part of Hraban's commentaries are composed of quotations from relevant works of Augustine, Gregory, Origen and others: they exemplify what is known as the *catena* (or chain) method of biblical commentry. In this he, like Bede and Alcuin, did not intend to deceive: his sources were for the most part clearly acknowledged by marginal annotation, as were his own ideas with the initial 'M' (for Maurus), and he urged copyists to respect these annotations as an integral, and indispensable, part of the textual apparatus. In short he claimed, deliberately choosing the words of Bede, that he had been 'solicitous throughout lest I should be said to have stolen the words of greater men and to have put them together as if they were my own'.[136] The aim was to provide a dossier of patristic authority on every word and phrase of the Bible, one that would elucidate for the average student, without the means, the intellectual resources or the time to consult the Fathers at first hand, the various levels of meaning inherent in Holy Writ: the literal or historical, the allegorical, the moral or tropological and the anagogical or spiritual.[137] His sense of mission was to ransack the storehouse of Christian learning, and thereby to render it and its wisdom, the highest form of know-

[135] P. Le Maître, 'Les Méthodes exégetiques de Raban Maur', in: *Haut moyen âge. Culture, éducation et société: études offerts à Pierre Riché* (Paris, 1990) pp. 343–52 at p. 343 n.1.
[136] MGH Epp. V, p. 389; Eng. trans. G. Constable, 'Forgery and plagiarism in the middle ages', *Archiv für Diplomatik* 29 (1983) pp. 1–41 at p. 28.
[137] Le Maître, 'Raban Maur', p. 344, citing Hraban's *In Jeremiam*, PL 111, cols. 793–4, and p. 346.

ledge, more readily accessible to a Carolingian audience. He 'bent over backwards in the effort not to be original', to be a faithful mouthpiece for what others better qualified than he had already said, as he himself stressed in the preface to his commentary on Ezechiel: 'it seems to me healthier to lean upon the doctrines of the holy Fathers . . . than improperly to offer my own'.[138] Here, as in the search for 'authentic texts' at the court of Charlemagne, is the aim of returning *ad fontes*, of drawing Christian wisdom from the source in all its purity, 'because the better water is the coldest water of the spring, and the better for drinking than the streams wandering here and there through the steep hills of the mountains and fields, disturbed by animals, beasts and pigs'.[139] In the ambition to make tradition and authority the norm of contemporary living, we touch the essential meaning of the Carolingian *renovatio*.

In fact Hraban's commentaries, like those of Alcuin and especially Bede before him, contain a sizeable element of originality, on occasion (for example in his Matthew commentary) his own contribution amounting to nearly 50 per cent of the whole. Moreover these compilations are sensibly and intelligently arranged, all carefully integrated into a credible and coherent whole, and 'bearing the impress of the writer's own mind and personality'.[140] To this extent they constitute 'original' works of scholarship. Other Carolingian commentators such as Paschasius Radbert, Angelomus of Luxeuil and Christian of Stavelot, selecting their material and varying their approach to meet the requirements of their particular audiences, worked in the same way with greater or lesser degrees of success, as indeed did contemporary compilers of handbooks, dossiers and *florilegia* of all kinds, containing both Christian and secular learning, produced for a variety of purposes in accordance with contemporary tastes and needs. Like Isidore, Hraban showed especial reverence for *pater Augustinus*.[141] Thus learning, for Hraban and others, was the acquisition of pre-existing knowledge, not original thought. Those who strayed too far from the tradition, such as Amalarius, Claudius of Turin, Gottschalk and John Scottus Eriugena, were liable to find themselves in hot water, accused of *superbia* or worse. What this approach demanded was that its exponents should be phenomenally well read in the writings of the fathers, for which the prerequisite in turn was a well-stocked library and many busy scribes to provide for it. This point is well made by Alcuin in a letter to Charlemagne regarding the tracts he had commissioned from his scholars in the attack against Adoptianism: 'if the writings agree in their defence of the faith, we can see that one spirit speaks through the lips and hearts of all; but if any difference is found, let it be seen who

[138] R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987* (London, 1983) p. 202. The preface to the Ezechiel commentary (PL 110, col. 498A–B) is cited by Constable, 'Forgery and plagiarism', p. 29.
[139] *Alcuini epistolae*, appendix 2, MGH Epp. IV p. 486, discussed by N. Hathaway, '*Compilatio*: from plagiarism to compiling', *Viator* 20 (1989) pp. 19–44 at p. 29.
[140] M. L. W. Laistner, 'Some early medieval commentaries on the Old Testament' in *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages. Selected Essays by M. L. W. Laistner*, ed. C. Starr (Ithaca, N.Y., 1957) pp. 181–201 at p. 182; also Le Maître, 'Raban Maur', p. 352.
[141] MGH Epp. V, pp. 402, 457.

has the greater authority in scripture and the Fathers'.[142] Hraban's biblical commentaries, in their method and expertise, are thus as instructive of Carolingian scholarship, its methods and its limitations, as the testimony of the surviving manuscripts and book-lists.

Hraban's other works largely follow the same derivative path. His *De institutione clericorum* closely follows Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, but here he rearranges the whole, excising some bits and adding material from Cassiodorus, Isidore and Bede. Similarly his scientific treatise *De rerum naturis* (or *De universo*) is essentially a reworking of Isidore's *Etymologies*, indispensable as an 'encyclopaedia of the knowledge necessary for the understanding of the scriptures'.[143] The *De rerum naturis* shows how all knowledge was Christianised. The universe, the stars in the heavens, the earth and its creatures, had all been shaped by the divine will and thus bore its mark. Traces of the divine nature thus remained hidden in the natural world, but in forms of meaning that could be unlocked by the use of allegory and symbol. The rationale of Hraban's work, as of Isidore's, was that the origin and meaning of the names given to natural objects were a guide to their essential nature, and thus also to the divinity hidden within them. The mystical symbolism of these objects was thus what mattered, not the objects themselves. Scientific knowledge, like other branches of learning, was thus relevant only in so far as it pertained to the Christian faith and its significance.

Hraban's work, characteristic of Carolingian scholarship then in so many ways, is thus essentially derivative, self-consciously so. It may be uninspiring to the modern reader in consequence. But to follow *vestigia patrum*, as Bede put it, and to render patristic wisdom accessible to the present, was the accepted, and cherished, aim of early medieval scholarship. All shared in one body of knowledge, one Truth, to which all had access, upon which all might draw, and consequently which any might appropriate. One must appreciate what it was that Hraban and his contemporaries were trying to do: namely to provide the practical tools by which their Christian society might be corrected, reformed, renewed and therefore saved in the shortest possible time. The biblical commentaries apart, almost all Hraban's other works are intended for use in the practical context of pastoral care and underline the extent, once again, to which the uses and resources of learning were directed towards the needs of reform. The ultimate compliment was paid to Hraban (and to himself) by his master Lothar I who is reported to have said: 'Just as God gave my predecessors Jerome, Augustine and Ambrose, so he has given me Hraban.'[144]

Hraban wrote several of his biblical commentaries for friends, for example Hilduin of St Denis (Louis the Pious' archchaplain), Gerward of Lorsch (the

142 MGH Epp. IV, no. 149, p. 244, lines 7–11; Eng. trans. S. Allott, *Alcuin. His Life and Letters* (York, 1974) p. 96.

143 D. Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena. A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989) p. 12 and Le Maitre, 'Raban Maur', p. 345.

144 MGH Epp. V, p. 504, line 3.

court librarian), and Bishop Freculf of Lisieux, sending them texts of the finished product.[145] Such a friendship network, with widespread ramifications, as the record of Hraban's correspondence makes clear, was by no means exceptional. All the evidence shows that both men and manuscripts moved freely about the empire; and this intercourse between Carolingian churches, fostered alike by ties of confraternity (formal prayer arrangements between churches) and by the frequent meetings of bishops and abbots, and their retinues, at court, synod and council, is one of the most important aspects of intellectual life in the Carolingian period.[146] Lupus, abbot of Ferrières between 841 and 862, is the most striking illustration of what has been termed 'the gregariousness of Carolingian scholarship', and of the importance of connections, both personal and institutional, for the cultivation of learning.[147] Our source here is his outstanding letter collection. Several letters refer to the lending of books; others ask, or dispense, advice on a variety of academic points, many concerning the *correctio* of grammar or pronunciation.[148] Books are exchanged not merely for reading but also for copying. It was above all through this kind of co-operative exchange, both of views and manuscripts, that the Carolingian Renaissance proceeded.

Several of the texts referred to in these letters are pagan classical texts. It is evident, moreover, that Lupus and his friends sought not just to acquire such texts, but to acquire the best corrected, least corrupt texts. This characteristic Carolingian concern with correct, authentic texts, evident at the court of Charlemagne, and applied first of all to Christian learning, especially to the Bible and the liturgy, was also, we see, being applied to classical learning by Lupus and his friends. We can see Lupus in particular collecting many different variant manuscripts of a given text in order to compare and collate them so as to arrive at the most correct, most authentic version possible. He and his friends thus played an important part in ensuring that good classical texts survived into the modern period. Their attentions are focused not only on the classical writings best known to ninth-century audiences, for example those of Cicero or Vergil, but also on lesser-known authors such as Sallust, Caesar, Martial and Suetonius.

The circle of friends who shared Lupus' enthusiasm for all aspects of classical learning, however, was not a large one; first and foremost he himself was a scholar of Christian learning. His extant writings include, for example, theological works on the nature of the Eucharist and on predestination, on the meaning and function of kingship in a Christian society, and several saints' lives. He also drafted some conciliar legislation for Charles the Bald. His letters remind us that the pagan classics certainly did appeal to a learned elite among

145 MGH Epp. V, pp. 389, 402–3.

146 McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, pp. 210–12.

147 Ibid., p. 211.

148 Lupus of Ferrières, Epp. nos. 1, 4–5, 8–9, 35, 53, 65, 69, 79–80, 87, 95, 100–1, 108, 124, ed. L. Levillain, *Loup de Ferrières. Correspondance*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1964).

ninth-century Carolingian churchmen, as they had to some at Charlemagne's court, and that they were certainly thought worthy of preservation: but they remained at best an undercurrent in Carolingian learning, removed from the mainstream of effort and interest.

Conclusion

From what has been said already it will be clear that the revival of learning which is so prominent a feature of Charlemagne's reign did not end with his death in 814, despite the witness of Einhard, Walafrid and Lupus to that effect; neither did it end with the break-up of the empire in 840, nor in 877 with the death of Charles the Bald. Wherever one looks there is continuity through the ninth century and beyond.[149] This is especially true in the east where Ottonian culture is but late Carolingian culture under another name, and only less so in the west where the growth of tenth-century monastic reform, based on the monasteries of Cluny, Fleury, Gorze and Brogne, is plainly a sucker from the plant of its Carolingian counterpart. To emphasise the continuity between the ninth and tenth centuries, however, is not to deny that the Church faced very grave problems at this time. Foremost among these was the decline of royal power and authority resulting, as in the later Merovingian period, in the loss of church lands and, to some extent, secularisation of the Church itself as abbacies and bishoprics were filled by men whose outlook, dress and behaviour were secular rather than religious. The loss of lands could mean that schools closed, copying ceased, and even that communities dispersed. The availability of material resources was the crucial prerequisite for the pursuit of learning, and this the Carolingian kings, from Pippin III to Charles the Bald, broadly speaking had ensured. It was military success in the first place that had enabled them to do this: much of the wealth which provided for the Carolingian Renaissance was plunder and tribute from conquered lands. If learning declined in the late ninth and early tenth centuries it was largely because central authority could no longer guarantee the Church's enjoyment of its material resources in the face of lay encroachment. The weakening of central authority, and the political fragmentation of society concomitant with this, also made it more difficult for churches and individuals to maintain the links with others which had sponsored the fruitful interchange and exchange of manuscripts and personnel upon which so much of ninth-century scholarship and copying had depended.

Patronage of the Church in any form is an investment: laymen patronised churches because they expected a return, either spiritual, or temporal, in the form of greater control over that church and its resources. The Carolingian Renaissance may be seen as an exercise in patronage on a grand scale by the

[149] See select bibliography at the end of this chapter.

Carolingian rulers. Church lands could be relied upon to provide the *milites* upon whom Carolingian power and authority depended. The Church was also a medium through which their territories could be more effectively controlled. Only through the Church, its institutions, and its laws, could disparate populations, with different languages and law-codes, be integrated and administered. The royal interest is an essential and integral part of the Carolingian Renaissance, whether construed as the reform of society according to Christian norms or simply as a revival of learning, and crucial to understanding why this development took place at all. The Carolingians were faced with two principal problems: not only how to bind together and govern disparate and far-flung territories, but also simply how best to consolidate and legitimise their newly acquired royal authority. In such circumstances it is easy to see the attraction of the idea that God's destiny for them was to construct, with papal backing, a unified Christian society held together by the Christian virtue of obedience. The position of the Carolingian rulers, oath-breakers and usurpers, could thus be fortified by an unction which signified that God's favour and choice had fallen upon them. Rulers drawn from outside an ancient royal kindred could be seen to lack fortitude. As anointed kings set over a Christian society they were both God's elect and God's representatives: rebellion against their authority thus became rebellion also against God. Obedience to the dictates of the faith and obedience to the ruler whose divinely appointed task was to institute those dictates by law could be made to seem indistinguishable.

Education and learning were conceived as being vital to the success of the enterprise of moral *correctio*. Here too there were important implications for royal authority. Classicising tendencies in both art and literature, and notably in court poetry, served to enhance the ruler's prestige by associating him with late Roman imperial traditions; and government was more efficient, and more Roman, if articulated and conducted in writing as well as in speech. Recent research has very clearly underlined the extent to which writing was employed in Carolingian government, especially from the time of Louis the Pious onwards. Thus the Latin language could be employed in secular administration, as well as in the liturgy, to bind together subject peoples who spoke different tongues.[150]

The needs of government are thus an important factor in understanding the Carolingian Renaissance and its causes. An even larger one is Carolingian military success. In the first place it created a vast amount of wealth, a large proportion of which was given over to the Church in the form of a thank offering. Secondly, with the exception of Anglo-Saxon England and the kingdom of the Asturias, it created the reality of a unified Christendom against which the ideal could be matched. Thirdly it brought the Franks into closer contact with both Italy and Spain and the richness of their cultural traditions.

[150] McKitterick, *Carolingians*, and Nelson, 'Literacy in Carolingian government'.

Fourthly, Carolingian military triumphs, particularly over feared pagan opponents like the Saxons and the Avars, stimulated and advanced the Franks' self-confident belief in themselves as a chosen people, the New Israel, with a mission to promote the Christian faith much as a similar experience had earlier inspired the Visigoths. To the Carolingians the triumph of arms indicated that God had a special destiny in store for them. But what? The answer that they and their advisers came up with was Christian *reformatio*. This entailed both a revival of Christian learning and a further development of it, drawing on patristic tradition and feeding on more recent cultural developments worked out in Visigothic Spain, Anglo-Saxon England and Merovingian Gaul: *Roma renascens*. The Frankish Church, for its part, remained confident in the healing, revivifying powers of the Holy Spirit to create all things anew: 'Behold, a new spring has come ... the seasons are joyously renewed according to the eternal laws'.[151]

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