

Annales Xantenses

Translated by
Christopher P. Flynn

Spardjon

Annales Xantenses

TRANSLATED BY CHRISTOPHER P. FLYNN

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Email: apardjon.journal@gmail.com

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ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Christopher P. Flynn earned his PhD in Medieval History from the University of Minnesota. He specialises in the political, military, and administrative history of the ninth-century Carolingian world. He is currently visiting assistant professor at Gustavus Adolphus College.

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

A*pardjón Journal for Scandinavian Studies* is pleased to present the first full English translation of *Annales Xantenses* ‘The Annals of Xanten’; translated by Christopher P. Flynn, visiting assistant professor at Gustavus Adolphus College in St Peter, Minnesota. Throughout its pages, ‘The Annals of Xanten’ highlight the important, yet tumultuous events which occurred across the early medieval Carolingian realm from the end of the eighth century through to the third quarter of the ninth century. Amongst its near century spanning reports, the annals describe events including: the life and death of Charlemagne, repeated Viking raids, recurring Carolingian civil conflict, and various natural disasters.

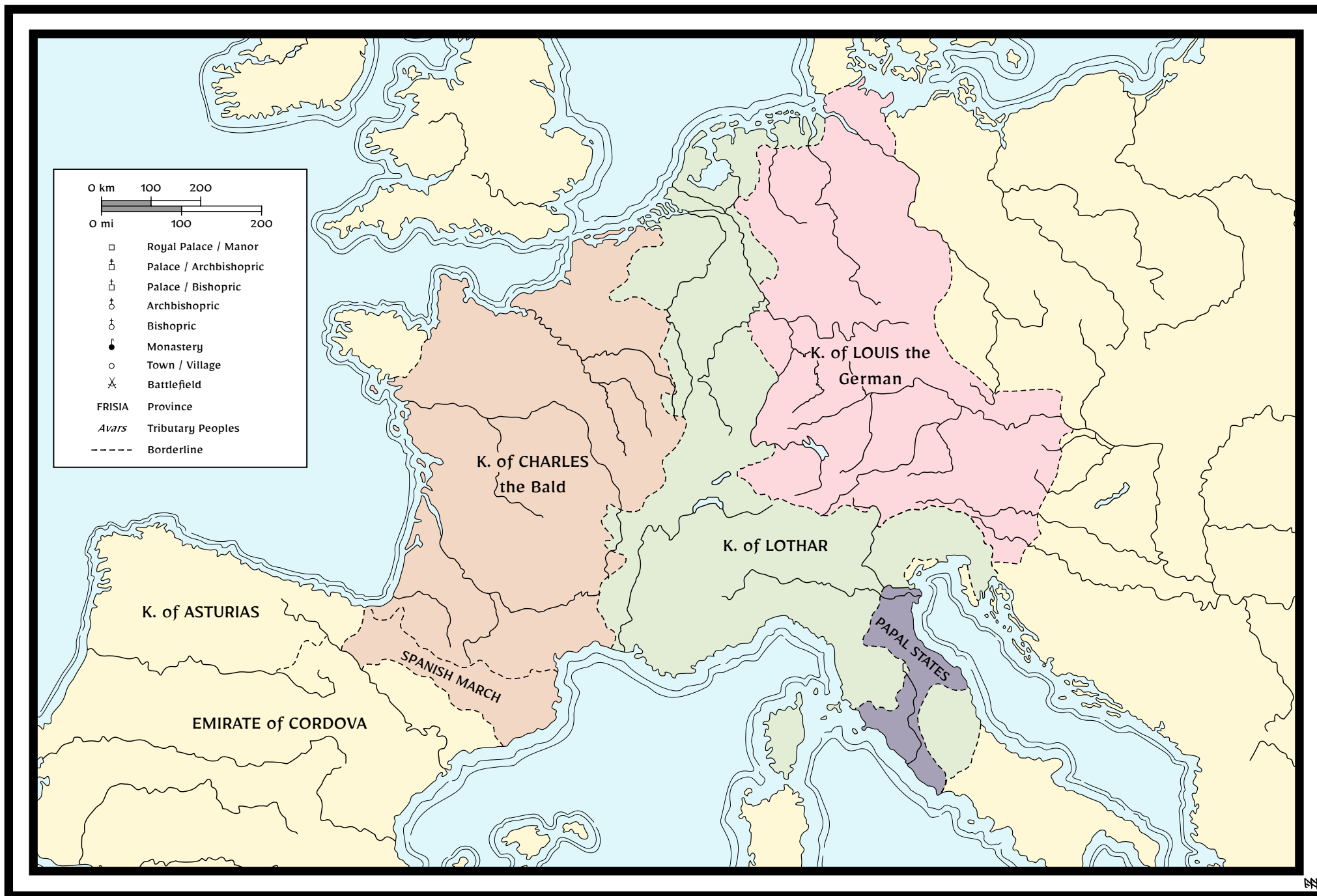
This volume represents the fourth translation to be published by *Apardjón*, with more to follow. Editors who have contributed to the present publication are as follows: Erin Benton, Hannah Booth, Cassidy Croci, Rosemary Kelly, Blake Middleton, and Maryann Pierse.

I would like to express my gratitude to the editorial team of *Apardjón*, who have gone above and beyond to manage multiple publication projects on top of their own workloads. Each editor has worked extremely hard to ensure we meet a high academic standard. The editorial team would also like to extend their thanks to Cassidy Croci, Solveig Marie Wang, and Jennifer Hemphill, all of whom have stepped down from their respective roles at the journal over the course of the past year. In their stead, we have welcomed Erin Benton and Maryann Pierse to our editorial team as general editors, and look forward to our continued collaboration with them on future projects. *Apardjón* would not exist without all these scholars’ commitment to creating an accessible platform for interdisciplinary research on the Viking and medieval North.

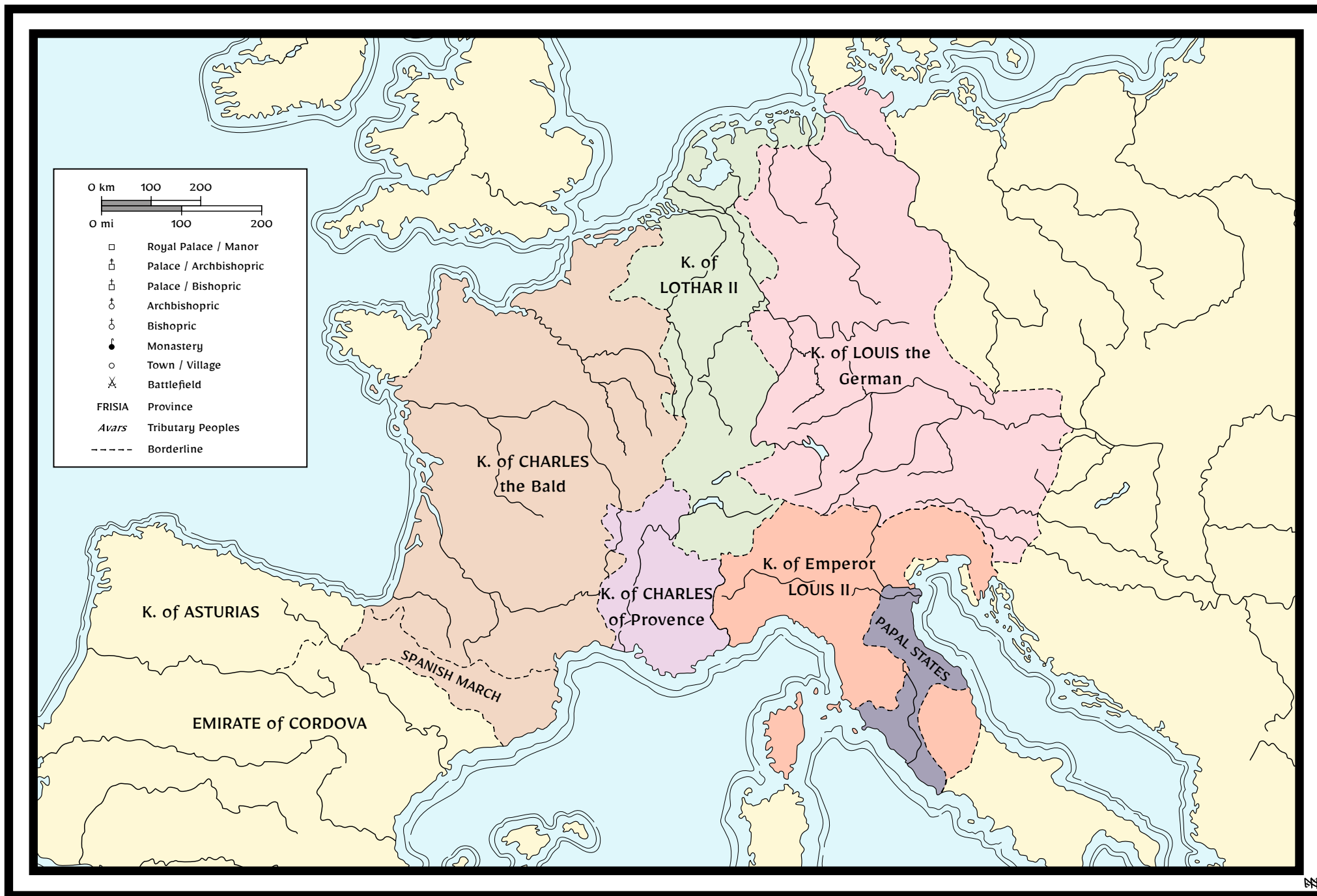
A further thanks is owed to Managing Editor and Production Manager, Blake Middleton, who has diligently prepared the structure, covers, and map designs for this special issue. Finally, the editorial team extends our thanks to everyone who has supported the journal thus far. We are currently working on the journal’s fourth volume, but until then, we sincerely hope you enjoy this translation of *Annales Xantenses*.

On behalf of the editors,

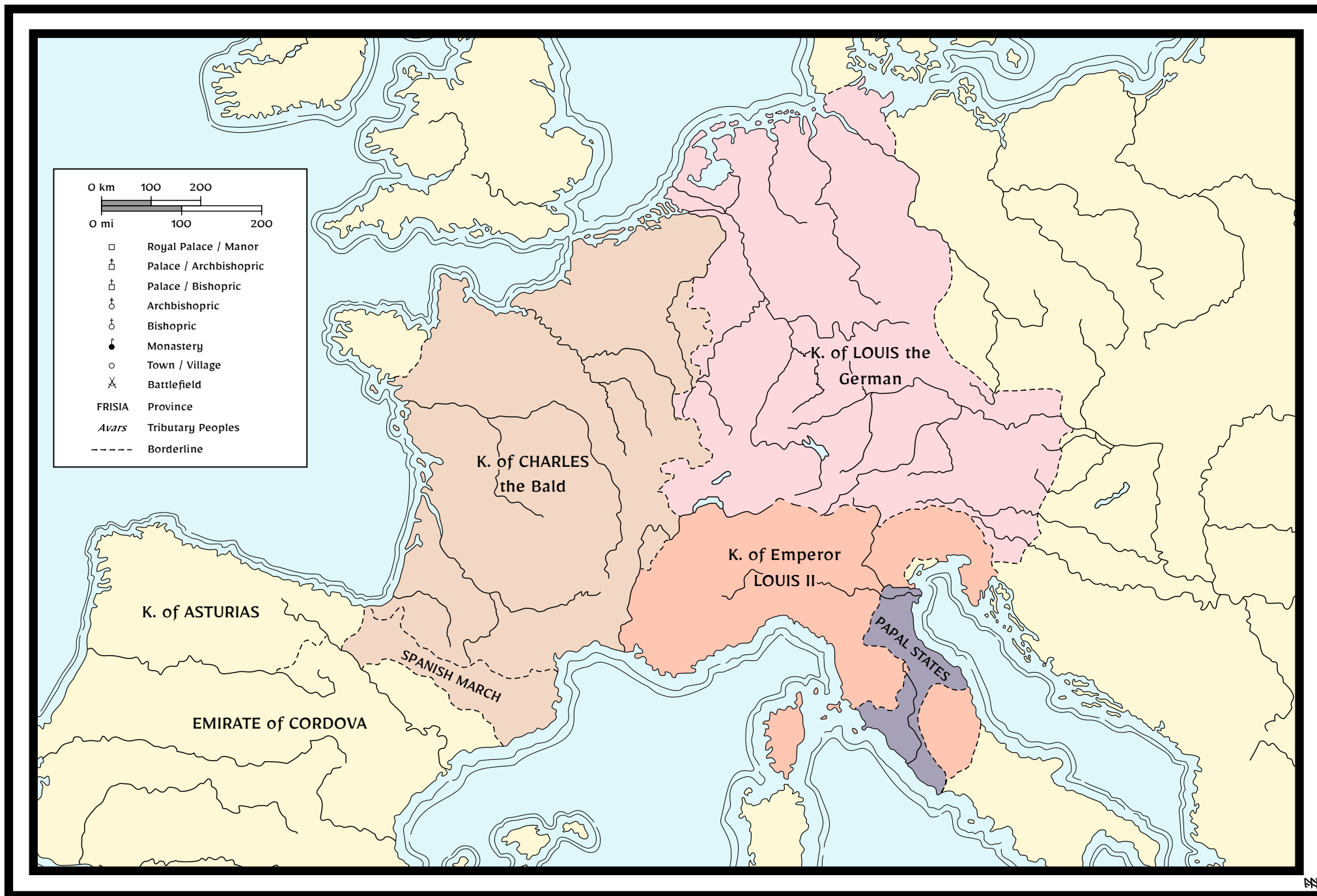
Rosemary Kelly



CAROLINGIAN KINGDOMS, 843 CE



CAROLINGIAN KINGDOMS, 855 CE



CAROLINGIAN KINGDOMS, 870 CE

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The *Annals of Xanten* (hereafter *AX*) are a fascinating text about which frustratingly little is known with certainty. In fact, we are quite lucky to know anything about them at all. The text exists alongside several other works in one British Library manuscript, which was damaged in the Cotton library fire at Ashburnham House in 1731, before being established as part of the British Museum collection in 1753. The manuscript was first located and publicised by Georg Pertz in 1827.¹ He proceeded to edit the annals for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (hereafter *MGH*) *Scriptores* series (Pertz 1829). It was Pertz who dubbed the annals ‘of Xanten’, since they contained a highly specific reference to the 863 destruction of Xanten’s Church of St Victor, which, it seemed to Pertz, the author may have witnessed firsthand (Pertz 1829: 219).² The annals have been edited and translated several times since Pertz. Bernhard von Simson, who was sceptical of the Xanten association, produced a second edition for the *MGH*, referring to them as the *Annales Xantenses Qui Dicuntur* (‘So-called Annals of Xanten’, von Simson 1909). Carl Rehdantz translated the annals into modern German, which Wilhelm Wattenbach updated in a subsequent edition (Rehdantz 1852; Wattenbach 1889). The latter edition was used by Reinhold Rau in his source collection, with facing Latin after Bernhard von Simson’s edition (Rau 1969). James Harvey Robinson published an English translation of select excerpts from 844–861 for inclusion in a primary source reader (Robinson 1904), which is the version used by Paul Edward Dutton in his own very popular Carolingian source collection (Dutton 2009).

Despite this partial English translation, the whole of the work remains relatively unavailable to Anglophone students without the requisite language training, which this volume aims to remedy. This is highly desirable, as the *AX* are a unique source of ninth-century history: so unique, in fact, that no other, later source can be found that has relied on or borrowed from *AX* as a major font of information. Taken in conjunction with the other, more available and better understood major annalistic sources, such as the *Royal Frankish Annals* (hereafter *RFA*, Kurze 1895; Scholz and Rogers 1972), the *Annals of Fulda* (hereafter *AF*, Kurze 1891; Reuter 1992), the *Annals of St-Bertin* (hereafter *AB*, Waitz 1883; Grat *et al.* 1964; Nelson 1991), and the *Chronicle* of Regino of Prüm (Kurze 1890; MacLean 2009), the *AX* help to provide a composite look into the complex world of ninth-century life, war, and

¹ The original, extant manuscript is housed at the British Library, London, Cotton Tiberius C.XI, f. 132r–145r.

² This was followed by Wattenbach, who thought the author could have been a displaced Xanten monk who fled to Cologne (Wattenbach 1893: 262–64). Note that in the more recent editions, Wattenbach has received the benefit of Löwe’s editorial updates on the subject (e.g., Wattenbach, Levison, and Löwe 1990: 882–83). Also see *AX* below, s.a. 864.

politics. Although there was probably no concrete connection between the *AX* and Xanten itself, I shall continue to refer to them as the *Annals of Xanten* (or *AX*) throughout this work, simply to avoid the obnoxious construction *So-Called Annals of Xanten*.

The *AX* exhibit several interesting tendencies. They are thoroughly concerned with the miraculous, with references to heavenly signs and portents abounding throughout the text, often linked to major events, such as the death of Louis the Pious and the subsequent division of the Carolingian Empire. Likewise, the annals show great interest in the weather and natural world, recording hard freezes, heavy snow or rainfall, floods, excessively hot summers, and more. The famines which sometimes resulted from these natural occurrences could be devastating, and the annals do not fail to mention them. Miraculous or unusually destructive natural events also represented the wrath of God being visited upon a sinful humanity, such as the plague of locusts which concludes the entry for the *AX*'s final year of 873.

The *AX* are reasonably well acquainted with the major political, military, and ecclesiastical events of the age. There are interesting accounts of the scandalous divorce case of King Lothar II and accompanying deposition of Archbishop Gunthar of Cologne, constant reference to the near-perennial Viking raids of the mid-century period, an obvious concern over the division of the empire following the civil war years of the 830s–840s, and acceptable awareness of Louis the German's major eastern campaigns. In addition, the annals are far from neutral in their presentation of political events. Generally, the *AX* seem relatively sympathetic to Louis the Pious in his conflicts with his sons. Lothar, the heir to the imperial title, is treated similarly at first, but seems to lose a bit of favour with the annalist after stirring up the *Stellinga* rebels in Saxony against Louis the German. The latter's treatment shifts heavily, from problematic and rebellious son in the 830s to the wisest and most just of all the remaining rulers by 869. Not being directly associated with any royal court, however, the *AX* are not official 'royal annals', and thus they provide an interesting and somewhat more independent account of the ninth-century Carolingian world.

The *AX* certainly had multiple authors working on the project, though precisely how many and when they worked has been a matter of considerable debate (more below). This is coupled with the fact that the *AX* must have undergone some process of copying and re-copying in the manuscript tradition that led to the preservation of this ninth-century record only in an eleventh-century hand. Precisely how much copying is difficult to say, since only the one manuscript copy survives. The multiple authorship and the chain of copying have led to a major infelicity in the text's record of events as listed, although it is generally an easy one

for the reader to remedy. The years 854–872 have gone off by one year: that is, most events listed under one year should belong rightly to the prior one. Thus, the reader must simply subtract one year to ensure that the correct dates are given. The entry for 873 reverts to correctness for one final year. I have deliberately left the dates uncorrected below, to keep the translation in accordance with the edition whence it derives. There is a note in the translation to mark the beginning of this chronological shift, and those years are marked with an asterisk.

The Contemporary Situation of the *Annales Xantenses*

The AX from 790–873 cover what is typically interpreted as the apex and subsequent decline of Carolingian royal power. Charlemagne's early reign featured sweeping conquests that resulted in a significantly expanded Carolingian empire. This military success brought with it a lofty reputation and a substantial increase in economic and administrative power for the monarchy. Charlemagne leveraged his conquests and rule of many peoples in order to have himself crowned Emperor of the Romans by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day of 800 CE, an event which created the ideal that would eventually metamorphose into what is conventionally termed the Holy Roman Empire. The wave of military successes and subsequent imperial coronation gave Charlemagne a larger-than-life persona. He would be admired and idealised as the prime exemplar of successful Christian kingship and imperial majesty by contemporaries and the succeeding generations of Carolingian kings. Try as they might, however, these subsequent kings could never manage to live up to the sterling example of Charlemagne, in the eyes of virtually every contemporary author (Gabrielle 2008: 13–19; Stuckey 2022). This trend is certainly identifiable in the AX, which can be observed in the way the annalist records respective imperial deaths. Charlemagne's death entry in 814 states that *[b]eate memoriae gloriosissimus Karolus imperator, Domino vocante, [...] de hac luce migravit* 'the most glorious Emperor Charles of blessed memory, having been called by God, departed from this world' (AX, s.a. 814). Then, for his son, Louis the Pious, the 840 annal states: *Ludowicus imperator obiit in insula quadam parva Hereni fluminis [...] et ad Sanctum Arnulfum conditus est* 'The Emperor Louis died on a certain small island in the Rhine...and was buried at St Arnulf [at Metz]' (AX, s.a. 840). No 'blessed memory'; no 'most glorious', in spite of the fact that the annalist usually seems well disposed towards Emperor Louis. Emperor Lothar I's death in 855 is not mentioned at all. Lothar's son, Emperor Louis II, who was still alive when the annals reached their extant form, is condemned as a failure for conflicts with the papacy and for not expelling the Moors from Benevento (AX, s.a. 869). One can feel the AX's perceived dynastic decline in this trend alone.

Perhaps the defining political event of the age within the empire was the civil war of the 830s and 840s. When Charlemagne considered the fate of his kingdom after his imperial coronation, he had several legitimate sons to provide for, and Frankish tradition dictated that he should bequeath to each a piece of the empire to rule. He made preparations to do just that in the 806 *Divisio Regnorum* ('Division of the Realms', Boretius 1883: 126–30, I.45; Dutton 2009: 146–50). This document, however, was rendered null by the deaths of his sons Pippin (d. 810) and Charles (d. 811), leaving Louis the Pious as sole legitimate heir. As the *AX* report (*AX*, s.a. 813), Charlemagne, in ill health, crowned Louis co-emperor, solidifying the succession before his impending death in 814. Charlemagne had lived to be rather an old man, and Louis was already in his mid-30s with several children of his own by his wife Ermengarde. Louis decided prudently to tackle the succession issue early in his reign, and in 817 he promulgated the *Ordinatio Imperii* ('Ordering of the Empire', Boretius 1883: 270–73, I.136; Ubl *et al.* 2024: 32–47; Dutton 2009: 199–203), setting forth the respective inheritances of his sons. Lothar received his father's imperial title and was crowned co-emperor, while Pippin and Louis the German would be sub-kings under their elder brother. The succession situation would be complicated further, however. After Ermengarde's death in 818, Louis the Pious married Judith of the powerful Welf family, and she gave birth to Charles the Bald in 823. A kingdom was created for Charles in 829, which angered his elder half-brothers, as it necessarily diminished the shares available to them. Rebellions soon followed, which persisted throughout the 830s as sons and father jockeyed for political position and moved in and out of each other's favour (Nelson 1992: 75–91; Goldberg 2006: 57–62).

The rebellions of the early 830s came to a serious breaking point in 833. At a spot between Strasbourg and Basel, Lothar, Pippin, and Louis arrayed their armies against their father, who remained determined that Charles should have a kingdom. The three brothers had been plotting with the magnates of their respective regions, however, and many of those men dramatically defected, abandoning the emperor and crossing over to his sons' forces. Louis the Pious, with no chance of profitable resistance in the face of this defection, dismissed his remaining forces and allowed himself to be taken prisoner by Lothar, who reportedly treated his father shamefully during his captivity (*AB*: 5–10; s.aa. 833–834). Louis was forced into a public display of penance for his purported mismanagement of the realm (de Jong 2009; Booker 2009). On the whole, however, the deposition was unpopular, and Louis the German and Pippin began to have second thoughts about Lothar lording cruelly over their father as a war captive, not least because Louis and Pippin worried about Lothar growing over-mighty (Nithard 1907: 5–7, I.4). In 834 Louis and Pippin mustered their forces and marched on Paris, where Lothar held Louis at St-Denis. Realising that his brothers had the

weight of popular sentiment and large armies at their backs, Lothar fled, and Louis the Pious was freed and restored to his imperial throne. Louis the Pious mercifully pardoned Lothar, who would maintain all the succession rights that he had been promised. Tensions still rankled over the issue of Charles's succession, however, and they would haunt Louis the Pious through to the end of his life. In 838 Louis the German rebelled once more, when Charles came of age at 15. This rebellion was still active when Louis the Pious died upon a Rhenish island near Ingelheim, as reported in *AX*. The sad truth, which the *AX* do not report fully, can be found elsewhere: Louis the Pious sickened and died while returning from a campaign against his still-rebellious namesake son (*AF*: 30–31 and *AB*: 24, both *s.a.* 840; Nithard 1907: 12–13, I.8; Astronomer: 540–50, LXII–LXIII).

After the death of his father, Lothar wielded the sole imperial title, as had been arranged. He immediately attempted to use this imperial clout to seize the entirety of the kingdom for himself, quite against the *Ordinatio Imperii* and Frankish partible inheritance practice. Pippin I had died in 838, leaving a namesake son, Pippin II, in control of Aquitaine, and this nephew would ally with his uncle Lothar in the coming struggle for power. Louis and Charles, however, would not simply be outmuscled by their eldest brother. Lothar marched against Louis and Charles in turn, but each avoided his attempts to seek battle, hoping instead to join forces against Lothar. Louis struck a powerful blow at the Ries on 13 May 841. While Lothar moved against Charles, he left the powerful Count Adalbert of Metz with a large army to guard against Louis coming out of Bavaria to rendezvous with Charles. Louis managed to catch Adalbert in a compromising position in the Nördlinger Ries, likely falling upon Adalbert's men while they were crossing the Wörnitz (Goldberg 2006: 99–100). Adalbert and a huge number of his men were killed, and Louis marched to meet Charles, which he finally did near Châlons-sur-Marne. Lothar and Pippin II finally managed to bring Louis and Charles to battle at Fontenoy on 25 June 841. The battle was cast as a judgment of God to determine whose cause was just, and it did not end well for Lothar and Pippin. Louis and Charles pulled off a thorough yet indecisive victory when Lothar's army routed in the face of massive casualties. Lothar was still alive, however, and he still had a considerable force at his disposal. The civil war ground on until Lothar was forced to sue for peace late in 842, which culminated in the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Verdun in 843. Verdun finally settled the division issue that had refused to die since 817, and the empire would cease to exist as a united whole for the rest of the period covered by *AX*. Much to the annalist's chagrin, it would now consist of separate realms ruled by different kings (*AX*, especially *s.a.* 869).

In addition to the internal strife, the Carolingian world experienced the threat of external raids or invasions in several theatres during the ninth century. Charles and Lothar faced constant incursions from Viking raiders, which became nearly an annual occurrence, and these receive frequent coverage in the *AX*. Particularly hard hit on the continent were the coastal sections of Frisia, the trading centres called *emporia*, such as Dorestad and Quentovic, and the areas along the Seine, which provided the raiders and their shallow-draft ships with easy access to inland regions. From the middle of the ninth century, however, most of the kingdom from the Elbe in the northeast to Aquitaine in the southwest experienced raiding at some point (Bauduin 2009: 151; Melleno 2024: 148–99). The Carolingians defended against these raids in several ways, with varying degrees of success. The first was the naval system of coastal defence, particularly active under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. Ships were stationed along the coastal regions to prevent the raiders from landing in the first place, but there is no explicit evidence that they ever engaged in any seaborne actions against Vikings (Coupland 2004: 50–51). The further we progress into the ninth century, the less evidence we have for the continued presence of coastal ships, and the more evidence for the frequent landing and plundering of raiders. Usually, this is attributed to the increased division of the Carolingian realms and the general increase in Viking activity, both on the mainland and in the British Isles (Cooijmans 2020; Melleno 2024).

A second measure was the *lantweri*, the military obligation incumbent upon all able-bodied males to defend the regions in which they lived from outside attack. This obligation meant service in bodies frequently called the general levies, which were assembled and led by local leaders (Bachrach 2001: 51–54). Notably, this service was highly local and temporary, so while the total military strength of the kingdom's general levies might be theoretically very large, these forces were only summoned to wage local, defensive warfare. The levies were of paramount importance against raiders, as they were the first line of defence until a more substantial force could be summoned if necessary (Coupland 2004: 52–54). Often the general levies were insufficient, but sometimes they could be very effective, as attested in *AX* (s.aa. 845, 864, and 873). Third, the king could summon expeditionary forces to attack and interdict raiders, but these measures were often too slow (Bachrach 2001: 54–57). By the time a summons went out and the men assembled, the raiders had often achieved their plundering and departed, but sometimes the royal host did manage to meet the raiders in battles or sieges, though *AX* do not report it (for example, see *AB*, s.aa. 845, 848, 852, 853, 858, and 864). Fourth, military obligations could often be fulfilled through other militarily useful means, such as bridge and road construction, and maintenance. Charles the Bald's famous Edict of Pîtres (Boretius 1897: 310–28, II.273) attests strongly to the

importance of such measures. These often had directly defensive purposes, as Charles turned to fortifying bridges over major rivers to create strong defensive sites along the usual invasion routes (Coupland 1991, 2004: 54–56, 66–67). Finally, and by far the least popular in contemporary accounts including *AX* (s.a. 869), the king might simply bribe the raiders with tribute to go away instead of plundering and ravaging the landscape. Although unpopular among those who expected the king to be a strong war leader and defender of the realm, these measures could be somewhat desirable from a strategic perspective at times, since they temporarily assuaged the problem and freed up time for other actions — rather than spending a substantial portion of the campaign season trying to repel the raiders by force (Coupland 1999).

The Xanten annalists tended to discuss Viking raids from a mournful, lamenting ecclesiastical perspective. They framed the raids as pagan assaults upon the Christian faith and people, which resulted from divine retribution for human sins. Much of *AX*'s perspective on this is also covered in the *AF* and *AB*, as these incursions were of serious concern in the broadly affected coastal and riverine regions. Much else, however, is unique to *AX*, most notably the account of the assault on St Victor's at Xanten, which led to the naming of the annals by Pertz. The terminology typically employed in *AX* for Vikings also reflects the Carolingian Christian perspective. Raiders were usually called *pagani/gentiles* ('pagans'), *predones* ('pirates'), *Nordmanni* ('Northmen'), or worse, like Roric, *fel Christianitatis* ('gall of Christianity', s.a. 873).

While Viking raiders were certainly the most highly publicised, *AX* also briefly discuss Moorish³ attacks on Italy, including the infamous sack of St Peter's at Rome in 846. For the annalist, these southern raids, in conjunction with those of the Vikings to the north and Slavs to the east, constituted a strangling encirclement of the Catholic church by "pagans" generally, which heralded the approach of the Antichrist (*AX*, s.a. 871). The final theatre of raiding was the long eastern frontier, across which were numerous Slavic peoples, some nominally subject to Carolingian authority or required to pay tributes, others ruled directly by Carolingian *duces* (sg. *dux*, military commanders and high administrative officials — it is too early here to call them 'dukes' in the later, ennobled, and heritable sense). *AX* are aware of many of Louis the German's campaigns in the east to quash rebellions or attempt the removal of a problematic leader, such as Goztomuizli (called 'Gestim' by *AX*, s.a. 844) of the Obodrites. The latter part of *AX* also shows strong awareness of Louis the German's

³ 'Moor' was a term by which medieval Christians designated Muslims of the western Mediterranean world. While not inherently derogatory, it is certainly exonymic — that is, a term used by an outside group rather than a self-identification. It was frequently used alongside 'Saracen', as below in s.a. 846 (the Xanten annalist here uses both at once, seeming unsure about the difference), which typically referred to Muslims more generally.

Moravian campaigns, which by this point were largely commanded by his sons, as Louis's age was growing advanced. Most of these centred around the removal of the *dux* Rastislav (AX, s.aa. 870–872), whom Louis himself had installed after removing his predecessor Moimir in 846.⁴

The other major political issue — perhaps that which receives the most thorough attention from the AX — is the divorce case of Lothar II, particularly as it involved Archbishop Gunthar of Cologne. When Lothar attempted to put aside his legitimate wife Theutberga and marry his long-term lover Waldrada (with whom he had been involved since before his marriage), the pope refused to allow it. In 860, Gunthar and Lothar had presided over a synod at which Theutberga was accused of incestuous intercourse with her brother. The case had been largely fixed beforehand. Theutberga was forced to admit guilt to the fabricated charges, and the marriage to Lothar was dissolved. Pope Nicholas, however, sent legates to investigate, after which Gunthar was called to Rome in 863 to testify regarding the previous judgment. The pope completely rejected their testimony, and Gunthar was excommunicated and deposed when he refused to accept the papal decision. Gunthar was still unrepentant, however, and he continued to perform church services as if he were still in office, with some significant popular support at Cologne. Finally, Gunthar was allowed to take lay communion by Nicholas's successor, Pope Hadrian II, but he was never restored to his office (Heidecker 2010; Stone and West 2016). The AX thoroughly condemn Gunthar's actions and in contrast, lavish much praise upon his successor Willibert (AX, s.a. 871). Lothar himself died while returning from an expedition to Rome in 869, still entangled in the same difficulties.

It is rather a shame that the AX end so abruptly when they do in 873. By this point, Louis the German and Charles the Bald had divided Lotharingia between themselves at the Treaty of Meerssen in 870 (Boretius 1897: 193–95, II.251). Both kings still lived, but they would not for much longer. Louis died in 876, and after a failed attempt to conquer Louis the Younger's territory at the Battle of Andernach in 876, Charles followed his half-brother to the grave shortly thereafter in 877. The Xanten annalist, so distressed over the division of the empire, would undoubtedly have provided an interesting perspective on the subsequent, further division of the *regna* ('realms') into smaller units under the next generation of Carolingian kings. This too was temporary, prior to the reabsorption of these realms into one polity under Louis the German's son Charles 'the Fat', before his own deposition in 887 and death in 888 (MacLean 2003). But as it stands, the AX conclude in 873, leaving us stranded *in medias res* and forced to rely on other sources for the decline of Carolingian royal authority.

⁴ See AF: 36, s.a. 846 for this episode, which is not much reported in AX, which says only that Louis *perrexit in Winithos* 'went against the Wends'.

Authorship, Origins, and Sections of the Work

All the years 790–830 are obviously derivative of the *Royal Frankish Annals* and probably another annalistic compilation which is now lost.⁵ Most of these unoriginal entries are extremely abridged versions of the *RFA* and provide little in the way of unique value or information.⁶ There are, however, some unique bits in the early section, such as in the entry for 827, which, when discussing Louis the German's marriage to Queen Emma, includes the information that she was the sister of Empress Judith, wife of Louis the Pious. It is possible that other annalists might have found this relationship a bit scandalous and omitted it, since a father and son were married to two sisters, but just as likely is Löwe's idea that the explicit noting of the sisters' relationship revealed a deep interest in the royal family on the part of the author of *AX*. Where earlier scholars had posited that the unique information not found in the *RFA* was likely derived from some other, now lost source, Löwe believed that some of these insertions could also have been derived simply from the author's own memory, having lived through the events and remembered participating in or hearing about them (Löwe 1951: 97–98; cf. Airlie 1990: 191–204). There is no entry for 830, but once the annals hit their stride after 831, the entries become progressively denser, more unique, and more informative, particularly during the civil war era of the 840s. From 831–873, as Pertz recognised long ago, the *AX* are an original work, providing a unique perspective (Pertz 1829: 217–219). The entries for the decade of the 850s are again abrupt at best, an abridgement perhaps from the original manuscript or a later author working from memory or brief notes, but the 860s and 870s provide the most thorough accounts that the annals achieve. Finally, they break off suddenly in 874, with the typical heading for that year 'Anno DCCCLXXIII', but with no entry.

Thus, we have four distinct parts: the derivative section before 830, the rather fuller section from 831–851, the very clipped entries from 852–860, and finally, the information-packed section from 861–873, which shows much concern for the deposition of Archbishop Gunthar of Cologne and the royal divorce case of Lothar II. Scholars have worked from this paradigm to argue variously that *AX* was a compilation of four sources by several authors (Steffen 1889), or that one later author had worked from several sources (including *RFA* and other, lost material) from the beginning to 831; had been the original author to 851; and

⁵ Herein I omit the much later, derivative addition of the years 640–789 — as Bernhard von Simson has done in his Latin edition — as they are not reflective of the ninth-century text and highly incomplete, with many years having no entry. On the lost compilation related also to the *Annales Maximiniani*, see Hoffmann 1958: 12–21, and on *Annales Maximiniani*, see recently Close 2010: 303–25; Latin edition of *Annales Maximiniani* in Waitz 1881: 19–25.

⁶ This practice is very common, on which see the section 'The Frankish Minor Annals', in Kooper and Levelt 2022: 87–216.

another author continued from 861 onward—probably writing from around Cologne—adding the short and unsatisfying entries for the 850s from memory or abridging his predecessor’s work (Löwe 1951: 59–64; Rau 1969: 8–9). It has also been argued that the annals probably stemmed not from Cologne or Xanten but from Worms, given the frequent, highly specific references to that place in the narrative (Oediger 1946/47: 32–43).

Heinz Löwe has made the most detailed arguments and specific claims regarding authorship, and his ideas remain by far the most influential upon later scholarship.⁷ He believed that all of the entries up to 860 were the work of a single author: Gerward, the palace librarian under Louis the Pious, whose family had been patrons of Lorsch early in the ninth century. After likely receiving some early training at Lorsch, Gerward joined the royal court some time ca. 814, where he would take up the position of palace librarian and become close friends with Einhard, author of the *Vita Karoli Magni* (Einhard 1911; Noble 2009) among other works (Airlie 1990: 194–97; Ganz 1997: 299–310; Bischoff 1994: 76–92). Gerward departed from that court position around 837, retiring to Lorsch possessions at *Gannita*⁸ near Nijmegen, where he administered the holdings there that he and his family had given to Lorsch. After his death in the early 860s, his books, which he had bequeathed to Lorsch, were transferred there from *Gannita* (Bischoff 1989: 56–59). Löwe worked through prosopography, studying Gerward’s familial, social, and political networks and origins. He arrived at the conclusion that Gerward possessed just the right connections to have plenty of knowledge of events in Frisia, relationships and/or training at Lorsch, news via the Rhine from Worms, a career in the imperial court, and monastic retirement from court life at *Gannita*, to have given the AX the shape and character in which they come down to us (Löwe 1951: 87–99). Löwe’s arguments are thorough and well-reasoned, and at present I see no reason to doubt that Gerward was at least a viable candidate to have authored AX to 860, except in the most basic terms. That is, other clerics could have written the AX at other locations, since news travelled. Additionally, plenty of people, influential and rather more anonymous alike, knew Gerward, and they could have heard his version of events to add them to the story. Still, even if AX was written by someone in Gerward’s sphere of influence, it remains reasonable, as far as can be discerned, that his potential stamp upon AX was strong.

Friedrich Wilhelm Oediger raised objections to Löwe’s claim that Gerward was the likely author of the first part of the annals (Oediger 1955: 181–90; and cf. Oediger 1946/47:

⁷ The list of works that follow Löwe’s interpretation is enormous, but a few must suffice to make the point in the interest of brevity. McKitterick 1989: 189–90; Depreux 1997: 214–15; Bauduin 2009: 126; Patzold 2008: 362–68; Nelson 1992: 130, 270; Innes 2000: 209, n.166; Goldberg 2020: 269, n.143; Goldberg 2006: 45, 55; Dutton 2009: 347.

⁸ Gendt, about 10km east of Nijmegen along the Waal River (Goosmann 2018).

32–43). Oediger rejected the specificity of Löwe’s arguments, claiming that we know far too little of Gerward’s career to make any of Löwe’s suppositions certain. He also stressed the absence of any other extant texts from Gerward’s pen, save for a few scant dedicatory verses appended to Einhard’s *Vita Karoli Magni*, with which to compare the *AX* to determine possible stylistic similarities (Oediger 1955: 183–84). Any clues from the manuscript tradition of *AX* are nearly impossible, given that they have survived in one manuscript only, hundreds of years removed from the original text. Thus, any conclusions regarding authorship lean heavily on the text itself and are necessarily speculative — that is, what can be said with certainty is far less than what might be possible (Oediger 1955: 182); for Oediger, that provides insufficient proof for Gerward’s case. Oediger preferred instead to situate the likely annalist either at Worms or nearby Lorsch, due to the very specific detail in *AX* concerning that locality, including things like the number of shocks that accompanied earthquakes (Oediger 1955: 184–88). Löwe responded that a few notes about Worms in the latter part of the annals were nothing compared to the preponderance of concern with the affairs of Cologne. He also noted that Oediger’s arguments were mostly generalised, rather than dealing with any of his own concrete points, and therefore, they did not really disprove Gerward’s authorship at all (Löwe 1956: 574).

Notably, the distance between the Lorsch possessions at *Gannita* and Lorsch itself was some 400 km along the Rhine. Regardless of whether the first annalist wrote at Worms, nearby Lorsch, or *Gannita*, the Rhenish trade networks with Frisia — in which Lorsch participated in large measure — ensured that either locality would have received plenty of news from the other (Löwe 1951: 82–85; Goosmann 2018: 35–47). Therefore, while one cannot say with absolute certainty who wrote the *AX*, whether the likely Gerward or some anonymous cleric at Worms or Lorsch, we do have a good idea of the sort of Rhenish network along which they lived, and the ways in which they would have attained news of the major political, military, and ecclesiastical events of the day. Certainly, however, the lived experience at one end of this network in Frisia, experiencing an enormous brunt of attacks from the Northmen firsthand, would be markedly different from someone in Worms, witnessing major assemblies and synods and worrying about the distant possessions in *Gannita* that were under threat from said attacks.

Wolfgang Eggert noted a pronounced shift in the annalist’s partisan viewpoints from Lothar towards Louis the German following Louis’s brutal suppression of the *Stellinga* rebellion in Saxony, which Lothar had attempted to encourage. For Eggert, Gerward approved the draconian methods Louis used and was clearly disappointed in Lothar for setting

the servile classes against their lords, thus upsetting Gerward's perceived proper order of society (Eggert 1973: 130–54). Gerward also grew increasingly resigned to the fact that the empire was no longer going to remain a unified whole under Lothar, although it disgusted him to the point that he did not deign to report in detail on the enormously important Treaty of Verdun (843), which divided the empire formally among the brother kings (Eggert 1973: 138–39).⁹ Afterwards, Louis tended to appear in less condemnatory terms, and Lothar was not consistently designated 'emperor' as opposed to 'king', thus rendering him on the same relative level as his brothers. True enough; though it would be easy to overestimate the value of such a line of argumentation, since it relies upon the assumption that the annalist set out to use consistent terminology throughout or that his usage necessarily reflected a change in perception rather than somewhat more arbitrary word choice (and also would have constituted a deliberate choice to deny the reality of Lothar's imperial status). Surely, some variance in vocabulary must be allowable, as medieval chronicles did not always speak in perfectly formulaic titular designation throughout. This methodology is ideally suited to charters and other official records, as they reflect formulaic royal usage more than creative and interpretive works of history like chronicles, in which one might expect more authorial variation in word choice. In charters, for example, one can note that the emperor often bore the sense of being both 'emperor' and 'king', as had been reflected in the chosen title of Charlemagne: *Karolus [sere]nissimus augustus a deo coronatus magnus pacificus imperator Romanum gubernans imperium, qui et per misericordiam dei rex Francorum atque Langobardorum* ('Charles, the most serene Augustus crowned by God, the great and peaceful emperor governing the Roman Empire, and who, by the mercy of God, is King of the Franks and the Lombards', Mühlbacher 1906: 265, no. 197).¹⁰ Louis the Pious and Lothar, however, chose to prefer the simpler *divina ordinante providentia imperator Augustus* ('emperor Augustus by order from divine providence', Kölzer 2016: 34, no. 11) to Charlemagne's glorious but highly cumbersome title.¹¹ The usage shortened the title and showed that to their minds, these rulers had been elevated to a position higher than mere kingship. Importantly, it was this very thing that served to put Lothar on a superior footing to his brothers in *Ordinatio Imperii*, wherein he was

⁹ Here, Eggert even argues that the author's report that Louis's invasion of 858–859 spoiled the realm and fixed nothing is to be construed as disappointment that the invasion failed to reunify the whole *regnum*. I would posit instead that the author here disgustingly concludes that another foolish and fruitless attempt at civil war had closed with nothing but suffering for the people and difficult choices for the church as to which king to support. Even if Eggert is correct regarding the general sentiment of positivity towards Louis, the annalist could still condemn these particular actions. Cf. Goldberg 2006: 248–62; Nelson 1992: 187–92.

¹⁰ For Charlemagne's later title, see charters 197 forward in Mühlbacher 1906.

¹¹ See Kölzer 2016 for any of the hundreds of examples for Louis the Pious after 814; for Lothar, see Schieffer 1966.

made emperor while his brothers were designated merely kings under his authority (Boretius 1883: 270–73, I.136; Ubl *et al.* 2024: 32–47).

If one accepts Löwe's arguments for Gerward's authorship, then the composition process went as follows. For the first part, until 830, Gerward obviously used the *RFA* as a chief source, supplementing that account with his memory of things he particularly appreciated, such as the distinct note about Queen Emma and Empress Judith noted above. Gerward's career as palace librarian lasted, at the latest, until 837, after which time he retired from palace life to Lorsch possessions at *Gannita*, with which his family had prior connections as pious donors and where Gerward was likely educated without having taken vows (Löwe 1951: 89).¹² At Louis the Pious' imperial court, Gerward would have developed his deep interest in the royal family, as well as a sense of devotion to the ideal of imperial unity which would later colour his portrayals of the Carolingian kings. Thus, in the civil war era of the 830s, Gerward could usually be seen to prefer Emperor Louis the Pious to his son Louis the German, and after Louis the Pious' death in 840, the author shifted his allegiance to the new Emperor Lothar, again in preference to Louis the German. The preference, however, is of limited scope, merely a slight but nevertheless detectable bias toward the imperial party over the sub-kings created by the *Ordinatio Imperii* and subsequent creation of a kingdom for Charles the Bald.

Following his departure from politics, Gerward retired to *Gannita*, upon land possessed by the monastery of Lorsch, which was the likely site of his composition of the first part of the *AX*. His old capacity as palace librarian would have given him easy access to the *RFA*, from which he worked until *RFA* left off in 829 and his own memory became fuller in the decade of the 830s. The monastery's possessions around Nijmegen and Utrecht suffered greatly in the growing wave of Viking incursions during the 850s, when finally, Gerward's work and many others were probably removed to Cologne to prevent their destruction around 863, prior to the noted attack on Xanten and the Church of St Victor. The serious threats incurred during the 850s, for Löwe, account for their brevity, since other matters than the annals occupied the author's attention, as well as the fact that the author found the difficult life situation painful to relate. After the disgusted entry of 860 or perhaps with similarly terse notes until 863, Gerward ceased to write, possibly from ill health or death, understandable as he would have been in his mid-60s by that time (Löwe 1951: 61).

¹² Here Löwe notes that Gerward's career rather paralleled that of Einhard, who was educated at Fulda before being sent to the palace school for further training and the advancement of his scholarly career. Likewise, Gerward was possibly educated at Lorsch, went to the palace, and then retired to the monastery's holdings when his administrative career ended.

Sometime during this era, another author, to this point unidentifiable but likely based at Cologne, took up Gerward's labour. He revised some of the earlier work, adding a sense of stylistic continuity throughout, and he also began writing new entries in his own right. Now we begin to hear of the great political scandal of the age, the divorce case of King Lothar II. Lothar attempted to divorce Queen Theutberga and marry his long-time concubine, Waldrada. During the course of this scandal, Archbishop Gunthar of Cologne was deposed for his part in it, and the annals evince a clear disdain for Gunthar on the part of the author, whose position (probably) at Cologne gave him a close personal knowledge of the situation. He stressed the disrepute and mismanagement at Cologne which resulted from Gunthar's tenure, comparing Cologne to an old widow, bereft of a spouse and reduced to a pitiable situation, abusing herself and sitting in a heap of ash (*AX*, s.a. 869).

This second anonymous author also felt sorrow over the divided state of the empire, although he was much more sympathetic than Gerward to Louis the German, whom he called the wisest and most just of the current rulers. Charles the Bald is condemned as never able to defeat the Vikings, but always ready to buy them off with bribes and tributes; Lothar is predictably scourged for his divorce proceedings; and Louis of Italy is called an enemy of Pope Nicholas and scorned for failing to drive the Moors from Benevento (*AX*, s.a. 869). Unlike Gerward, as Eggert showed, this second author was much more comfortable talking about the realms (*regna*) of the various kings as separate polities than merely regions of an empire which ought to have been unified (Eggert 1973: 138–42 and 146–54). At any rate, both authors evince the most concern for events that transpired in the Middle Kingdom, especially the Rhineland, and the same places once they became a part of the Eastern Kingdom after the 870 Treaty of Meerssen (Boretius 1897: 193–95, II.251).

The Current Translation

I have followed, not necessarily to the letter, several general principles in preparing a translation of this text, which is presented alongside facing Latin from Bernhard von Simson's edition (von Simson 1909). I have tended towards the literal more than striving for the best-sounding English syntax, believing in the value of trying to bring out the author's own phrasing and sentence structure as much as I am able in a modern translation. At times this has necessitated further explanation in the notes, since the Latin of *AX* can be occasionally cramped and awkward, although usually straightforward. I have chosen to present names of major figures in typical English spellings rather than French or German (e.g., Lothar over Lothaire, Carloman over Karlmann, etc.). Some names, especially unidentifiable figures or

places, I have left in their Latin forms as written in *AX*, though usually with explanatory notes. The same is true for terms such as *pagus* or *dux*, where modern equivalents are unsatisfying or misleading. Insertions or explanations are done in square brackets [].

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Annales
Xantenses

Annales Xantenses Qui Dicuntur

Anno DCCXC. *Domnus rex moratus est Vangionam, et absque bello transiit tempus.*

Anno DCCXCI. *Perrexit domnus rex cum exercitu in Pannoniam. Inde regressus rediit ad Regenesburg et nativitatem Domini ac pascha ibidem celebravit vita prospera.*

Anno DCCXCII. *Carolus rex in Reganesburg totum annum peregit, et Saxones iterum a fide dilapsi sunt Christianitatem relinquentes.*

Anno DCCXCIII. *Ermbertus episcopus Vangione obiit.*

Anno DCCXCIII. *Fastrada regina obiit ad Franconofurt; ibi domnus rex sinodum magnam habuit cum omnibus episcopis Galliae et Italiae de adoptivo filio domino nostro Iesu Christo. Quam heresim introducere nitebatur Elefantus episcopus Hispanorum, Toletanae sedis episcopus. Inde rediens per Saxoniam venit ad Aquis ibique hiemavit.*

‘The So-Called Annals of Xanten’

In the Year 790. The lord king¹ stayed at Worms, and the time passed without war.²

In the Year 791. The lord king proceeded with an army into Pannonia.³ Returning thence, he went back to Regensburg, and he celebrated the birth of the Lord and Easter there in prosperous life.

In the Year 792. King Charles stayed the whole year at Regensburg, and the Saxons, relinquishing Christianity, fell away from the faith again.⁴

In the Year 793. Bishop Ermbertus⁵ of Worms died.

In the Year 794. Queen Fastrada⁶ died at Frankfurt; there, the lord king held a great synod with all the bishops of Gaul and Italy, concerning the adoption of the son, our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷ Elipandus,⁸ Bishop of Spain, was struggling to introduce this heresy at his episcopal seat of Toledo. Returning thence through Saxony, he [Charlemagne] came to Aachen and

¹ Charlemagne, r. 768–814.

² From this year through to 829, readers may consult the *RFA* for fuller accounts of the mostly derivative material, as well as the *Annales Maximiniani* for parallel accounts likely of similar derivation.

³ This campaign was directed against the Avars, for which considerably more detail may be found in *RFA*: 87–88, s.a. 791; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 69–70; and Einhard’s *Vita Karoli Magni*: 15–17, no. 13; Noble 2009: 32–33.

⁴ Charles spent the year preparing, putting down a conspiracy led by his son Pippin “the Hunchback”, and building mobile pontoon bridges that could be assembled and disassembled easily, see *RFA*: 90–92, s.a. 792; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 70–71; Einhard’s *Vita Karoli Magni*: 25–26, no. 20; Noble 2009: 39–40. The absence of a military campaign was likely due in part to a lack of fit horses, due to the massive equine epidemic of the prior year, for which see *RFA*: 87–88, s.a. 791; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 69–70; and especially Gillmor 2005.

⁵ Attested Bishop of Worms as early as 764 in a charter of King Pippin, see Mühlbacher 1906: 28–29, no. 20.

⁶ Third or fourth wife of Charlemagne, depending on whether one regards Himiltrude, mother of Pippin the Hunchback, as wife or concubine. For a discussion of Charlemagne’s early marriages, see Nelson 2019: 91–110.

⁷ The Adoptionist Heresy, rejected at the 325 Council of Nicaea, so named due to the belief that Christ was the adopted son of God rather than part of the inherent being of the divinity. The rejection of this is clear in the Nicene Creed’s wording, [*Credo*] *in unum Dñm Iesum Christum, Fñm Dei Unigñitum, et ex Patre natum ante òmnia sàcula. [...] gñitum, non factum, consubstantiàlem Patri* (‘I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages [...] begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father’, *Missale Romanum*: 258 and *The Roman Missal*: 527, respectively). See also Ganz 1995: 762–66; Chandler 2002: 505–27.

⁸ Elipandus, Archbishop of Toledo since c. 783.

Anno DCCXCV. *Rex Carolus venit in Saxoniam. Cumque Saxones convicti in omnibus se culpabiles recognovissent, obsides regi offerentes, accepitque eorum terciam partem in obsidionem generis masculini, et spoponderunt se ultra non fallere, sed antiqua illorum infelicitas eos non permisit, et domno rege inde recedente, statim foedus irrumpentes.*

Anno DCCXCVI. *Huni cum omnibus finibus ad se pertinentibus domni regis ditioni et Francorum imperio se subdiderunt; rex autem perrexit Saxoniam.*

Anno DCCXCVII. *Barcinona civitas Hispaniae, quae iam olim a nobis desciverat, per Azotum prefectum ipsius nobis est reddita. Nam et ipse ad palacium veniens domno regi semetipsum cum civitate commendavit. Expeditio facta in Saxoniam, et usque ad oceanum trans omnes paludes et in via loca transitum est; et rex mense Novembrio mediante ad hibernandum cum exercitu Saxoniam intravit, positus castris apud Wisuram fluvium.*

Anno DCCXCVIII. *Venit etiam legatus Hadifonsi regis Galaciae et Austriae nomine Froia, papilionem mirae pulchritudinis*

wintered there.

In the Year 795. King Charles came into Saxony. At that time the conquered Saxons had recognised themselves guilty in all things, and they offered hostages to the king, of which he accepted a third part of the men as hostages, and they [the Saxons] pledged not to deceive him further; but the ancient misfortune of those men did not permit them [to keep the pledge], and with the lord king returning thence, immediately they broke their pact.

In the Year 796. The Huns⁹ subjected themselves, with all their territories¹⁰ and all things pertaining to them, to the authority of the lord king and the rule of the Franks; the king also proceeded to Saxony.

In the Year 797. Barcelona, the city in Spain, which had already defected from us once, was returned to us by Zatun, the prefect of that [city].¹¹ For he, coming to the palace, commended himself with the city to the lord king. An expedition¹² was made into Saxony, and it crossed up to the ocean, through all the swamps and impassable places; and the king in mid-November entered Saxony with his army to spend the winter there, with camps built along the river Weser.

In the Year 798. Also, a legate named Froia came from King Alfonso¹³ of Galicia and Asturias, bringing to the emperor¹⁴ a

⁹ Avars, for whom 'Huns' was a common designation among medieval chroniclers. This campaign significantly enriched the Franks with Avar treasure, *RFA*: 98–100, s.a. 796; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 74–75.

¹⁰ Latin *finibus*, which has the sense of 'borders', signifying all their territories from end to end.

¹¹ Zatun, Muslim governor of Barcelona; cf. *RFA*: 100–2, s.a. 797; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 75–76; and Chandler 2020: 65–66.

¹² Almost always has the sense of 'offensive military campaign' in Carolingian annals, as it does here.

¹³ Alfonso II, r. 791–842.

¹⁴ A bit early, as Charlemagne was not emperor until Christmas Day, 800, which the annalist certainly knew, as he proceeds to relate it shortly. Perhaps *imperator* is intended only in the sense of 'commander', or he writes retrospectively and does not trouble himself about the slight anachronism.

deferens imperatori.

Anno DCCXCVIII. *Eodem anno Romani Leonem papam excecaverunt et linguam detruncaverunt atque in custodiam miserunt. Set visum ei addidit Dominus, etiam et loquelam. Wido comes vicit totam Brittanniorum provinciam, quod numquam antea fuerat.*

Anno DCCC. *Eodem anno Karolus rex pertranssiens ad Turonicam.*

Anno DCCCI. *Ipsa die sacratissimae nativitatis domini nostri Iesu Christi ante confessionem beati Petri apostoli Leo papa Carolum benedixit ad imperatorem, sicut mos est, et coronam auream expressam signo sanctitatis super caput eius posuit.*

Anno DCCCII. *Herona imperatrix de Constantinopoli misit legatos ad Karolum pacem confirmare inter Francos et Grecos.*

Anno DCCCIII. *Hoc anno terrae motus ad Aquis factus est.*

Anno DCCCIII. *Karolus imperator transiit in Saxoniam et omnes, qui trans Albiam et in Winodis habitabant, Saxones exules fecit.*

pavilion¹⁵ of great beauty.

In the Year 799. In the same year the Roman people blinded Pope Leo, cut out his tongue, and threw him into prison. But the Lord gave him sight and also speech. Count Wido¹⁶ conquered the whole province of Brittany, which was never done before.

In the Year 800. In the same year, King Charles crossed to Tours.

In the Year 801. On the day of the most sacred birth of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁷ before the tomb of the blessed apostle Peter, Pope Leo blessed Charles as emperor, as was custom, and placed a golden crown showing the sign of sanctity upon his head.¹⁸

In the Year 802. Irene¹⁹ the empress of Constantinople sent legates to Charles to confirm the peace between Franks and Greeks.

In the Year 803. In this year there was an earthquake²⁰ at Aachen.

In the Year 804. The Emperor Charles crossed into Saxony, and he exiled all the Saxons who lived beyond the Elbe and in Wigmodia.²¹

¹⁵ Latin *papilionem*, literally ‘butterfly’. Such a pavilion was of great use to a king like Charlemagne, who spent many years on campaign and thus sleeping in military camps. An ornate pavilion would have provided a measure of comfort as well as royal pomp and dignity.

¹⁶ Commander of the Breton March, cf. *RFA*: 106–9, s.a. 799; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 77–78.

¹⁷ This was Christmas Day of the year 800 — the listing of the event under 801 reflects the medieval Christian practice of beginning the new year at Christmas.

¹⁸ von Simson 1909: 3, note 4, indicates that the wording is obscure, but it could be a reference to the crown having the cross upon it; the artifact has not survived, but it seems a likely thing for the pope to bestow upon a Christian monarch. The *RFA* are not specific about the nature of the crown, saying only *Leo papa coronam capiti eius imposuit* (‘Pope Leo placed a crown on his head’), see *RFA*: 112–16, s.a. 801; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 81.

¹⁹ Empress Irene, sole ruler 797–802 and empress consort or regent from 775.

²⁰ Latin *terrae motus*, lit. ‘movement of the earth’.

²¹ A region northeast of the Weser near Bremen. This was a massive deportation effort of northeast Saxons into Francia to snuff the last vestiges of resistance to Frankish rule; cf. *RFA*: 118–19, s.a. 804; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 83–84; *Chronicon Moissiacense*: 307, s.a. 804; and Einhard’s *Vita Karoli Magni*: 9–11, nos 7–8; Noble 2009: 28–29, who numbers the deported people at 10,000 and uses this moment as the end of the Saxon wars, which he says lasted thirty-two years from 772–804.

Anno DCCCV. *Eodem anno cappanus, princeps Hunorum, ad Karolum imperatorem venit.*

Anno DCCCVI. *Mense Iulio profectus est imperator de Aquis ad Theodoniswillam.*

Anno DCCCVII. *Legatus regis Persarum nomine Abdella cum monachis de Ierusalem et Georgius, qui fuit abbas in monte Oliveti, hi ad imperatorem Karolum pervenerunt, munera deferentes, id est papilionem et alia multa.*

Anno DCCCVIII. *Eodem anno hiemps mollissima ac pestilens erat. Tunc misit filium suum Karolum ad Albiam vesano regi resistere.*

Anno DCCCVIII. *Karolus rex ad Aquis palatium concilium episcoporum magnum habuit de processione spiritus sancti.*

Anno DCCCX. *Sol et luna bis defecerunt, sol VI. Idus Iunii et luna XI Kal. Iulii, et Pippinus rex, filius imperatoris, migravit, et ille elephas, quem Aaron imperatori miserat, subita morte periit, et magna mortalitas boum et aliorum animalium erat in ipso anno, et*

In the Year 805. In the same year the *cappanus*, a leader of the Huns, came to Emperor Charles.²²

In the Year 806. In the month of July, the emperor left Aachen for Thionville.²³

In the Year 807. A legate of the king of the Persians by the name of Abdella, with monks from Jerusalem, and Georgius, who was abbot at Mount Olivet, came to the Emperor Charles bearing gifts, that is, a pavilion and many others.²⁴

In the Year 808. In the same year, there was a most mild and pestilential winter. Then he [Charlemagne] sent his son Charles to the Elbe to resist the mad king.²⁵

In the Year 809. King Charles held a great council of bishops at the palace at Aachen concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit.²⁶

In the Year 810. The sun and moon were eclipsed twice, the sun on 7 June and the moon on 21 June, and King Pippin the son of the emperor died,²⁷ and that elephant,

²² A *cappanus* was an Avar commander of a sort, possibly distinct from a khan, though arguments have been made for one title simply being a corruption of the other, or an intensification of the same. Sinor 1954: 174–84; RFA: 119–20, s.a. 805 and note 3. Recently, Steinhübel (2021: 68–73) carries forward the idea that this was a territorial ruler subject to the khan.

²³ This happened in 805, see RFA: 119–20, s.a. 805; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 84–85, which provides the additional detail that Charlemagne went via Thionville to the Vosges Mountains for a hunting trip, of which he was very fond, and then he returned again to Thionville to celebrate Christmas.

²⁴ A continuation of the diplomatic gift exchange begun in the 790s between Charlemagne and Harun al Rashid, Caliph at Baghdad — here ‘king of the Persians’.

²⁵ A great deal more military detail is presented in RFA: 125–27, s.a. 808; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 88–89. This expedition was conducted against Godofrid, king of the Danes (also called *vesano regi* ‘the mad king’ in RFA: 125, s.a. 808; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 88), who had moved into the land of the Obodrites, a Slavic people who resided across the eastern frontier of Saxony. They paid tribute to Carolingian rulers for much of the ninth century. Charlemagne feared that some attempt to attack Saxony would result and sent his son to ensure that it did not. Godofrid was murdered by a retainer in 810.

²⁶ The procession of the Holy Spirit — that is, how it relates to the other members of the Trinity, frequently named the *filioque* controversy for whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father or from the Father ‘and the Son’ (*filioque*). The literature on the subject is massive. A useful recent introduction is Siecienski 2010; for the 809 Council of Aachen, see Werminghoff 1906: 235–44.

²⁷ Latin *migravit*, here a typical euphemism for ‘died’, bearing the sense of ‘departed’, ‘went to the Lord’, ‘passed away’, etc. Pippin died 8 July, RFA: 132, s.a. 810; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 92.

hiemps valde dura.

Anno DCCCXI. *In ipso anno mittuntur ab imperatore nostro ad regem Grecorum legati ad Constantinopolim, id est Haida episcopus et alii duo.*

Anno DCCCXII. *Dedit Karolus imperator filio filii sui Bernhardo, filio Pippini regis, regnum Langobardorum, et, gratias omnipotenti Deo! tunc venerunt legati imperatoris nostri de Grecia, qui prenominati sunt, et simul legati cum eis Grecorum cum honorificis vel imperialibus muneribus ad Aquis palacium ad colloquium imperatoris, et dimissi sunt cum pace.*

Anno DCCCXIII. *Karolus imperator Lodewicum regem Aequitaniae, filium suum, constituit corona imperiali, et hiemps nimis dura.*

Anno DCCCXIII. *Beate memoriae gloriosissimus Karolus imperator, Domino vocante, V. Kal. Februarii de hac luce migravit. Et postea mense Martio venit de Aequitania Ludewicus imperator ad Aquis palacium, et venerunt illic ad eum legati Grecorum et aliarum gentium ad pacem confirmandam inter illos et Francos. Tunc demum ille imperator constituit filium suum regem super Equitaniem Pippinum.*

which Aaron²⁸ had sent to the emperor, died a sudden death, and there was a great mortality of cattle and other animals in that year and a very hard winter.

In the Year 811. In that very year, legates—that is, Bishop Haido and two others—were sent by our emperor to the king of the Greeks at Constantinople.²⁹

In the Year 812. Emperor Charles gave the realm of the Lombards to his grandson Bernard, son of King Pippin, and then—thanks be to omnipotent God!—the aforementioned legates of our emperor came from Greece, and with them likewise came legates of the Greeks with honours and imperial gifts, to a conference with the emperor at the palace at Aachen, and they were dismissed in peace.

In the Year 813. Emperor Charles set up his son Louis, King of Aquitaine, with the imperial crown, and the winter was excessively hard.³⁰

In the Year 814. The most glorious Emperor Charles of blessed memory, having been called by God, departed from this world³¹ on 28 January. And afterwards, in the month of March, Emperor Louis came from Aquitaine to the palace at Aachen, and in that place legates of the Greeks and other peoples came to him to confirm the peace between those peoples and the Franks. Then finally, the emperor set up his son Pippin as king over

²⁸ The Abbasid caliph, Harun al-Rashid, who predeceased the famous elephant Abul-Abbas in 809. The elephant had been a diplomatic gift from Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne. See *RFA*: 112–16, s.aa. 801, 802; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 81–83.

²⁹ *RFA*: 133–35, s.a. 811; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 93–94 reveals that these were Bishop Haido of Basel, Count Hugh of Tours, and Aio of Friuli; here in *AX* the *regem Grecorum* ‘King of the Greeks’ is to be identified as Emperor Nicephorus I, who would be killed in battle against the Bulgars in the same year.

³⁰ Charlemagne had established a succession plan in 806 called the *Divisio Regnorum* (Boretius 1883: 126–30, I.45), by which he divided the kingdom between his legitimate sons Charles, Pippin, and Louis, but all except Louis predeceased him. Thus, Charlemagne crowned Louis co-emperor with him in 813 to ensure a smooth transition of power upon what he correctly foresaw to be his impending demise.

³¹ Latin *de hac luce migravit*; literally, ‘migrated from this light’.

Anno DCCCXV. *Ludewicus imperator habuit conventum magnum in loco appellato Paderbrunnon in Saxonia. Stephanus papa mense Octobri venit in Franciam ad civitatem Remensium. Ibique apostolicus in dominico die fecit benedictionem imperialem super Ludewicum et coniugem eius Ermingardam.*

Anno DCCCXVI. *Ludewicus imperator direxit suum exercitum contra Sclavos, et adiuvante Deo victores extiterunt, et legati Grecorum venerunt ad imperatorem pacem confirmandam.*

Anno DCCCXVII. *Imperator Lotharium filium imperatorem constituit. Eodem anno mense Octobri igneae acies apparuerunt in caelo. Bernhardus filius Pippini regis molitur Italiae tyrannidem machinante Egithéo. Huius nefandum conatum ad nihilum deducitur, et tempus vertebatur in annum [...].*

Anno DCCCXVIII. *Bernhardus rex Langobardorum luminibus privatus est, et Theodulfus episcopus degradatus est Aurelianae civitatis.*

Anno DCCCXVIII. *Mense Februario Ludewicus imperator accepit sibi in*

Aquitaine.

In the Year 815. Emperor Louis held a great assembly in Saxony in the place called Paderborn. In the month of October, Pope Stephen came into Francia, to the city of Rheims. And there, on a Sunday, the pope performed the imperial blessing over Louis and his wife Ermengarde.

In the Year 816. Emperor Louis directed his army against the Slavs,³² and with the aid of God they emerged the victors, and legates of the Greeks came to the emperor, confirming peace.

In the Year 817. The emperor set up his son Lothar as emperor.³³ In the same year in the month of October, blades of fire appeared in heaven. Bernard the son of King Pippin built a tyranny in Italy by the machinations of Eggideo.³⁴ The nefarious attempt of this man was brought to nothing, and time was changed to the year [...].

In the Year 818. Bernard, King of the Lombards, was deprived of his eyes, and Bishop Theodulf of the city of Orléans was deposed.³⁵

In the Year 819. In the month of February, Emperor Louis took in marriage

³² Specifically, the Sorbs, cf. *RFA*: 143–44, s.a. 816; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 100–1.

³³ This was the *Ordinatio Imperii* (Boretius 1883: 270–73, I.136; Ubl *et al.* 2024: 32–47), the succession plan which laid out the proposed division of the kingdom between Louis' sons Lothar, Pippin, and Louis the German. Lothar was crowned co-emperor and would act as sole emperor after his father's death, as the annalist notes here, while his brothers would be sub-kings under Lothar — Pippin in Aquitaine and Louis in Bavaria. The plan would require altering after the birth of Charles the Bald to the emperor's second wife Judith in 823, on which see below.

³⁴ Eggideo/Achiteus, Count of Camerino and a prominent advisor of Bernard, who was blinded alongside Bernard in the following year. Apart from this, very little is known about him. *RFA*: 125–48, s.a. 817; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 101–4; Thegan: 210–13, XXII; Noble 2009: 205–6; Astronomer: 378–85, XXVIII; Noble 2009: 256–57; *Chronicon Moissiacense*: 312–13, s.aa. 817, 818; Brunner 1979: 97–109, specific mention of Eggideo on p. 100; Decker-Hauff 1955: 340–42.

³⁵ Bernard of Italy rebelled after being excluded from *Ordinatio Imperii* in 817. Louis crushed the rebellion swiftly, and Bernard was sentenced to death, but the emperor commuted the sentence to blinding, thus exhibiting the trope of royal mercy. Unfortunately for Bernard, the blinding operation killed him. Noble 1974: 315–26; Depreux 1992: 1–25; McKitterick 1983: 134–36.

coniugium Iudith ad imperatricem.

Anno DCCCXX. *Ludewicus imperator Carisaco placitum habuit.*

Anno DCCCXXI. *Ludewicus imperator dedit filio suo Lothario regi ad coniugium Ermingardam filiam Hugonis comitis Turonicorum, et hiemps erat valde dura.*

Anno DCCCXXII. *Ludewicus imperator dedit filio suo Lothario regnum Landobardorum.*

Anno DCCCXXIII. *Ludewicus imperator dedit Druoagoni fratri suo regimen et cathedram episcopalem Metensiae civitatis. Ebo episcopus pergit partibus Danorum una cum Wildericho episcopo. Eodem anno genuit Iudith Carolum.*

Anno DCCCXXIII. *Perrexerunt rex cum exercitu partibus Britanniæ, eam vastavit et reversus est in pace.*

Anno DCCCXXV. *Haistulfus archiepiscopus Magontiae civitatis obiit, et successit in locum eius Otgerus capellanus dominicus.*

Anno DCCCXXVI. *Ludewicus imperator habuit sinodum episcoporum ad Ingulenheim, et illic venit multitudo ad eum Nordmannorum, et princeps eorum nomine Herioldus baptizatus est et uxor eius, et cum eis plus quam CCC homines promiscui sexus. Ex eo tempore multa mala increverunt*

the Empress Judith.³⁶

In the Year 820. Emperor Louis held an assembly at Quierzy.

In the Year 821. Emperor Louis gave Ermengarde, daughter of Count Hugh of Tours, to his son King Lothar in marriage, and the winter was very hard.

In the Year 822. Emperor Louis gave the realm of the Lombards to his son Lothar.

In the Year 823. Emperor Louis gave control and the bishop's seat of the city of Metz to his brother Drogo.³⁷ Bishop Ebbo went to the lands of the Danes along with Bishop Wilderich.³⁸ In the same year Judith gave birth to Charles.³⁹

In the Year 824. The king went with an army into the lands of Brittany. He devastated them and returned in peace.⁴⁰

In the Year 825. Archbishop Haistulf of the city of Mainz died, and he was succeeded in that place by the Lord's chaplain Otgar.⁴¹

In the Year 826. Emperor Louis held a synod of bishops at Ingelheim, and in that place came to him a multitude of Northmen, and a leader of those men by the name Harald was baptised, as was his wife, and with them more than 400 people of both sexes.⁴² From that time many ills

³⁶ Ward 1990: 205–27. Ermengarde, first wife of Louis and mother of Lothar, Pippin, and Louis the German, had died on October 3, 818, see *RFA*: 148–49, s.a. 818; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 104.

³⁷ Half-brother; Drogo was an illegitimate son of Charlemagne and his concubine Regina; see Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni*: 21–23, no. 18; Noble 2009: 40–41.

³⁸ Ebbo, Archbishop of Rheims, and Wilderich, Bishop of Bremen.

³⁹ The future King Charles the Bald of West Francia, whose birth upset the earlier succession plan established in the 817 *Ordinatio Imperii* and for whom a kingdom would be created in 829.

⁴⁰ *RFA*: 164–67, s.a. 824; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 115–17 makes clear that this was a campaign of three armies: one led by Louis and one each by Pippin and Louis the German. This eased the logistical burden of supporting a large force, spread the armies out to devastate more territory more efficiently, and it gave his sons some on-the-job training for leading campaigns.

⁴¹ Otgar, Archbishop of Mainz until his death in 847.

⁴² Harald Klak, a king in Denmark until his deposition in 827, see *RFA*: 174–76, s.a. 827; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 121–22; Coupland 1998: 89–93; Melleno 2024: 84–101.

a gentilibus super aecclesiam catholicam.

Anno DCCCXXVII. *Venerunt corpora sanctorum Marcellini et Petri de Roma, et Ludewicus rex accepit in coniugium sororem Iudith imperatricis.*

Anno DCCCXXVIII. *Legati imperatoris, Ruodger episcopus cum sociis suis, Constantinopolin perrexerunt.*

Anno DCCCXXIX. *Erat sinodus episcoporum in tribus locis regni Lodewici imperatoris, et mense Augusto in Vangionensium civitate erat conventus magnus episcoporum. Et ibi tradidit imperator Karolo filio suo regnum Alisacinse et Coriae et partem Burgundiae.*

[no entry for Anno DCCCXXX (830)]

Anno DCCCXXXI. *Mense Octobri venit ad imperatorem Pippinus rex Aequitaniae et Bernhardus comes Barcenonae civitatis, qui infideles deputabantur, ac fidem iuraverunt; et Pippinus de Aquis nocte fugiens abscessit. Eodem mense eclipsis lunae facta est. Legati Sarracenorum venerunt ad imperatorem pacem confirmandam et cum pace reversi sunt.*

Anno DCCCXXXII. *Mense Aprili eclipsis*

grew up over the Catholic Church from the heathens.

In the Year 827. The bodies of Saints Marcellinus and Peter came from Rome,⁴³ and King Louis [the German] took in marriage the sister of the Empress Judith.⁴⁴

In the Year 828. Legates of the emperor, Bishop Roger and his associates, went to Constantinople.⁴⁵

In the Year 829. There was a synod of bishops in three places of the realm of Emperor Louis, and in the month of August, there was a great assembly of bishops in the city of Worms. And there, the emperor gave to his son Charles the realm of Alsace, Chur, and part of Burgundy.⁴⁶

[no entry for 830]

In the Year 831. In the month of October, Pippin, the king of Aquitaine, and Bernard, count of the city of Barcelona,⁴⁷ came to the emperor. Those men had been judged unfaithful, and they swore fidelity; but Pippin, fleeing, departed from Aachen in the night.⁴⁸ In the same month there was an eclipse of the moon. Legates of the Saracens came to the emperor confirming peace, and in peace they departed.⁴⁹

In the Year 832. In the month of April

⁴³ The much-celebrated translation of these relics to Seligenstadt was done at the behest of Einhard, famous author of the *Vita Karoli Magni*, which he recorded in his less-famous work *On the Translation and Miracles of the Relics of Saints Marcellinus and Peter*. For the original Einhard in *De Translatio*, see Waitz 1887: 238–64.

⁴⁴ This was Queen Emma, who would be the wife of Louis the German until she predeceased him by only a few months in 876. Their long marriage seems to have been relatively happy, as they produced eight children, and Louis the German is not recorded as having any mistresses or illegitimate offspring.

⁴⁵ I am unable to identify Bishop Roger here; *RFA*: 174–76, s.a. 828; Scholz and Rogers 1972: 122–24 states that the embassy was led by Bishop Halitgar of Cambrai and Abbot Ansfrid of Nonantola.

⁴⁶ This creation of a kingdom for the young Charles the Bald was a key undergirding factor behind the frequent rebellions by his half-brothers Lothar, Pippin, and Louis the German throughout the 830s.

⁴⁷ Bernard of Septimania, executed by Charles the Bald in 844 (below).

⁴⁸ Compare the account in *Astronomer*: 450–73, XLIII–XLVII; Noble 2009: 274–79 and in *AB*: 3, s.a. 831; Nelson 1991: 22–24.

⁴⁹ *AB*: 3, s.a. 831 includes the detail that the embassy was sent by al-Mamun, caliph of Baghdad and son of Harun al-Rashid.

lunae fuit; et postea aestivo tempore, Ludewico imperatore morante apud Magontiam civitatem, obviam venit ei filius eius Lodewicus rex Beguariae, rebellare paratus contra patrem, et non potuit, sed fugiens abscessit. Persequente autem eum patre usque ad Augustam civitatem, necessitate compulsus venit ad patrem et in pace dimissus est. Et inde rediens imperator ad Hispaniam capere filium suum Pippinum, sed non potuit.

Anno DCCCXXXIII. *Tempore enim aestivo convenerunt filii imperatoris in pago Alisacinse, Lutharius, Pippinus et Ludewicus, adducentes secum Gregorium papam. Ibique leudes imperatoris coniurationes suas postposuerunt, relinquentes autem eum solum, reversique sunt ad Lotharium, ei fidem iuramentis spoponderunt, et imperator vero illorum coniuge simul et regno privatus, merens adflictusque in dominium filiorum advenit. Qui miserunt eum in custodiam publicam in Suessionis civitate similiterque coniugem illius. Collatione autem eorum peracta, tripertitum est regnum Francorum, et domnus papa rediit in patriam suam, Lotharius mansit in Compendio. Ceteri vero reversi sunt unusquisque in sua.*

Anno DCCXXXIII. *Morante Ludewico imperatore in custodia, filius Ludewicus*

there was an eclipse of the moon. Afterwards, in summertime, with the emperor staying at the city of Mainz, his son Louis, King of Bavaria, came against him, prepared to rebel against his father, but he was unable to, and he departed fleeing. However, with his father pursuing him up to the city of Augsburg, compelled by necessity, he came to his father and was dismissed in peace. The emperor, returning thence to Hispania to capture his son Pippin, was unable to do it.⁵⁰

In the Year 833. Indeed, in the summertime, Lothar, Pippin, and Louis, the sons of the emperor, convened in the *pagus* Alsace, leading with them Pope Gregory [IV].⁵¹ There, the emperor's men, putting aside their alliances and leaving him alone, went over to Lothar, promising fidelity to him by oaths. Truly, the emperor was deprived of his wife and likewise his realm, and grieving and overthrown, he came into the power of his sons.⁵² They sent him into public custody in the city of Soissons and likewise his wife.⁵³ Moreover, with their [the sons'] conference completed, the realm of the Franks was divided in three parts, and the lord pope returned to his homeland, and Lothar remained in Compiègne. The others, however, returned each one to his own lands.

In the Year 834. With the emperor Louis remaining in custody, his son Louis [the

⁵⁰ These rebellions were prompted by the brother kings' dissatisfaction with the creation of a kingdom for their much younger half-brother Charles (see *s.a.* 829), as well as the machinations of Bernard of Septimania, on which see *AB*: 1–3, *s.a.* 830–831; Nelson 1991: 21–24; Astronomer: 450–65, XLIII–XLV; Thegan: 220–25, XXXVI–XXXVIII; Noble 2009: 274–77 and 208–10, respectively.

⁵¹ Pope Gregory had come from Italy with Lothar's force, see *AB*: 5–7, *s.a.* 833; Nelson 1991: 26–28. For analysis of his role in the negotiations, see de Jong 2019: 166–77.

⁵² The so-called 'Field of Lies' (*Campus Mentitus* in both Astronomer: 472–81, XLVIII, Thegan: 228–31, XLII; Noble 2009: 210–11 and 279–82, respectively), whose nomenclature reflects the oath-breaking by sons and magnates against Louis the Pious, which resulted in his capture and deposition when his men abandoned him on the field.

⁵³ Judith was sent to Tortona in Italy; Thegan: 228–31, XLII; Noble 2009: 210–11.

astute cogitans contra fratrem suum Lotharium, cui priori anno omnem fidem promiserat, insidias molitus est. Congregato exercitu suo festinus perrexit ad Suessiones patremque suum de claustris liberavit atque Iudith de custodia revocavit, direxeruntque aciem contra Mahtfridum atque Landbertum, principes Lotharii consules, ut eos vinctos ad se adducerent aut etiam gladio detruncarent. Quibus resistentibus magna persecutores strage ceciderunt. Ibi cum aliis plurimis occisi sunt Uodo comes et Theodo abbas. Ludewicus vero imperator et coniunx eius persecuti sunt Lotharium, qui tandem venit ad eos cum suis omnibus, et fide facta ex utraque parte, tamen non firma, rediit unusquisque in sua. Interea, dum haec agerentur, inruerunt pagani in vicum nominatissimum Dorestatum eumque inmani crudelitate vastaverunt; et eo tempore regnum Francorum infra semetipsum valde desolatum est, et infelicitas hominum multipliciter cotidie augebatur. Eodem anno aquae inundaverunt valde super terram.

Anno DCCCXXXV. *Mense Februario eclipsis lunae fuit. Ludewicus imperator cum convoco suo perrexit ad Burgundiam, ibique venit ad eum Pippinus filius eius. Interim*

German], thinking cleverly, planned a trap against his brother Lothar, to whom he had promised all fidelity in the previous year. With his army assembled, he [Louis the German] went swiftly to Soissons, and he liberated his father from the monastery, and he recalled Judith from custody.⁵⁴ They sent a force⁵⁵ against Matfrid and Lambert,⁵⁶ principal counsellors of Lothar, in order that they might bring them fettered to him [the emperor] or even behead them by the sword. When those men resisted, they cut down their attackers with great slaughter.⁵⁷ There, with many others, were killed Count Odo⁵⁸ and Abbot Theoto.⁵⁹ Emperor Louis and his wife, however, pursued Lothar, who finally came to them with all his men, and with good faith made from both sides, although not firmly, each returned to his own lands. Meanwhile, while these things were done, the pagans assaulted the most celebrated vicus Dorestad, and they devastated it with enormous cruelty, and at that time the kingdom of the Franks was greatly plundered within itself, and the misfortune of men was much increased daily. In the same year, the waters flooded strongly over the lands.

In the Year 835. In the month of February there was a lunar eclipse. Emperor Louis collected his men and moved into Burgundy, and there his son

⁵⁴ Louis the Pious had been sent to St Denis, Nithard: 5–7, I.4; Conti 2022: 93–95; Astronomer: 490–97, LII; Noble 2009: 284–86; also see de Jong 2009: 46–52.

⁵⁵ Latin *acies*, literally ‘blade’ or ‘edge’ but frequently used for battle-line or army.

⁵⁶ Matfrid, Count of Orleans (d. 836), and Lambert, former Count of Nantes (d. 837). See Depreux 1997: 329–31 and 288–91, respectively.

⁵⁷ This confusingly worded episode is clearer in Nithard: 7–8, I.5; Conti 2022: 95–97. The army that went against Matfrid and Lambert was led by Count Wido of the Breton March and derived from *omnes inter Sequanam et Ligerem degentes* ‘all men between the Seine and Loire’. Nithard makes clear that this very large army was unwieldy and poorly commanded, and thus it was defeated heavily by Lothar’s men and their smaller but more disciplined force. Wido was killed along with the others named by the Xanten annalist and Nithard.

⁵⁸ Count of Orléans, in which office he had replaced Matfrid in 828, Depreux 1997: 191.

⁵⁹ Abbot of St Martin at Tours (Depreux 1997: 387–88).

autem iterum invaserunt pagani partes Frisiae, et interfecta est de paganis non minima multitudo. Et iterum predaverunt Dorestatum.

Anno DCCCXXXVI. *Mense Februario incipiente nocte mirandae acies apparuerunt ab oriente in occidentem. Iterum eodem anno pagani Christianos invaserunt.*

Anno DCCCXXXVII. *Ingens turbo ventorum frequenter erumpebat, et stella cometes visa est nimium ex se mittens fervorem in oriente coram humanis obtutibus quasi per tres cubitos, et pagani vastaverunt Walicrum multasque feminas inde abduxerunt captivas cum infinita diversi generis pecunia.*

Anno DCCCXXXVIII. *Hiemps pluvialis et ventosa valde, et mense Ianuario XII. Kal. Februarii tonitruum auditum est, similiterque mense Februarii XIII. Kal. Martii tonitruum est auditum magnum, et nimis ardor solis terram urebat, et in quibusdam partibus terrae motus factus est, et ignis forma draconis in aere visus est. Eodem anno heretica pravitas orta est. Eodem anno V. nocte ante natale Domini fragor tonitruum magni auditus est et fulguris visus, et multis modis miseria et calamitas hominum cotidie augebatur.*

Anno DCCCXXXVIII. *VII. Kal. Ianuarius ingens venti turbo ortus est, ita ut fluctus maris valde inundabant supra terminos et litus, miserabiliter innumerabilem turmam humani generis in villis et vicis*

Pippin came to him. In the meanwhile, however, the pagans invaded the lands of Frisia again, and no small number of the pagans were killed. And again, they pillaged Dorestad.

In the Year 836. In the month of February, in the early night, miraculous beams appeared from east to west. In the same year, the pagans attacked the Christians again.

In the Year 837. An enormous whirlwind frequently burst forth, and a comet was seen in the east before the human gaze, sending forth from itself excess heat, as if three cubits long.⁶⁰ And the pagans devastated Walcheren,⁶¹ from which place they carried off many women as captives and infinite plunder of various sorts.

In the Year 838. An intensely rainy and windy winter, and on 21 January, thunder was heard, and likewise on 16 February a great thunder was heard, and the heat of the sun burnt the land excessively, and in certain parts there was an earthquake,⁶² and fire in the form of a dragon was seen in the sky. In the same year a heretical depravity arose.⁶³ In the same year, five nights before the birth of our Lord, the noise of a great thunder was heard and lightning was seen, and by many measures the miseries and calamities of men increased daily.

In the Year 839. On 26 December a great whirlwind arose,⁶⁴ such that the waves of the sea flooded over its bounds and the shore, and pitifully, they swallowed up an innumerable throng of humankind in the

⁶⁰ That is, Halley's Comet's very long tail appeared to be around three cubits long, accounting for the perspective.

⁶¹ An island at this time, now adjoined to the mainland.

⁶² AF: 29, s.a. 838; Reuter 1992: 15 says this occurred near Lorsch, Worms, Speyer, and Ladenburg.

⁶³ Some of the work of Amalarius (often 'of Metz') concerning predestination, which was condemned at Quierzy in the same year thanks to the efforts of Florus of Lyons. Refer to Werminghoff 1908: 768–82; Gillis 2017; and for a contemporary glimpse at the complex debate see Genke and Gumerlock 2010, with the literature there.

⁶⁴ 26 December, 838, as the new year began at Christmas (cf. above, s.a. 801).

circumpositis simul cum edificiis consumpserunt. Classes enim in mari vertentes disruptae sunt, et flamma ignis supra totum mare visa est. Eodem anno VIII. Kal. Aprilis admirandae acies apparuerunt vesperscente die in caelo, in modum domus rotundae totum caeli ambitum circumducentes. Eo anno venerunt corpora sanctorum Felicissimi et Agapiti atque sanctae Felicitatis in locum qui dicitur Fredenna.

Anno DCCCXL. *Acies consimiles apparuerunt per duas simul noctes sicut hae quae in priore anno fuerunt. Et tertia Maii, id est tertia die rogationum, hora nona eclipsis solis facta est, et stellae manifestae sunt visae in caelo velut noctis tempore. Et postea mense Iunio, XI. Kal. Iulii Ludowicus imperator obiit in insula quadam parva Hereni fluminis contra villam regiam que vocatur Ingulnheim, absentibus liberis coniugeque eius, et ad Sanctum Arnulfum conditus est. Postea vero Lotharius imperator profectus est de Italia in Franciam concessum sibi a patre possidere regnum. Cui contra veniens predictus Ludewicus, frater illius, iterum intercapere regnum orientale; sed superveniente Lothario ultra Renum flumen, vix sine bello discesserunt a se. Postea vero*

surrounding villas and villages, together with their buildings. Indeed, ships were broken apart, overturned into the sea, and a flame of fire was seen over the whole sea. In the same year on 25 March, miraculous beams appeared in the evening in heaven, in the shape of a round house in a ring around the whole circuit of heaven.⁶⁵ In the same year, the bodies of Saints Felicissimus and Agapitus,⁶⁶ and also Saint Felicitas,⁶⁷ came to the place which is called Fredenna.⁶⁸

In the year 840. Similar beams appeared for two consecutive nights, just like those which occurred in the previous year. And on the third of May, that is the third day of Rogations,⁶⁹ in the ninth hour there was a solar eclipse, and the stars were clearly visible in heaven just as if it was nighttime. And afterwards on 21 June,⁷⁰ the Emperor Louis died on a certain small island in the Rhine River, opposite the royal villa which is called Ingelheim, with his wife and children elsewhere, and he was buried at St Arnulf.⁷¹ Afterwards, Emperor Lothar came from Italy into Francia, to take hold of the realm given to him by his father. His aforementioned brother Louis, coming against him, again seized the realm to the east, but with Lothar arriving across the Rhine River, they barely departed from

⁶⁵ A description of a *parhelion*, a 'sun dog' or 'solar halo'.

⁶⁶ Deacons of Pope Sixtus II, who were martyred along with him in the persecutions of Emperor Valerian in 258.

⁶⁷ St Felicitas of Rome, second-century martyr and mother of the Seven Holy Brothers.

⁶⁸ Vreden, Westphalia. von Simson 1909: 11, note 1.

⁶⁹ The eclipse occurred 5 May, which was the third day of Rogations in 840. The *tercia Maii* is presumably 'three days before the nones of May' with the 'nones' missing due to error, which would give the correct date of 5 May, three days (counting inclusively as in the Roman reckoning) before the nones of May (7 May). Cf. Andrew of Bergamo, *Historia*: 226.

⁷⁰ Actually 20 June, cf. Astronomer: 550–55, LXIII; Noble 2009: 301–2; *AB*: 24, s.a. 840; Nelson 1991: 48–49; and *AF*: 30–31, s.a. 840. Nelson presents 26 June in her *AB* translation, while the Latin edition shows *XI. Kalendas Iulii* ('eleven days before the Kalends [first] of July' — counting inclusively in the Roman manner).

⁷¹ That is, the church of St Arnulf at Metz, von Simson 1909: 11, note 4 and *AF*: 30–31, s.a. 840.

Lotharius pergens cum exercitu contra Karolum. Et Ludewicus iterum congregato exercitu litus Rheni possidens. Quo comperto, Lotharius movens exercitum et clam apud Wormatiam civitatem predicto flumine transcenso, iterum Ludewicus fugiens in Beiorariam.

Anno DCCCXLI. *Videns Ludewicus, quod germanum superare nequibat, iunxitque se ad Karolum, ut per eius solatium predictum superaret imperatorem. Quod cum Lotharius percepisset, moto cum exercitu venit adversus eos in locum qui dicitur Alciodorum, et, quod dici dolor est, magna se cede ibidem Christiani in invicem debachati sunt. Eodem anno V. Kal. Augusti, feria V, claro sole circuli tres apparuerunt in caelo, similes visioni arcus, ambientes se alterutrum; sed minimus solem sibi medium circumcingens, qui tamen colore ceteris plenissimus videbatur. Maximus in occidente, cuius extrema pars solem tangere videbatur. Medius in aquilone, qui predictos duos aequaliter ambiebat. Sed tamen medius et maximus plus tenues minimo videbantur. Et nubecula parva in oriente et aquilone eadem*

each other without war.⁷² Afterward, however, Lothar proceeded with an army against Charles. And again, Louis with his army assembled, occupied the bank of the Rhine. Having learned this, Lothar moved his army, and secretly crossed the aforementioned river at the city of Worms, and Louis fled a second time into Bavaria.⁷³

In the Year 841. Louis, seeing that he was not able to conquer his full brother, joined himself to Charles [his half-brother], so that with his help, he might conquer the aforementioned emperor.⁷⁴ When Lothar had learned this, moving with his army he came against them in the place which is called Auxerre, and — what pain it is to say — in the same place the Christians raged against themselves with great slaughter.⁷⁵ In the same year on 28 July, a Thursday, with a bright sun, there appeared in heaven three circles similar to the appearance of a rainbow, going around each other; but the smallest was encircling the sun in the middle, which was still seen more clearly in colour than the others. In the west was the largest one, of which the furthest part seemed to touch the sun. In the north was

⁷² Louis the German had been stripped of his East Frankish territories other than Bavaria by Louis the Pious after a serious argument between the two in 838. He rebelled, and just before his death, Louis the Pious had chased him out of the Rhineland with a large army. Thus, Louis the German was technically still deprived of all but Bavaria upon his father's death, and the annalist here can say that he 'seized' his eastern realm. Cf. *AF*: 29–31 and *AB*: 15–24, s.a.a. 838–840; Reuter 1992: 15–18 and Nelson 1991: 38–49, respectively; Nithard: 8–13, I.6–8; Conti 2022: 99–107.

⁷³ For discussion of these maneuvers, see Nithard: 13–21, II.1–7; Conti 2022: 107–27. This flight into Bavaria took place in April of 841, on which see *AF*: 31–33, s.a. 841; Reuter 1992: 18–20; Nithard: 20–21, II.7; Conti 2022: 125–27. Louis did not wish to fight his brother in a pitched battle, and once his Rhenish garrison had been compromised, Louis retreated to avoid battle against his brother's larger force.

⁷⁴ In order to join forces with Charles, Louis had to defeat Lothar's Rhenish garrisons under Adalbert of Metz, which he accomplished at the Ries on 13 May, killing Adalbert and many others near the Wörnitz River. *AF*: 31–33, s.a. 841; Reuter 1992: 18–20; *AB*: 24–27, s.a. 841; Nelson 1991: 49–52; Nithard: 23–24, II.9; Conti 2022: 129–33; Goldberg 2006: 99–101.

⁷⁵ This was the Battle of Fontenoy, the chief battle of the Carolingian civil war era, fought 25 June, 841, which was universally remembered by the extant sources as a disaster for the Franks. Louis and Charles defeated Lothar and nephew Pippin II of Aquitaine, but both armies suffered monstrous casualties, and the battle was indecisive, since the conflict was not settled until the Treaty of Verdun in 843. See the parallel accounts in *AF*: 31–33, s.a. 841; Reuter 1992: 18–20; *AB*: 24–27, s.a. 841; Nelson 1991: 49–52; Nithard: 24–27, II.10; Conti 2022: 133–41; Regino's *Chronicon*: 75, s.a. 841; MacLean 2009: 131–32; and see Flynn 2022; Goldberg 2006: 94–104.

specie circulorum longe ab his quasi in uno loco claruit. Ante horam diei terciam visi sunt et usque post meridiem permanserunt. Eodem anno per totam Saxoniam potestas servorum valde excreverat super dominos suos, et nomen sibi usurpaverunt Stellingas et multa inrationabilia commiserunt. Et nobiles illius patriae a servis valde afflicti et humiliati sunt.

Anno DCCCXLII. *Quadragesimali tempore stella in occidente maiorem consueto radium ab oriente habens. Et Lotharius vastata Gallia rediens ad Aquis. Et postea aestivo tempore Ludewicus et Karolus, predato pago Vangionensium, per angustum iter asperum Gronneorum Confluentes civitatem petierunt. Ibiq[ue] hostiliter venit Lotharius contra eos. Sed cum vidisset, quod a suis deceptus esset, fugiens usque Lingonas pervenit ibique viribus resumptis consedit. Prefati vero reges, vastata omni regione Ripuariorum, insequentes eum usque ad predictum locum. Illicque, intervenientibus viris strenuis, iterum tripertito regno Francorum, in pace, tamen non firma, discesserunt a se, Lotharius ad Aquis,*

the middle one, which encircled the two aforementioned. But still the middle and the largest seemed weaker than the smallest. And a small cloud in the east and the north shone with the same splendour of the circles, far from these, as if in one place.⁷⁶ These were seen before the third hour of the day and remained until the afternoon. In the same year through all Saxony the power of the servants increased greatly over their lords, and they usurped for themselves the name *Stellingas*, and committed many irrational acts. And the nobles of that land were afflicted and humiliated greatly by the servants.⁷⁷

In the Year 842. In the time of Lent there was a star in the west having a greater ray than usual from the east. And Lothar, having devastated Gaul, returned to Aachen. And afterwards, in the summertime, Louis and Charles, having pillaged the *pagus* of Worms, came by a narrow and difficult road of *Gronneorum*⁷⁸ to the city of Koblenz. There Lothar came as an enemy against them. But when he had seen that he was deceived by his men, he fled to Langres, and there he encamped, having recovered his strength.⁷⁹ Truly, the aforementioned kings [Louis and Charles], having devastated the whole region of the Ripuarians,⁸⁰ pursued him [Lothar] to the aforementioned place. And in that place, with vigorous mediation by their men,

⁷⁶ The description is likely a complex solar halo, but most important to the annalist, this was a portentous vision in the sky. The three circles likely represent the three parts of Francia; the small cloud probably refers to the Viking raids to come. It might also be the *Stellinga* of the same year, though this rebellion did not have nearly the lasting implications of the Viking raids. For discussion of an ancient parallel occurrence, see Woods 2012. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for the reference.

⁷⁷ The Saxon *Stellinga* rebellion. I have translated *servi* as ‘servants’, rather than ‘slaves’, since the rebels were not necessarily of slave status, though the Latin means either. See Goldberg 1995.

⁷⁸ There is evidently manuscript corruption here which obscures the meaning; see von Simson, 1909: 12, notes b and 6, and cf. Rau 1969: 347, note 1, who opts for ‘Hunsrück’.

⁷⁹ *AF*: 33–34 and *AB*: 27–29, both s.a. 842; Reuter 1992: 20–21 and Nelson 1991: 52–55, respectively; and Nithard: 38–39, III.7: Conti 2022: 167–69 confirm the desertion of the garrisons intended to keep Louis and Charles from crossing the Moselle.

⁸⁰ That is, the middle Rhine around Koblenz.

Karolus in Galliam, Ludewicus in Saxoniam et servos Saxonum superbe elatos nobiliter afflixit et ad propriam naturam restituit.

Anno DCCCXLIII. *Prefati III reges miserunt legatos suos proceres, unusquisque ex parte sua, ut iterum per descriptas mansas aequae tripertirent regnum Francorum. Cumque et inter illos dissensio facta est, venerunt ipsi reges in unum locum et dissonantiam illorum coadunaverunt, et separati sunt a se. Eodem anno Iudhit imperatrix, mater Karoli, predata a filio substantia omni Turonis civitate migravit a seculo.*

Anno DCCCXLIII. *Gregorius papa migravit de seculo, et successit in locum illius Sergius papa. Et Bernhardus comes a Karolo est occisus. Et Pippinus rex Aquitaniae, filius Pippini, una cum filio Bernhardi hostem Karoli valde prostravit. Ibique Hugo interfectus est abbas. Eodem tempore*

again dividing the realm of the Franks into three parts,⁸¹ they departed from one another in peace, although not a firm [peace], Lothar to Aachen, Charles into Gaul, and Louis into Saxony, and he crushed the haughty servants of the Saxons nobly, and restored [things] to their proper nature.⁸²

In the Year 843. The aforementioned three kings sent out their noble legates, each from their own parts, so that again by surveying the estates they might divide the realm of the Franks three equal ways.⁸³ And when there was dissent among those men, the kings themselves came together in one place and united the discrepancies, and they [the realms] were divided by them.⁸⁴ In the same year Empress Judith, mother of Charles, with all her wealth plundered by her son, departed from the world at the city of Tours.

In the Year 844. Pope Gregory [IV] departed from the world, and Pope Sergius [II] succeeded in his place. And Count Bernard was killed by Charles.⁸⁵ And King Pippin [II] of Aquitaine, son of Pippin [I], together with the son of Bernard, vigorously defeated the army of Charles.⁸⁶

⁸¹ A proposed division plan, the terms of which were that 120 agents should be deployed to survey and divide the kingdom as equally as possible; Nithard: 46–48, IV.5; Conti 2022: 185–89. This ultimately resulted in the Treaty of Verdun in 843.

⁸² The *Stellinga* of the previous year — note the annalist’s moralising tone and clear sympathy with the nobles and the king over the rebels.

⁸³ In reference to the 120-man survey arranged in the previous year.

⁸⁴ The Treaty of Verdun, which has not survived, though the basic terms are described by AB: 29–30, s.a. 843; Nelson 1991: 55–56, indicated that Louis the German received all the lands east of the Rhine plus the important lands around Mainz, Worms, and Speyer; Lothar was given the imperial title, Italy and everything between the Rhine, Scheldt, and Rhône; and Charles received the lands to the west of Lothar’s. Pippin II continued to rule in Aquitaine but only as a subking under Charles, which prompted his rebellion the following year. Goldberg 2006: 113–16; Nelson 1992: 132–35.

⁸⁵ Bernard of Septimania, on whom see above, s.a. 831, and whose wife Dhuoda wrote the *Liber Manualis* of advice for their son William (Dutton 2009: 336–44).

⁸⁶ 7 June (AF: 34–35, s.a. 844; Reuter 1992: 22–23), at the *pagus* of Angoulême, AB: 30–32, s.a. 844; Nelson 1991: 57–60, which adds the detail that this army was *en route* to reinforce Charles’s siege of Toulouse before being massacred by Pippin II’s forces.

Ludewicus rex perrexit in Winithos cum exercitu. Ibique unus ex regibus eorum interiit, Gestimus nomine, reliqui vero fidem prebentes veniebant ad eum. Quam illo absente statim mentientes. Post haec autem Lotharius, Ludewicus atque Karolus convenerunt ad Thiedenhofe et post conlationem eorum in pace discesserunt a se.

Anno DCCCXLV. *Bis in pago Wormaciense terre motus factus est. Primo sequenti nocte palmarum, secundo in nocte sancta resurrectionis Christi. Eodem anno multis in locis gentiles Christianos invaserunt, sed cesi sunt ex eis a Fresionibus plus quam XII. Alia pars eorum Galliam petierunt, ibique ceciderunt ex eis plus quam sexcenti viri. Sed tamen propter desidiam Karoli dedit eis multa milia ponderum auri et argenti, ut irent extra Galliam, quod et fecerunt. Tamen monasteria sanctorum plurimorum diruta sunt, et multos Christianos captivos abduxerunt. His ita*

And there Abbot Hugh⁸⁷ was killed. At the same time King Louis went against the Wends⁸⁸ with his army. And there he killed one of their kings, by the name Goztomuizli,⁸⁹ and truly the remaining ones, offering fidelity, came to him.⁹⁰ With him [Louis] gone, immediately they reneged on this [promise]. After this, however, Lothar, Louis, and Charles convened at Thionville and after the conference they departed from each other in peace.⁹¹

In the Year 845. Twice in the *pagus* of Worms, there was an earthquake. The first came in the night following Palm Sunday, the second in the holy night of the resurrection of Christ.⁹² In the same year, in many places the pagans attacked the Christians, but from those men [the pagans], more than 12[000] were slain by the Frisians.⁹³ Another party of those people [Vikings] attacked Gaul, and there more than six hundred of those men fell. But still, on account of the idleness of Charles, he gave them many thousands of pounds of gold and silver, in order that they should go out of Gaul, which they

⁸⁷ Hugh, Abbot of St Quentin; cf. *AB*: 30–32 and *AF*: 34–35, both s.a. 844; Nelson 1991: 57–60 and Reuter 1992: 22–23. Numerous other counts, abbots, and bishops were killed here, for which see *AB*: 30–32, s.a. 844.

⁸⁸ An inexact term used indiscriminately by Carolingian annalists to mean ‘Slavs’. *AX* and *AB* are especially prone to its use as esp. *AB*: 56–61, s.a. 862; Nelson 1991: 97–104, specifically 102, note 22, *Winodos qui appellantur* [...] ‘the Wends who are called [the Obodrites]’ (as noted by Nelson, the manuscript is missing the precise designation given here in brackets;), showcasing the nonspecific use, while *AF* tends to name the peoples across the eastern frontier more precisely. In this case, the campaign was waged against the Obodrites, across the far northeastern border.

⁸⁹ Goztomuizli, whom Louis the German replaced with Carolingian client leaders (*duces*); *AF*: 34–35, s.a. 844; Reuter 1992: 22–23.

⁹⁰ *AB*: 30–32, specifically p. 31, s.a. 844; Nelson 1991: 57–60, specifically 59 calls them *regulos* (*reguli*, m.nom. pl. ‘petty kings’ or ‘kinglets’).

⁹¹ Hartmann 1984: 27–35, III.6 ‘Yütz bei Diedenhofen, Oct. 844’.

⁹² 22/23 and 28/29 March, respectively, per the marginal note in von Simson 1909: 14.

⁹³ Regardless of whether the number is twelve or twelve thousand, it is ridiculous, since twelve is too few to be worth reporting (and an author who was estimating would probably say more than ten rather than twelve), and 12,000 is an outrageous exaggeration, typical of medieval chronicles. Perhaps 1200 would be a reasonable figure for the Frisian levy to deal with in the absence of royal assistance, as they were frequently reported to do; see s.a. 835 above, s.a. 873 below, and cf. *AF*: 77–81, s.a. 873; Reuter 1992: 69–73 for an especially prominent episode of effective Frisian resistance.

gestis, Ludewicus rex congregato exercitu magno iter iniit ad Winodos. Quod gentiles cum cognovissent, e contra legatos direxerunt in Saxoniam, et miserunt ei munera et obsides et petierunt pacem. At ille, concessa pace, reversus est de Saxonia. Postea vero ingenti clade percussi sunt predones, in qua et princeps sceleratorum, qui Christianos et loca sancta predaverat, nomine Reginheri Domino percutiente interiit. Consilio enim inito miserunt sortes, a quo deorum suorum salutem consequi debuissent; sed sortes salubriter non ceciderunt. Suadente autem eos quodam captivo Christiano, ut coram deo Christianorum sortem ponerent, quod et fecerunt, et salubriter sors eorum cecidit. Tunc rex eorum nomine Rorik una cum omni populo gentilium XIII dies a carne et medone abstinuit, et cessavit plaga, et omnes Christianos captivos, quos habebant, ad patriam propriam dirigunt.

did.⁹⁴ However, the monasteries of many saints were destroyed, and they abducted many Christian captives. Thus, with these deeds done, King Louis summoned a great army and began a campaign⁹⁵ against the Wends.⁹⁶ When the pagans had learned this, they sent legates toward him into Saxony, and they sent him gifts and hostages and sought peace.⁹⁷ And conceding peace, he [Louis] returned from Saxony.⁹⁸ After this, a great plague struck the pirates, in which the leader of those criminals by the name of Ragnar,⁹⁹ who had plundered Christians and holy places, died, struck down by the Lord.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, beginning a council, they [the pirates] cast lots, [to determine] from which of their gods they ought to seek health,¹⁰¹ but the lots did not fall beneficially. However, they were persuaded by a certain Christian captive, that they ought to cast a lot before the god of the Christians, which they did, and the lot fell beneficially. Then the king of those men by the name Roric,¹⁰² together with all the people of the pagans, abstained from meat and mead for fourteen days, and the plague ceased, and they sent back all the Christian captives, whom they

⁹⁴ Although the policy was obviously unpopular, as reflected in the entry here, Charles' tribute payments to the Vikings were perhaps cheaper and more effective than trying to muster resistance, since the fast-moving raiders were often gone by the time the royal army arrived to deal with them. See especially Coupland, 1999.

⁹⁵ Latin *iter*, literally 'road' or 'journey', but the military context renders 'campaign' more sensible.

⁹⁶ Here, the Obodrites, who were in rebellion again, as the entry for 844 indicated began almost as soon as the king had left after pacifying them and killing Goztomuizli in the previous year; and cf. *AF*: 34–35, s.aa. 844, 845; Reuter 1992: 22–24.

⁹⁷ This was the assembly at Paderborn, where Louis received envoys from Bulgars, Slavs (Obodrites, as here), and Northmen; *AF*: 35, s.a. 845; Reuter 1992: 23–24.

⁹⁸ Likely to the important palace at Regensburg, where he had been before the assembly, as he issued a charter there on 3 September, per Kehr 1934: 44. Regensburg usually served as the Louis the German's base of operations for campaigns across the eastern frontier.

⁹⁹ Sometimes identified with Ragnar Lodbrok of saga fame (as Dutton 2009: 845 has done without comment), but at least he shares the name; Cooijmans 2020: 166, Table VI.6.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *AB*: 32–33, s.a. 845 for the significant raiding that took place this year on the Seine and a parallel account of plague and divine judgment against the raiders.

¹⁰¹ That is, a cure for the plague.

¹⁰² Roric of Dorestad, on whom see esp. *AF*: 39–41, s.a. 850; Reuter 1992: 30–32; Cooijmans 2020: 166, Table VI.6.

Anno DCCCXLVI. *Consueto Norhtmanni Ostraciam et Westraciam vastaverunt et vicum Dorestatum cum allis duabus villis incenderunt igni, vidente Lothario imperatore, cum esset in Noviomago castro, sed scelus ulcisci nequiverat. Illi autem ingenti preda hominum atque facultatum oneratis classibus reversi sunt in patriam. Eodem anno ivit Ludewicus de Saxonia contra Winidos ultra Albiam. Ipse vero cum exercitu suo contra Boemmanos perrexit, quos nos Beuwinitha vocamus, sed periculose valde; Karolus contra Britannos, sed non profuit. Eodem tempore, quod sine grandi merore nulli dicendum vel audiendum est, mater cunctarum ecclesiarum, basilica sancti Petri apostoli, a Mauris vel a Sarracenis, qui iam pridem Beneventaniam consederant, capta atque predata est, et omnes Christianos, quos foris Romam repperierunt, intus et foris eiusdem aeccliesiae occiderunt. Reclusos etiam viros et mulieres abduxerunt. Altare sancti Petri cum aliis multis detraxerunt, et afflictio Christianorum propter scelera eorum cotidie hinc inde orta est. Sergius papa migravit ex hac luce.*

Anno DCCCXLVII. *Defuncto Sergio memoria apostolicae sedis minime ad aures*

were holding, to their [the Christians'] own lands.¹⁰³

In the Year 846. In the usual manner, the Northmen devastated Ostergau and Westergau,¹⁰⁴ and they burned with fire the vicus Dorestad with two other estates, with Emperor Lothar seeing it, since he was in the fortress at Nijmegen, but he was unable to avenge the crime. Those men, however, returned to their homeland with enormous spoils in people [captives] and supplies loaded upon their ships. In the same year Louis went from Saxony across the Elbe against the Wends. He himself went with his army against the Bohemians, whom we call *Beuwinitha*, but with great danger;¹⁰⁵ Charles went against the Bretons, but he did not profit.¹⁰⁶ In the same time — which cannot be said nor heard without great mourning — the mother of all churches, the basilica of St Peter the Apostle was captured and plundered by the Moors or the Saracens, who had long since occupied Benevento, and all of the Christians, whom they discovered outside Rome, they killed, both within and outside the same church. And also they abducted all the recluses, men and women.¹⁰⁷ They dragged down the altar of Saint Peter with many other things, and from here onwards, the affliction of the Christians grew daily on account of their crimes.¹⁰⁸ Pope Sergius departed from this world.

In the Year 847. With Sergius dead, too little news of the apostolic seat reached our

¹⁰³ Cf. the account of this episode in *AB*: 32–33, s.a. 845; Nelson 1991: 60–62, which is based upon the *Translatio Sancti Germani Parisiensis*, here see *Analecta Bollandiana*: 91–92, chs 30–31.

¹⁰⁴ Both in Frisia; cf. von Simson 1909: 15, note 4.

¹⁰⁵ Louis's army certainly suffered at the hands of the Bohemians on his return march, but the initial campaign was directed against Moravia. *AF*: 36, s.a. 846; Reuter 1992: 24–25; Goldberg 2006: 138–42.

¹⁰⁶ For the result was a treaty see *AB*: 33–34, s.a. 846; Nelson 1991: 62–63.

¹⁰⁷ That is, residents at the monastery, monks and otherwise.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. the accounts in *AB*: 33–34 and *AF*: 36, both s.a. 846; Nelson 1991: 62–63 and Reuter 1992: 62–63, respectively.

nostras pervenit. Hereban magister et abbas de Fuldo defuncto Otgero episcopo archiepiscopus et successor eius effectus est atque sollempniter electus. De cetero Nordmanni Christianos hinc inde vastaverunt et contra Sigirum et Liutharium comites bellum fecerunt, et ultra vicum Dorestatum contra flumen Reni per miliaria novem remigaverunt usque ad vicum Meginhardi, et ibidem facta preda reversi sunt.

Anno DCCCXLVIII. II. Nonas Februarii *ad vesperum fulgur emicuit et tonitruum auditum est, et gentiles Christianis, ut consueverant, nocuerunt. Eodem anno Ludewicus rex habuit conventum populi apud Magontiam, et secta quaedam in sinodo episcoporum inlata est a quibusdam monachis de predestinatione omnipotentis Dei. Qui convicti et coram omni populo contumeliis verberum affecti reversi sunt in Galliam, unde ierant, et Deo gratias! inlesus permansit status aecclesiae.*

Anno DCCCXLVIII. *Infirmante Ludewico rege, hostis illius de Beioaria iter arripuit in Boemmanos; sed multis ex eis ibidem interfectis, valde humiliati reversi sunt in patriam. Gentilitas vero consueto ab*

ears.¹⁰⁹ With Bishop Otgar dead, Rabanus¹¹⁰ the master and abbot at Fulda was made his successor as archbishop and solemnly elected. Concerning other things, the Northmen from this point forward ravaged the Christians and made war against Counts Sigirus and Liutharius,¹¹¹ and they [the Northmen] rowed nine miles beyond the vicus Dorestad against the current of the Rhine, up to the vicus of Meginhard,¹¹² and having pillaged that place they returned.

In the Year 848. On 4 February in the evening lightning burst forth and thunder was heard, and the pagans injured the Christians, as they were accustomed to do. In the same year, King Louis held an assembly of the people at Mainz, and a certain sect¹¹³ arose in a synod of bishops from certain monks concerning the predestination of omnipotent God.¹¹⁴ Those men were convicted and having been afflicted by the indignity of lashings before the whole populace, returned to Gaul, whence they had come, and — thanks be to God! — the status of the church remained uninjured.

In the Year 849. With King Louis ill, his army took the road from Bavaria against the Bohemians, but many of them were killed in that place, and with great humiliation

¹⁰⁹ A reference to the emergency ordination of Leo IV without consulting Emperor Lothar, since Rome was in the process of recovering from the sack of 846 by the Saracen forces mentioned here. Leo then presided over a massive rebuilding project, including the extension of the city's physical defences with the Leonine Wall.

¹¹⁰ Rabanus Maurus, former Abbot of Fulda and now Archbishop of Mainz until his death in 856.

¹¹¹ I have been unable to identify these men; Dümmler 1862: 288, called them 'Frisian Counts', but the evidence seems circumstantial given the focus on Dorestad here.

¹¹² Meinerswijk in the Netherlands.

¹¹³ That is, a heresy or schism.

¹¹⁴ The heresy of Gottschalk, on which cf. *AF*: 37–38, s.a. 848; Reuter 1992: 27–29; and *AB*: 36–37, s.a. 849; Nelson 1991: 66–68. Regarding this passage Nelson (1992: 67 and note 2) believes it was a later interpolation by Hincmar, to whom Gottschalk was delivered after his conviction. Hincmar has placed the whole episode in 849, though the Mainz synod and initial condemnation did take place in 848. On Gottschalk see especially Gillis 2017.

aquilone Christianitatem nocuit, magis magisque convaluit; sed fastidiosum est enarrare.

Anno DCCCL. *Kalendis Ianuarii, id est octabas Domini, ... eodem die ad vesperum tonitruum auditum est magnum, et fulgur nimium visum est, et inundatio aquarum ipsa hieme humanum genus affligebat. Et sequenti aestate calor nimium solis terram urebat. Leo papa apostolicae sedis, vir electus, castellum circa basilicam sancti Petri apostolici construxit. Mauri vero urbes maritimas in Italia hinc inde vastaverunt. Rorik Nordmannus, frater iam dicti Herioldi iunioris, qui prius a Lothario dehonestatus fugit, Dorestatum repetit, multa mala Christianis fraudulenter intulit. Eodem anno inter duos fratres, Lotharium imperatorem et Ludewicum regem, tanta pax erat, ut in Hosninge simul plurimos dies cum paucis venationi operam dederunt, ita ut multi hoc facto mirarentur, et in pace discesserunt a se.*

Anno DCCCLI. *De Roma venerunt corpora sanctorum in Saxoniam, Alexandri, unius ex septem fratribus, Romani atque*

they returned to their homeland.¹¹⁵ Truly, the pagans from the north, in the typical manner, injured the Christians, and they thrived more and more; but it is nauseating to describe.

In the Year 850. On the first of January, that is the octave of the Lord,¹¹⁶ [here something may be missing from the manuscript]¹¹⁷ [...] on the same day in the evening a great thunder was heard, and excessive lightning was seen, and that winter a flood afflicted humanity. And in the following summer, the excessive heat of the sun burnt the land. Pope Leo of the apostolic seat, the excellent man, built a fortification around the Basilica of St Peter the Apostle. The Moors, however, devastated the coastal cities in Italy from this point forward. The Northman Roric, brother of the already named younger Harald,¹¹⁸ who earlier fled in dishonour from Lothar, went back to Dorestad, and deceitfully inflicted many evils upon the Christians. In the same year, so great was the peace between the two brothers, Emperor Lothar and King Louis, that together in Osning¹¹⁹ with a few men, they devoted many days to the work of hunting, such that many marvelled that this was done, and they departed in peace from one another.

In the Year 851. From Rome into Saxony came the bodies of Saints Alexandrus — one of the seven brothers — Romanus and

¹¹⁵ See the much fuller account in AF: 38–39, s.a. 849; Reuter 1992: 28–29. The defeat was indeed humiliating, as the Bohemians had already sued for peace in negotiations with Thachulf, *dux* of the Sorbian March. The other Frankish leaders grew suspicious of Thachulf and attacked anew, causing the now-desperate Bohemians to fight on, this time defeating the Frankish host with massive casualties. See also Flynn 2025: 116.

¹¹⁶ Counting inclusively of 25 December and 1 January, in the manner of the Roman reckoning.

¹¹⁷ Per von Simson 1909: 17, note 3.

¹¹⁸ Harald the Younger, probably nephew of Harald Klak and brother of Roric (Coupland 1998: 89–93).

¹¹⁹ Mountainous part of the Teutoburg Forest, though the famous battle of 9 CE took place at Kalkriese.

Emerentianae. Eodem anno nobilissima imperatrix nomine Irmingard, coniunx Lotharii imperatoris, de hac luce migravit. Item Nordmanni in Fresia et circa Rhenum fluvium nocuerunt. Ingens exercitus congregatus est ad Albiam fluvium contra Saxones et civitates eorum, aliaque obsesse alieque succensae sunt igni. Et nimium Christianos vexaverunt. Conventus namque regum nostrorum tunc erat apud Mosam fluvium.

Anno DCCCLII. *Ferrum paganorum incanduit; nimius ardor solis, et fames subsecuta est, et pabula animalium defecerunt, et pastus porcorum exuberans.*

Anno DCCCLIII. *Fames magna in Saxonia, ita ut multi equis alerentur.*

Anno DCCCLIII. *Nordmanni cum reliquis multis malis, quae Christianis intulerunt undique, aecclesiam sancti Martini Turonis civitatis episcopi, ubi pausatio illius est, igni succenderunt.*

Anno DCCCLV. *Verno tempore Ludewicus rex orientalis misit filium suum et convocum in Aquitaniam accipere sibi regnum patruelis sui Pippini.*

Emerentiana.¹²⁰ In the same year the most noble Empress Ermengarde, wife of Emperor Lothar, departed from this world. Also, the Northmen damaged Frisia and around the Rhine River. A great army was assembled at the Elbe River against the Saxons and their cities, and some of these were besieged and others were burned with fire. And they vexed the Christians excessively. And meanwhile, then there was an assembly of our kings at the Meuse River.¹²¹

In the Year 852. The iron of the pagans burned, likewise the excessive heat of the sun, and famine followed, and forage for animals was deficient, and pasturage for pigs was abundant.

In the Year 853. There was a great famine in Saxony, such that many were nourished by horses.¹²²

[Here begins the incorrect dating, years marked with * (see Translator's Preface). In general, subtract one year from the entries 854–872 for the correct dates. 873 reverts to correctness.]

In the Year 854.* The Northmen, with the many other evils that they brought to Christians everywhere, burned with fire the church of Saint Martin at Tours, the city of the bishop, where his resting place is.

In the Year 855.* In the springtime King Louis of the Eastern Kingdom sent his son and namesake [Louis the Younger] into Aquitaine to take for himself the realm of

¹²⁰ Alexander was one of the Seven Holy Brothers, sons of Felicitas; Emerentiana was foster sister to St Agnes and was martyred early in the fourth century in Rome; there are several St Romanus, and I am unable to discern to which this refers.

¹²¹ This was the 851 Treaty of Meerssen, of which several were transacted by this generation of Carolingian kings; see Boretius and Krause 1897: 68–74, 193–95, II.204–205, II.251.

¹²² That is, the people ate horse meat to survive.

Anno DCCCLVI. *Nordmanni rursum regem sibi constituunt, cognatum et convocum priori, et Dani iterum, resumptis viribus, navali evectu Christianos invaserunt.*

Anno DCCCLVII. *Plaga magna vesicarum turgentium grassatur in populo et detestabili eos putredine consumpsit, ita ut membra dissoluta ante mortem deciderent.*

Anno DCCCLVIII. *Ludewicus rex orientalis conventum populi sortis suae apud Wangionam habuit.*

Anno DCCCLVIII. *Kalendis Ianuarii, celebrata sollempnitate matutinorum, apud Wormatiam semel terrae motus factus est et apud Magontiam tredecies ante diluculum.*

Anno DCCCLX. *Nonas Februarii tonitruum auditum est, et rex reversus est de Gallia, depravato omni regno et in nihilo emendato.*

Anno DCCCLXI. *Beatus Liutbertus episcopus honorifice multis sanctorum menbris monasterium quod dicitur Frikkenhurst adornavit, id est Bonifacii et Maximi martyrum, Eonii atque Antonii confessorum, adiecta parte de presepe Domini atque de sepulchro illius, simul et de pulvere pedum illius ascendentis in caelum. Eo anno*

his cousin Pippin [II].¹²³

In the Year 856.* The Northmen again set up a king for themselves, kinsman and namesake of the former one,¹²⁴ and the Danes, again recovering their strength, attacked the Christians with a naval expedition.

In the Year 857.* A great plague of swelling blisters attacked the populace and consumed them with detestable putrefaction, such that the rotten members fell off before death.

In the Year 858.* Louis, king of the east, held an assembly of the people of his lot¹²⁵ at Worms.

In the Year 859.* On 1 January during the solemn celebration of matins, there was an earthquake, once at Worms and thirteen times at Mainz, before dawn.

In the Year 860.* On 5 February, thunder was heard, and the king returned from Gaul, the whole realm having been corrupted and in no way fixed.¹²⁶

In the Year 861.* Blessed Bishop Liutbert¹²⁷ honourably adorned the monastery which is called Freckenhorst with the relics of saints, that is, the martyrs Boniface and Maximus, and also of the confessors Eonius and Antonius,¹²⁸ and adding a part from the manger of the Lord and from His sepulchre, and likewise from

¹²³ Pippin II of Aquitaine; nephew of Louis the German, cousin of Louis the Younger. On this reconnaissance expedition cum invasion see AF: 44–45 and AB: 44–45, both s.a. 854; Reuter 1992: 35–36 and Nelson 1991: 78–80, respectively; Goldberg, 2006: 234–242; Flynn, 2025: 613–614.

¹²⁴ Roric II; for the civil war which ended the reign of his predecessor, see AF: 44–45, s.a. 854; Reuter 1992: 35–36.

¹²⁵ That is, his portion of the kingdom.

¹²⁶ The king here is Louis the German, who had invaded Charles the Bald's realm in 858 and returned to the eastern kingdom early in 859. Cf. Goldberg 2006: 248–62; Nelson 1992: 185–92; Flynn 2022: 93–96.

¹²⁷ Bishop of Münster from 849 until his death in 870 (reported below under s.a. 871).

¹²⁸ The identity of the four holy men whose relics are mentioned here has occasioned considerable debate, summarised in Schüller 2009. They are probably Bishop Eonius of Arles (c. 494–500); Maximus, Bishop of Riez (433–460); Antonius of Carpentras (c. 463–473); and Boniface, 'Apostle of the Germans', the famous Anglo-Saxon missionary who died in 754 while attempting to convert Frisia.

hiemps longissima, et supradicti reges iterum secretum colloquium in supradicta insula habuerunt penes Confluentiam, vastantes omnia quae in circuitu erant. Et Lotharius rex Ripuariorum legitimam uxorem suam, sororem Hugberti clerici, iniusta occasione reliquit. Quam postea eodem anno predictus germanus illius accepit in sua. Rex vero concubina, cuius amore uxorem reliquit, publice usus est.

Anno DCCCLXII. *Ludewicus impium Hughardum comitem constituit. Quod dampnum pene suis omnibus visum est. Iam enim dissensio regum nostrorum et desolatio paganorum per regna nostra fastidiosum est enarrare.*

Anno DCCCLXIII. *Ludewicus rex primum conventum habuit Wangiona et post haec Magontia, ibique venit ad eum Lotharius, hostem machinantes in Sclavos, quod et postea fecerunt. Sed non profuit. Eodem anno hiemps turbulenta, mutabilis et pluvialis valde, ut pene absque gelu omnino, ut in sequentibus patuit in aeclesia sancti Victoris.*

the dust of His feet, as He ascended into heaven. And in that year the winter was most long, and the aforementioned kings again held a private meeting in the aforementioned island around Koblenz, laying waste all things which were in the surrounding regions.¹²⁹ And Lothar, King of the Ripuarians,¹³⁰ put aside his legitimate wife, the sister of the cleric Hubert, on an unjust pretext.¹³¹ In the same year her aforementioned brother accepted her into his [lands]. The king, however, appeared publicly with his concubine, for love of whom he relinquished his wife.¹³²

In the Year 862.* Louis set up the wicked Hughard¹³³ as count, which seemed a failure to nearly all his men. For now, the dissension of our kings and the desolation of the pagans throughout our realm is nauseating to narrate.

In the Year 863.* King Louis first held an assembly at Worms and after this at Mainz, and there Lothar came to him, planning [to raise] an army against the Slavs, which afterward they did. But it was not useful. In the same year the winter was turbulent, changeable, and extremely rainy, such that it was almost entirely without ice, so that the way to the Church of St Victor [at Xanten] was open to those seeking it.

¹²⁹ See AF: 54–55 and AB: 53–54, both s.a. 860; Reuter 1992: 46–47 and Nelson 1991: 92–94, respectively; Goldberg 2006: 260–62; Boretius and Krause 1897: 152–58, II.242.

¹³⁰ The Rhineland, thus the middle kingdom of Lotharingia.

¹³¹ Queen Theutberga was coerced into confessing to incest with her brother, a concoction of Lothar's to justify the dissolution of their marriage; see AB: 53–54, s.a. 860; Nelson 1991: 92–94; Stone and West 2016; Heidecker 2010.

¹³² The concubine was Waldrada, with whom Lothar had been romantically involved prior to his marriage. Lothar's attempt to divorce Theutberga and marry Waldrada overshadowed much of Carolingian politics during the 860s.

¹³³ A difficult figure to identify. Dümmler 1862: 471 and note 15 believed that he was probably a 'defected vassal' of Charles, which is reasonable in light of the political machinations which characterised the period. Chiefly, these were Louis the German's invasion of the western kingdom — incited by magnates disgruntled with Charles the Bald's leadership — and Louis and Charles attempting to manipulate their nephew Lothar II and his men. To attribute this to one of the various Hugh/Hugo figures of the period is tempting, but it would mean a substantial shift or error in nomenclature on the part of the annalist, who typically used Latin 'Hugo/Hugonis' for that name (cf. s.aa. 821, 844, 866).

Anno DCCCLXIII. *Nimia inundatione aquarum pagani sepe iam dicti aecclesiam undique vastantes per alveum Reni fluminis ad Sanctos usque pervenerunt et locum opinatissimum vastaverunt. Atque, quod omnibus audientibus et videntibus nimium dolendum est, aecclesiam sancti Victoris mirifico opere constructam incenderunt igni, omnia quae intus aut foris sanctuarii repperierunt rapuerunt. Clerus tamen et omne vulgus pene aufugit. Sed ipsum cenum sanctuarii postea nimium vesania correpti ibidem remiserunt. Sanctum vero corpus Victoris prepositus fratrum equo ascenso et loculo ante se posito cum solo presbitero Coloniam noctu perduxit in magno periculo, nonnisi meritis sancti intervenientibus. Guntharius autem isdem temporibus ibidem rector et episcopus preesse videbatur, nepos scilicet Hildiwini iunioris. Predones vero post, perpetrato scelere, haut longe a monasterio insulam quandam parvam petierunt ibique munitione constructa habitaverunt ad tempus. Sed quaedam pars illorum per alveum ascendentes villam regiam grandem incenderunt, ibique cesi sunt ex eis utpote plus quam C homines, ita ut una navis ibidem ex eorum sorte vacua remansit. Ceteri vero, vix conscensis navibus, confusi redierunt ad suos. Lotharius vero, paratis navibus, cogitabat intruere in eos, sed sui non consenserunt ei. At contra Saxones agiles ex altera ripa fluminis agiliter agebant, ita ut quendam ex eorum regibus nomine Calbi, qui superba temeritate litus eorum aggredi temptabat, occiderunt et in ipsum flumen fugientem demerserunt*

In the Year 864.* With the excessive flooding, the now oft-mentioned pagans, devastating the church everywhere, came up the channel of the Rhine River to Xanten, and they devastated that most famous place.¹³⁴ Also, what must be deplored greatly by those hearing and seeing it, they [the pagans] burned with fire the Church of St Victor, built with amazing work, and all things which they discovered within and without the sanctuary, they plundered. The clergy, however, and all the laity mostly escaped. But, having been seized by madness excessively, they [the pagans] returned this treasure of the sanctuary afterwards to the same place. Truly, the provost of the brothers, mounting a horse and placing the holy body of St Victor in the reliquary before him, with one lone priest brought it to Cologne by night in great danger, thanks to the interventions from the merits of the saint. However, at the same time Gunthar¹³⁵ appeared to preside as rector and bishop at the same place, namely the grandson of the younger Hilduin.¹³⁶ Afterwards, however, the thieves, having carried out this crime, attacked a certain small island not far from the monastery, and there they abided for a time, having constructed fortifications. But a certain part of those men, ascending by the river, burned a great royal villa, and there, from their number more than 100 men were cut down, such that one ship of theirs by chance remained empty in the same place. The others, however, just barely boarding their ships, returned confused to their men [on the island]. Truly

¹³⁴ It is this reference that caused Pertz to dub the text *The Annals of Xanten*.

¹³⁵ Gunthar, Archbishop of Cologne from 850 until his deposition in this same year, 863 (though the AX report it under the heading of 864), on whom the AX have a great deal more to report below.

¹³⁶ Hilduin of St Denis, former arch-chaplain to Louis the Pious and Abbot of St Denis until his resignation during the civil war years 840–843. Lothar appointed him Archbishop of Cologne, but he was never consecrated, due to divided loyalties between Lothar and Louis the German. See the discussion in Lapidge 2017: 46–49.

omnesque pene sequaces illius. Ceteri vero exinde territi locum predictum reliquerunt et incerta petierunt. Ludewicus vero totum pene annum morabatur in Bewaria, caute agens contra Margos rebelles, sed et contra filium. Predictus vero Guntharius archiepiscopus Agrippinae et Theitgaudus Treverensis archiepiscopus eodem anno iussu Nicolai pape Romam petierunt ob adulterium Lotharii regis, quod pridem commiserat, eo quod ei in hoc cum suis suffraganeis iniusta occasione contra religionem Christianitatis consenserunt, plurimas secum deferentes sententias quasi canonica auctoritate compositas. Quibus in sinodo Romanensi cum omni assertionem illorum condempnatis, omnino refutati sunt, eisque omni officio sacerdotali ad tempus interdicto dimissi sunt.

Lothar, with ships prepared, thought to attack them, but his men did not agree to it. But on the other hand, the active¹³⁷ Saxons from the other shore of the river acted quickly, such that when a certain man from the kings of those men [the Northmen]¹³⁸ by the name of Calbi,¹³⁹ who with haughty bravery attempted to attack the riverbank of those men [the Saxons], they cut him down, and as he fled, they drowned him and nearly all his followers in the river itself. Truly, the others, terrified, then left the aforementioned place and made for uncertain places. Louis, however, remained nearly the whole year in Bavaria, acting with caution against the rebel Moravians, but also against his son.¹⁴⁰ Truly, the aforementioned Archbishop Gunthar of Cologne and Archbishop Thietgaud of Trier in the same year made for Rome, by order of Pope Nicholas, on account of the adultery of King Lothar, which he had committed earlier, because those men with their suffragans had consented to it — against the Christian religion — on that unjust occasion, many with them giving judgment as if according to canonical authority. These things were condemned in a synod at Rome along with all the assertions of those men; they were completely refuted, and they were sent off with a prohibition from all priestly duty at that time.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ The Saxons are here praised for their quick action, in contrast to the inactivity of Lothar.

¹³⁸ The Northmen; the annalist would not have called a leader of the Saxons ‘king’, as their king was Louis the German. Reading *contra* adverbially and making the Saxons the subject of the sentence (rather than ‘against the Saxons’ as direct object), yields the interpretation that the Saxons repelled a raid from the fortifications, which caused the survivors to withdraw, as we know they did in the same year from the parallel (but much less informative) account in *AB*: 61–66, *s.a.* 863; Nelson 1991: 104–11.

¹³⁹ ‘King Calbi’ is not mentioned elsewhere, but Coijmans 2020: 166, Table VI.6 classifies him as a *hydrarch* active in Francia.

¹⁴⁰ Louis the German’s son Carloman had rebelled, in concert with Rastislav. Louis the German crushed the rebellion by feigning to attack Moravia but actually moving against Carloman. See *AF*: 56–61, *s.a.* 863; Reuter 1992: 49–51.

¹⁴¹ Cf. the much fuller account of these proceedings in *AB*: 61–74, *s.aa.* 863, 864; Nelson 1991: 104–21.

Anno DCCCLXV. *Moram faciente Lothario veniendi, temerarias ipsi episcopi conscriptiones Nicolao papae iterum remiserunt, dicentes eum impie at absque omni ratione tyrannico in eos more iniusta exercere iudicia, promittentes se absque illius gratia velle aequaliter gloriari in locis suis ceu ipse in Roma et in nullo gradum suum inferiorem gradu illius esse, non recordantes se ab eo pallium dignitatis accepisse. Loquente per eos apostata spiritu, qui dixit: Ponam solium meum ad aquilonem et ero similis altissimo. Quibus iterum ipse papa in sinodo episcopali, si ita peregissent, ab omni aecclesia catholica excommunicandos esse indixit. Regressi sunt ergo unde ierant, et veniente Gunthario Coloniam, ex ipso sacratissimo die caenae Domini omne officium paschale contra fas peregit, et ob hanc temeritatem iterum in eadem provintia ab omnibus episcopis Lotharii excommunicatus est. Nec mirum, si ipse, qui aerarium sancti Petri in vasis sacris aureis et argenteis et multis speciebus exinanivit et avariciae facibus semper exarsit et ad secularem pompam necnon et ad fratres et nepotes et sorores et neptes ea convertit, omnibus bonis privaretur. Consors vero illius nihil horum agere temptabatur. Sed tamen ambo Romam reversi sunt.*

In the Year 865.* With a delay having been made in Lothar's coming, the bishops themselves sent back rash compositions to Pope Nicholas again, declaring that he administered judgment wickedly and tyrannically against them, without all reason and in an unjust way; promising that without his grace, they wished to be glorified equally in their locales, just as he himself was in Rome; and that their rank was in no way inferior to his; and not remembering that they had accepted the pallium of their office from him.¹⁴² Through those men spoke the apostate spirit, who said: *I will set up my throne to the north, and I will be like the highest.*¹⁴³ Again to these men the pope himself, in a synod of the bishops, proclaimed that if they had continued, they must be excommunicated from all the Catholic Church. Therefore, they returned whence they had come, and with Gunthar coming to Cologne, from that most holy day of the supper of the Lord, he completed the service at Easter against divine will, and because of this boldness, once again, in the same province, he was excommunicated by all the bishops of Lothar. And no wonder, if he himself was deprived of all good things, he who despoiled the treasury of St Peter of sacred gold and silver vessels of many sorts, and always burned with the flames of avarice, and turned them to secular pomp, and also to his brothers, nephews, sisters, and nieces.¹⁴⁴ His consort [Thietgaud], however, was not tempted to do any of these things. But still, both returned to Rome.

¹⁴² The annalist is accusing Gunthar and Thietgaud of rejecting the supremacy of the papacy — bishop of Rome — and wishing to be equally glorified as men also of episcopal rank.

¹⁴³ Isaiah 14. 13–14.

¹⁴⁴ That is, he sold church treasures and spent opulently on worldly things or gave the wealth to his family.

Anno DCCCLXVI. *Mense Ianuario eclipsis lunae facta est, et sanctissimus episcopus Bremensis Ansgar de hac luce migravit. Liudolfus comes a septentrione et in Italia Everwinus, gener Ludewici regis, magnifici viri, de hac luce subtracti sunt. Eodem tempore Hubertus clericus, de quo supra scribitur, cuius sororem Lotharius rex pridem repudiatam dimisit, a quinque episcopis excommunicatus, a filiis Cuonradi, fratris quondam Iuthit reginae, in bello occiditur. Eo anno pagani reliquias Fresiae nimium vastaverunt. Et Ludewicus rex orientalis aestivo tempore conventum populi sortis suae habuit ad Franconoford, ibique interfuit Arsenius, auricularius Nicolai papae, ab eo cum epistolis directus ob statum catholicae fidei et defensionem Christianae religionis. Indeque proficiscens visitavit Lotharium regem, abstrahens illicitam concubinam reginam elevatam, cuius rei consensu Guntharius et Thietgaudus, duo archiepiscopi, graviter ceciderunt; restituens ei legitimam uxorem prius ab eo nefanda occasione repudiatam, indeque Romam rediens. Eo tempore vir magnificus nomine Ernost, socer videlicet Karlomanni promogeniti Ludewici regis, de hac luce migravit. Moram autem faciente Gunthario veniendi in civitatem, successit in locum illius quidam tyrannicus Hugo nomine, filius predicti comitis Cuonradi, qui non ut pastor, sed ceu lupo rapax gregem Dei invasit et*

In the Year 866.* In the month of January there was an eclipse of the moon, and Ansgar, the most holy bishop of Bremen, departed from this world.¹⁴⁵ Count Liudolf¹⁴⁶ from the north and in Italy Eberhard,¹⁴⁷ son-in-law of King Louis, magnificent men, were taken from this world.¹⁴⁸ At the same time the cleric Hubert, concerning whom it was written above [861], whose sister King Lothar had earlier sent away repudiated, and who had been excommunicated by five bishops, was killed in war by the sons of Conrad,¹⁴⁹ the brother of Queen Judith. In that year the pagans plundered the relics of Frisia greatly. And Louis, king of the east, in the summertime held an assembly of the people of his lot¹⁵⁰ at Frankfurt, where Arsenius,¹⁵¹ an advisor of Pope Nicholas, was present, from whom came letters concerning the state of the Catholic faith and the defence of the Christian religion. Thence proceeding, he visited King Lothar, removing the illicit concubine elevated as queen, to which things the two archbishops Gunthar and Theitgaud consented, and they fell hard; [Arsenius] restored to him [Lothar] the legitimate wife he had repudiated from himself earlier, on that infamous occasion, and thence he returned to Rome. In that time the magnificent man

¹⁴⁵ St Ansgar, 'Apostle of the North', d. 865; Palmer 2004. For his *Vita*, by Rimbert, see Waitz 1884; Robinson 1921; Dutton 2009: 400–51.

¹⁴⁶ Count Liudolf of Saxony, from whom the Liudolfing family of Ottonian rulers traces their descent.

¹⁴⁷ Count Eberhard of Friuli, husband to Gisele, daughter of Louis the Pious and Judith.

¹⁴⁸ To this point the annalist has often used *de hac luce migravit* ('departed from this world,' literally, 'migrated from this light'); one wonders at the significance of the switch to the passive *subtracti sunt* 'were taken'. The difference is not clerical or secular, as the first form is used of laypeople and clerics alike.

¹⁴⁹ Count Conrad of Argengau and Auxerre, of the house of Welf, brother of Empress Judith and thus uncle to Charles the Bald.

¹⁵⁰ For this usage see above, s.a. 858.

¹⁵¹ Bishop of Orte, 855–868; AB: 74–80, s.a. 865; Nelson 1991: 121–29, specifically 123 and note 5.

idcirco annuente Domino celeriter inde deiectus est, occisis ab eo plurimis in eodem episcopatu. Et pagani crudeliter Galliam vastaverunt. Acceptoque inde a Karolo rege innumerabili censu, ad tempus reversi sunt alibi desolare aecclesiam Dei.

Anno DCCCLXVII. *Duo presbyteri, qui se monachico habitu in Saxonia, quamvis inperiti, nimiae sanctitatis viros sub obtentu religionis simulabant, ita ut episcopis et presbyteris omnibus eiusdem provinciae sanctiores se esse prefigurabant. Nam solitariam vitam in hipocrisi primum duxere simul. Sed postea, mediante inter illos spiritu discordiae, separati sunt ab invicem, et tamen remota querentes habitacula semper iactitabant etiam se visiones angelicas vidisse et signa fecisse. Et confluebat ad eos multitudo magna gentis huius, tam divitum quam etiam ceterorum, diversa munera deferentes. Quorum confessiones suscipientes nova iudicia pretulerunt. Quorum hypocrisin inspector secretorum Dominus de caelo prospexit et manifestavit consilia cordium illorum, ita ut qui prior eorum videbatur nimia infestatione diaboli correptus est. Alter*

by the name of Ernest¹⁵², namely the father-in-law of Carloman, first-born of King Louis, departed from this world. However, with a delay made in Gunthar's coming to the city, there succeeded in his place a certain tyrant by the name of Hugh,¹⁵³ son of the aforesaid Count Conrad, who was not so much a shepherd but rather a *rapacious wolf*.¹⁵⁴ he attacked the flock of the Lord, and was quickly cast down thence from the Lord's favour, with many in the same episcopate killed by him. And the pagans cruelly devastated Gaul. And thence, having accepted from King Charles innumerable riches, at that time they returned to rob the church of God elsewhere.

In the Year 867.* Two priests, who wore monastic habit in Saxony, although they were ignorant, imitated men of great holiness under the guise of sanctity, so that they prefigured themselves to be holier than all the bishops and priests of the same province. For at first, they both led a solitary life in hypocrisy. But afterwards, divided by a spirit of discord between them, they were separated from one another, and yet, seeking¹⁵⁵ different habitations [from each other], they always mentioned still that they saw angelic visions and gave signs. And a great multitude of these people [Saxons] gathered to them, as much the wealthy as the others, bringing them diverse gifts. Accepting the confessions of those people, they offered new judgments. The hypocrisy of those men, the observer of secrets, *God in heaven, saw; and he*

¹⁵² Count Ernest, a powerful march commander under Louis the German and 'first among the friends of the king', AF: 38–39, s.a. 849 for the quotation and cf. AF: 54–55, s.a. 861 for his fall from royal favour and loss of office; Reuter 1992: 28–29, 47–48, respectively; see Goldberg 2006: 267–75 on the familial and political ties between Carloman and Ernest.

¹⁵³ A prominent Welf, Abbot of St Germain at Auxerre and then St Martin at Tours.

¹⁵⁴ Matthew 7. 15.

¹⁵⁵ Presumably *quaerentes*, 'seeking', and not *querentes* 'complaining'.

vero, aestivo tempore convocato Liudberto archiepiscopo Magontiae cum caeteris coepiscopis, canonice victus et prostratus ac de gradu depositus est. His ita gestis allata sunt pignora sancti Magni martyris in Saxoniam, a Nicolao papa venerabili episcopo Liudberto directa. Eodem tempore Guntharius, quondam Agrippinensis archiepiscopus, iterum Roma reversus est, communione tantum vulgari ei concessa, sed omni officio episcopali interdicto. Ipse tamen cum magna elatione, clangentibus signis, occurrenti clero cum ewangelis et turribus, aecclesias adiit. Eo anno ingens bellum inter Gallos et paganos geritur in Gallia, et cecidit ex utraque parte innumerabilis multitudo. Ibi Ruodbertus, vir valde strenuus, ortus de Frantia, dux Karoli, interfectus est.

Anno DCCCLXVIII. *Adhuc visitante Domino plebem suam et circa solis occasum pro denario diurno ociosos vocante operarios ad vineam excolendam, gens Bulgarum, hactenus idola vana colentium, ad fidem catholicam conversa est, mittente eis summo tonanti signa et prodigia fieri in medio plebis. Directis a Nicolao summo pontifice et universali papa urbis Romae viris apostolicis,*

*revealed the counsel of their hearts,*¹⁵⁶ so that he who seemed the first of them was seized greatly by an attack of the devil. The other, however, in the summertime at a convention, was convicted canonically and struck down by Liutbert, Archbishop of Mainz, with the other bishops, and cast down from his position. So, with these things done, the relics of St Magnus¹⁵⁷ the martyr were brought to Saxony, directed by Pope Nicholas to the venerable Bishop Liutbert [of Münster]. At the same time Gunthar, formerly Archbishop of Cologne, returned again to Rome, and it was permitted to him to take communion such as the laypeople, but he was still forbidden all episcopal office. He himself still approached the churches with great elation, clanging bells, and hurrying clerics with the gospels and incense.¹⁵⁸ In that year a huge war was fought among the Gauls and pagans in Gaul, and an innumerable multitude was killed from both sides. And there Robert, that greatly vigorous man, born of Francia, *dux* of Charles', was killed.¹⁵⁹

In the Year 868.* And thus, with the Lord visiting His people,¹⁶⁰ and around sunset, calling the idle workers for cultivating the vineyard¹⁶¹ for a denarius a day, the people of the Bulgars, to this point worshippers of empty idols, were converted to the Catholic faith, with the Highest, thundering, sending them signs and making portents in the midst of the people. With bishops sent

¹⁵⁶ Reference to I Corinthians 4. 5, though not an exact Vulgate quotation, where the verse runs *qui [Dominus] et illuminabit abscondita tenebrarum, et manifestabit consilia cordium [...]* ('he [the Lord] will illuminate the secrets of the darkness and make clear the hearts' counsels').

¹⁵⁷ St Magnus of Trani, martyred in the mid-third century.

¹⁵⁸ That is, Gunthar is still acting as though he retained his office.

¹⁵⁹ Count Robert 'the Strong', after whom the Robertians are called; father to Kings Odo (r. 888–898) and Robert I (r. 922–923). See AB: 80–86, s.a. 866; Nelson 1991: 129–38; and Regino's *Chronicon*: 92–94, s.a. 867; MacLean 2009: 153–55 for a fuller account of his death.

¹⁶⁰ Luke 7. 16.

¹⁶¹ Matthew 20. 8.

receperunt sermonem domini nostri Iesu Christi et baptizati sunt. Aequum quippe erat ut piscationem sibi iam olim a Domino commissam veteranus piscator, sagena predicationis Europico ponto directus, ad finem usque mundi prosequeretur et antiquus dierum pastor ovium nuncupatus agnos sibi specialiter commendatos et diu in heremo vacantes ad ovilia pascua perduceret, ubi eis individuus comes illius et egregius gentium predicator lac potum daret pro esca, quoadusque fierent oves foetosae, habundantes in egressibus suis, et fieret unum ovile et unus pastor, Iesus Christus dominus noster. De cetero diebus ieiuniorum Septembrium circuli duo magni apparuerunt in caelo, similes aspectui iris. Quorum maior ab aquilone primum formosior, sed postea, plenitudinem suam australi quasi tribueret, desipuit. Minor vero, solem sibi medium circumcingens, in extrema parte alterius omni decore resplenduit. Ante horam namque terciam oriundi et usque ad nonam perdurantes evanuerunt. Eodem tempore in Saxonia ignis in aere sagittae celeritate ferri visus est, grossitudine ligni foenarii et sicut massa ferri in conflatorio scintillas emittens, et subito coram oculis plurimorum velut in fumum picis redactus est. Sed horum significationem solius Domini nosse est. Deinde autumnali tempore exiit edictum a regibus, ut ieiunium triduanum generaliter observaretur, imminente terrore famis, pestilentiae, et terrae motus magnus per regna, ita ut desperatio humanae vitae plurimis accidit. Eo tempore Liudbertus episcopus Saxoniae, ortus de [...], distributione graduum et inpositione crismali

by Nicholas, supreme priest and universal pope in the city of Rome, they received the word of our Lord Jesus Christ and were baptised. Of course, it was right that the old fisherman, casting his net of preaching into the European sea, should pursue the fishing long ago committed to him by God all the way to the end of the world; and [it was right that] the *ancient of days*,¹⁶² called the pastor of the sheep, should lead the lambs specially entrusted to him — and for a long time idle in the desert — to the sheepfold pasture, where the inseparable companion of those men and the excellent preacher of the peoples gave them a dish of milk for food, until they became *fertile sheep, abounding in their births*,¹⁶³ and *there should be one sheepfold and one shepherd*,¹⁶⁴ Jesus Christ our Lord. And concerning other things, in the days of fasting in September two great circles appeared in heaven, similar in aspect to a rainbow.¹⁶⁵ The greater of them was first more beautiful from the north, but afterward, as if it granted its fullness to the south, disappeared. The lesser, however, girding itself about the sun's middle, shone brightly in all its glory at the outside part of the other. For in fact, born before the third hour and enduring up until the ninth, they disappeared.¹⁶⁶ At the same time in Saxony, fire in the sky with the speed of arrows of iron was seen, with the thickness of a shaft of hay, and just like a mass of iron emitting sparks in a furnace, suddenly before the eyes of many it was gone like the smoke of pitch. But the significance of these things is known only to God. Then in the autumn

¹⁶² Daniel 7. 9.

¹⁶³ Psalms 144. 13.

¹⁶⁴ John 10. 16.

¹⁶⁵ Another description of a 'solar halo', cf. s.a. 839 and 841 above.

¹⁶⁶ Roughly 9am to 3pm.

parrochiam Guntarii ab orientali parte procuravit. Eodem anno Nicolaus summus pontifex et athleta Christi de hac luce migravit ad Dominum. Pagani quoque iterum Hiberniam atque Fresiam crudeliter vastaverunt.

Anno DCCCLXVIII. *Mense Februario, tenebrosis aquis in nubibus aeris, tonitrua audita sunt, et XV. Kal. Martii, id est nocte sancta septuagesimae, stella cometes visa est ab aquilone et occidente, cui statim nimia tempestas ventorum et immensa inundatio aquarum est subsecuta, in qua multi inprovidi interierunt. Et postea aestivo tempore fames acerrima in multis provinciis subsequitur, maxime in Burgundia et Gallia, in quibus magna multitudo hominum acerbam sustinuit mortem, ita ut homines hominum corpora comedisse feruntur. Sed et canum carnibus aliqui vesci dicuntur. Eo tempore, ut propheta ait: propter peccata terrae multi principes eius, quattuor reges regnaverunt in regno quondam Karoli Magni: Ludewicus filius imperatoris Ludewici in oriente et Sclavis,*

*time an edict came from the kings,*¹⁶⁷ *that a general three-day fast should be observed, with the imminent terror of famine and pestilence, and there was a great earthquake throughout the kingdoms,*¹⁶⁸ *such that the despair of human life fell upon many. At that time, Liutbert, bishop of the Saxons, born of [place name missing]*¹⁶⁹, *managed the parish of Gunthar in the eastern part with the distribution of positions and the application of the chrism. In the same year [Pope] Nicholas, the highest priest and champion of Christ, departed from this world to the Lord. Again, the pagans devastated Ireland and Frisia cruelly.*

In the Year 869.* *In the month of February, with dark rain in the clouds of the sky,*¹⁷⁰ *thunder was heard, and on 15 February, that is the holy night of Septuagesima,*¹⁷¹ *a comet was seen from north and west, after which immediately a great tempest of winds and an immense flood of waters followed, in which many unwary people died. And afterward, in the summertime, a bitter famine followed in many provinces, especially in Burgundy and Gaul, in which a great multitude of men sustained a bitter death, such that men were brought to eat the corpses of men. And it was said that some feasted on the flesh of dogs. In that time, as the prophet said: on account of the sins of the land, there are many princes of it;*¹⁷² *four kings ruled in*

¹⁶⁷ Luke 2.1.

¹⁶⁸ Confirmed on 9 October in *AF*: 65–66, s.a. 867; Reuter 1992: 56–57. Regino's *Chronicon*: 92–94, s.a. 867; MacLean 2009: 153–55 notes a 'pestilence' among an army in Italy accompanied by dysentery, but the annalist is here probably foreshadowing the events of the next year, in which famine was reported in *AX*, s.a. 869 (sic) and also *AF*: 66–67, s.a. 868; Reuter 1992: 57–58.

¹⁶⁹ Below, in his death notice s.a. 871 (sic, 870), he is called 'a son of Ripuarium'.

¹⁷⁰ Psalms 17. 12.

¹⁷¹ von Simson 1909: 26, note 9 states that *XV. Kal. Martii* in 868 was 16 February, while *Septuagisima* was 15 February. Perhaps the annalist has miscounted or is reckoning the change of date at midnight from Sunday to Monday.

¹⁷² Proverbs 28. 2.

Bevaria, Alamannia et Coria, Saxonia, Suevis, Thoringia et orientalibus Francis cum pago Wormaciensi atque Namnetis, qui sapientior et iustior caeteris. Karolus frater eius Gallis, Aquitaneis atque Wasconiis praeerat, sepiissime paganorum infestationem sustinens semperque eis census opponens et numquam in bello victor existens. Ludewicus filius Lotharii imperatoris senior Italiam et Beneventaniam consedit, qui multas iniurias Nicolao papae intulit et non Mauros de Beneventania expulit. Lotharius frater eius, citus et levis, relicta legitima coniuge contra sanctorum canones et Nicolai papae iussum inlicite concubina usus est. Ipse enim Ripuariam, Burgundiam atque Provintiam possedit. Iterum atque iterum Guntarius et Thietgaudus Romam petierunt, succedente Adriano in locum regiminis, si aliquomodo possent adipisci gradum pristinum, sed non potuerunt, quia durum est contra stimulum calcitrare. Nam in ipsa peregrinatione Theotgaudus magna febre correptus vita pariter cum sacerdotio caruit. Ecclesia vero illius a chorepiscopis regebatur. Alter quippe eadem molestia preventus vix convaluit. Et cum vidisset, quod nullo modo repedare posset in gradum pristinum, consumpto aerario fraude adquisito, defunctis pene omnibus suis sequacibus, pauper cum paucis in incerto vagus girabat per terras. Sicque duo metropolitani ob consensum adulterii nefandi regis rite obligati sunt et ceciderunt. Sponsa vero Guntharii, quae quondam post Romam elegantissima habebatur, quasi vidua destituta viro, scissa veste, fuscata pelle, deiectis crinibus, nudis pedibus absque pastore sedit in cinere. Parvuli quoque illius hinc inde a lupis rapacibus devorabantur per loca, non habentes patrem. Sacerdotes eius acris verberibus virgisque ceduntur, non habentes

the erstwhile realm of Charles the Great: Louis [the German], son of Emperor Louis [the Pious], rules in the east and over the Slavs; in Bavaria, Alemannia, Chur, and Saxony; over the Suevi; in Thuringia; and over the east Franks, with the *pagi* of Worms and Nantes; and he is wiser and more just than the others. His brother Charles [the Bald] rules the Gauls, Aquitaine, and Gascony, so often sustaining attacks of the pagans and always laying treasure before them and never emerging victorious in battle.¹⁷³ Louis the oldest son of the Emperor Lothar [I] presides in Italy and Benevento, who inflicted many injuries upon Pope Nicholas and did not expel the Moors from Benevento. His Brother Lothar [II], the hasty and fickle, relinquishing his legitimate wife against the canons of the sacred and the judgment of Pope Nicholas, used his concubine illicitly. For he himself possessed Ripuaria, Burgundy, and Provence. Again and again Gunthar and Thietgaud asked Rome, where Hadrian [II] had succeeded in the place of control [as Pope], if they might somehow gain their former rank, but they were unable, because *it is hard to kick against the goad*.¹⁷⁴ For in this journey Thietgaud was seized by a great fever and lost his life along with his priesthood. His church, however, was ruled by suffragan bishops. The other [Gunthar], of course, coming to the same trouble, barely recovered. And when he had seen that in no way was he able to return to the former rank, with his fraudulently acquired treasury consumed, with nearly all his followers dead, he went roving through the lands as a pauper with a few men to uncertain places. And thus the two

¹⁷³ On which see Coupland 1999.

¹⁷⁴ Acts 9. 5, 26. 14.

patronum. Nobiles eius gladio ceciderunt, et illa dolens ac gemens, plorans ploravit per diem et noctem, dicens: 'Angustiae mihi undique, et quid eligam, ignoro, quia tribulationes cordis mei multiplicatae sunt'. Ad viatores quoque conversa aiebat: 'O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte, si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus. Ecce vivente viro vidua vocor. Parvuli mei delicati suffocati sunt. Vide, Domine, afflictionem meam, quoniam erectus est undique inimicus. Non est qui consoletur me nisi tu Deus solus'.

Anno DCCCLXX. *Lotharius rex Ripuariae sepe vocatus tandem Romam venit, cum Adriano pontifice colloquium habuit. Et ab eo mandatum accepit pelicem eicere ac legitimam coniugem accipere. Qui ita se per omnia obtemperare velle promisit, sed minime implevit. Et idcirco eum Dominus Roma redeuntem terribiliter percussit cum omnibus pene suis optimatibus. Quorum corpora*

*metropolitans duly were bound and fell*¹⁷⁵ by consenting to the infamous adultery of the king. Truly, the bride of Gunthar, who previously was held most elegant after Rome, just like a widow destitute of a man, with torn clothes, dirty skin, torn out hair, with bare feet, and without her shepherd, *sat in the ashes*.¹⁷⁶ Also the little children of that woman, having no father, thenceforth were devoured everywhere by *rapacious wolves*.¹⁷⁷ The priests of the place were struck with bitter blows and rods, not having a protector. Her nobles fell by the sword, and she, grieving and moaning, lamenting cried by day and night,¹⁷⁸ saying: '*Troubles for me everywhere, and what I should choose I know not, because the tribulations of my heart are multiplied*'.¹⁷⁹ And turning to travellers, she said: '*Oh all of you, who walk by this road, pay attention and consider, if there is pain like my pain*'.¹⁸⁰ Behold—I am called widow by living man. My darling children were strangled. Consider, Lord, my affliction, because the enemy is raised everywhere. Who can console me, except you alone, God?'¹⁸¹

In the Year 870.* Lothar, king of the Ripuarians, frequently called [by the Pope], finally came to Rome, where he had a conference with Pope Hadrian. And from him [Hadrian] he [Lothar] accepted the mandate to cast off his mistress and accept his legitimate wife. Thus, he swore that he was willing to obey in all things, but he fulfilled them [the promises] not at all.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁵ Psalms 19. 9.

¹⁷⁶ Jonah 3. 6. That is, Gunthar's church (the metaphorical bride here) at Cologne fell into disrepute due to his mismanagement, though it was previously regarded as second only to Rome.

¹⁷⁷ Matthew 7. 15. Figuratively — lacking proper clerical leadership, the people fell into sin.

¹⁷⁸ Lamentations 1. 2.

¹⁷⁹ The 'quotation' is cobbled together from Daniel 13. 22, Philippians 1. 22, and Psalms 24. 17.

¹⁸⁰ Lamentations 1. 12.

¹⁸¹ Another composite — Lamentations 1. 9, 1. 2, 1. 17, 1. 21.

¹⁸² See AB: 97–108, specifically 99, s.a. 869; Nelson 1991: 152–65, specifically p. 155 for Gunthar's promises.

pariter Coloniam asportata atque humata sunt. Quasi ultor dixisset: Mihi vindictam, et ego retribuam. Evaginabo gladium, et interficiet eos manus mea. Eo anno Ludewicus rex orientalis, missis duobus filiis suis Karlomanno et Karlo contra Margos diu resistentes sibi, Rasticium regem eorum fugaverunt et patriam vastaverunt atque cum multis spoliis reversi sunt. Item Guntharius sepe iam nominatus autumpnali tempore cum paucis, quasi lupus gregi insidians, nescientibus cunctis, latentibus evectu navali Coloniam venit et misso legato signa aecclesiae pulsare precepit et sibi honorifice occurrere iussit, dicens se potestatem habere, quam non habuit, ut rei exitus postea probavit.

Anno DCCCLXXI. *Karolus rex Galliae regnum quondam Lotharii cum elatione magna invasit, Aquisgrani palatium consedit, affirmans se totum regnum absque ullius gratia in proprietatem usurpare velle, quod postea, viris intercurrentibus strenuis, emollitum est et in pace dispositum. Tamen cum adhuc esset in pertinacia et videns Guntharium de loco suo avulsum, Hilduvinum quendam nepotem eiusdem, die sancto theophaniae cum uno tantummodo*

And therefore, the Lord struck him terribly while returning from Rome with nearly all his nobles. Their bodies were taken together to Cologne and buried. Just as the avenger had said: *Vengeance is mine, and I shall render it.*¹⁸³ *I will unsheathe my sword, and my hand will kill them.*¹⁸⁴ In that year Louis, king of the east, sent his two sons Carloman and Charles [the Fat] against the Moravians, who had resisted him for a long time, and they put to flight Rastislav,¹⁸⁵ the king of those people, and devastated his homeland, and they returned with much plunder. Also, just like the wolf lying in wait for the flock with everyone unaware, in the autumn time with a few men the now oft-mentioned Gunthar, came to Cologne secretly by a naval journey, and by a legate whom he sent, he ordered the bells of the church to be rung, and ordered them to hurry to him honourably, saying that he had power, which he did not have, as the end of the affair proved afterwards.

In the Year 871.* Charles, king of Gaul, invaded the erstwhile realm of Lothar with great ceremony, and he established himself at the palace of Aachen, affirming that he wished to usurp the whole realm as his property without the favour of anyone, which [issue] afterward, with vigorous men interceding, was softened and arranged in peace.¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, while he [Charles] was still obstinate, and seeing that Gunthar was removed from his place, he irrationally

¹⁸³ Hebrews 10. 30; Romans 12. 19.

¹⁸⁴ Exodus 15. 9.

¹⁸⁵ Not technically a king but a *dux* installed in 846 by Louis the German in place of Moimir, whom the East Frankish king campaigned against and deposed (AF: 36, s.a. 846).

¹⁸⁶ The awkward phrasing attempts to convey that Charles invaded without consulting or negotiating with Louis the German, who was delayed at Regensburg by a near-death illness. When Louis recovered and threatened war, Charles agreed to negotiate the division of the kingdom, which resulted in the Treaty of Meerssen (870). Boretius and Krause 1897: 193–95, II.251. See AF: 67–72 and AB: 97–115, both s.aa. 869, 870; Reuter 1992: 58–64 and Nelson 1991: 152–72, respectively for a fuller account of the proceedings, and cf. Goldberg 2006: 295–99; Nelson 1992: 218–25; Flynn 2022: 96–98.

episcopo Leodiae de Aquis ad Coloniam misit episcopum ordinandum et cathedram huius regiminis inrationabiliter obtinendam. At contra Ludewicus rex orientalis Liudbertum archiepiscopum Magontiae civitatis cum omnibus suffraganeis episcopis Coloniae ex altera parte Reni fluminis e regione civitatis direxit ordinare quendam Willibertum, eiusdem Colonie filium, episcopum, non elatum, non venatorem, non hypocritam, non mercenarium neque mercede conductum, sed magna coactum necessitate, omnibus aecclesiasticis disciplinis peditum. His omnibus ita peractis in conspectu gentium revelavit Dominus iusticiam suam, et mercenarius abiit et recessit, verus autem pastor supra gregem suum sollicite vigilavit. Tunc videns Guntharius, quod nullam spem pertinaciae suae ibidem ultra infigere posset, relictis Colonia victus et confusus inde discessit et amplius non est reversus ad eam. Sed in sequenti anno semper vagus, insidians, iterum Romam rediens, Adriano pontifici comminationes inferens et idcirco ab omni sinodo Romana excommunicatus incerto vitam pertinacem et improviso periculose amisit. Eodem anno V. Kal. Mai beatus episcopus Liudbertus Saxoniae et filius Ripuariae, de quo multa bona commemoravimus, de hac luce migravit ad Dominum. Civitas sancta Ierusalem et mons Oliveti atque omnia loca sancta in circuitu a Sarracenis invasa et possessa sunt. Monachi quoque ibidem Domino famulantes diversis poenis afflicti atque in custodiam missi. Audite enim haec omnes catholicae fidei cultores, dicentes: 'Plorate, sacerdotes, ministri Domini, et dicite: Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo, ne dominantur eis

sent Hilduin,¹⁸⁷ a certain relative of his [Gunthar's], on the holy day of the Epiphany, with only one bishop of Liège, from Aachen to Cologne to ordain him bishop and get the bishopric under his direction.¹⁸⁸ But against him, Louis, king of the east, directed Archbishop Liutbert of the city of Mainz with all the suffragan bishops of Cologne from the other side of the Rhine River from the region of the city,¹⁸⁹ to ordain as bishop a certain Willibert, a son of Cologne: not prideful, not a hunter, not a hypocrite, not a mercenary nor hired for pay,¹⁹⁰ but compelled by great necessity, and gifted with all ecclesiastical education. Thus, with all these things done, *God revealed his justice to the sight of the people*,¹⁹¹ and the mercenary departed and faded away, but the true shepherd watched over his flock carefully. Then Gunthar, seeing that he was unable to affix any hope to his persistence in that place any further, withdrew, departing Cologne conquered and confused, and thenceforth nevermore returned to it. But in the following year, he was always wandering, lurking, and coming again to Rome, carrying threats to Pope Hadrian, and therefore he was excommunicated by all the Roman synod, and he departed his obstinate life in uncertain and unexpected danger. In the same year on 27 April, the blessed Bishop Liutbert of Saxony and a son of Ripuaria, concerning whom we recalled many good things, departed from this world to God. The Holy City of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives and other holy places in the surrounding area were attacked and

¹⁸⁷ Abbot of St Bertin since 866 and a courtier of Charles (Nelson 1992: 214, 224).

¹⁸⁸ Regino's *Chronicon*: 96–100, s.a. 869; MacLean 2009: 158–62.

¹⁸⁹ Deutz, across the Rhine from Cologne, cf. von Simson 1909: 29, note 16.

¹⁹⁰ With the obvious implication that Gunthar was all of these things.

¹⁹¹ Psalm 97. 2.

nationes et dicant: Ubi est Deus eorum?’

{*Nunc de victoria Carlomanni*}

Rasticius rex Margorum a Karlomanno captus et in Franciam patri directus ibique postea luminibus privatus est. Pagani quoque tunc totam pene Hiberniam vastantes cum spoliis multis sunt reversi et per aquosa loca Franciae atque Galliae humano generi multas miserias intulerunt. Mauri quoque Beneventaniam consederant plurimis iam annis, quos Ludewicus rex Italiae expellere nequibat, et undique ecclesia catholica infestatione gentilium circumcincta, anxiali spiritu gemens ac sentiens tempora Antichristi appropriare.

Anno DCCCLXXII. Iterum regnum Margorum e manibus Karlomanni per

captured by the Saracens. The monks serving God in the same place were afflicted with diverse punishments and sent away into custody.¹⁹² For hear this, all worshippers of the Catholic faith, saying: ‘Lament, priests, ministers of the Lord, and say *spare us Lord, spare your people, lest the heathens dominate them and say: Where is their God?*’¹⁹³

{Now, concerning the victory of Carloman}¹⁹⁴

Rastislav, King of the Moravians was captured by Carloman and sent into Francia to his father [Louis the German], and there, afterwards, he was deprived of his eyes.¹⁹⁵ Also, the pagans then devastated nearly all Ireland and returned with many spoils, and they brought many miseries to the human race through the watery places of Francia and Gaul.¹⁹⁶ Also, the Moors, whom Louis king of Italy was not able to expel, had settled at Benevento for many years now, and everywhere an infestation of pagans encircled the Catholic Church, [which was] moaning with choked breath and perceiving that the time of the Antichrist was approaching.

In the Year 872.* Again the realm of the Moravians slipped through the hands of

¹⁹² Presumably a reference to the battle between ‘Isa ibn Shaykh and the Turk Amajur, who succeeded to the governorship of Damascus and imposed harsh taxation and tight security for the next eight years; Gil 1992: 300–8; Cobb 2001:37–42. This is slightly too early for the Tulunid expansion into Syria from Egypt, completed by 877; Cobb 2001:1–9. At any rate, the annalist’s wording that Jerusalem was captured ‘by the Saracens’ is curious, as the city had been under Muslim rule since the 630s.

¹⁹³ Joel 2. 17.

¹⁹⁴ von Simson 1909: 30 note 7, calls this characterisation ‘inept’, since Rastislav was captured by his nephew Svatopluk and delivered to Carloman in chains. I disagree, contending that the discontent in Moravia which resulted in Rastislav’s downfall was a direct result of successful campaigning there in 869 by Carloman and Charles the Fat, who ravaged considerable territory and captured several fortifications. Carolingian success — that is, Carloman’s victory — fomented in Moravia a lack of trust in Rastislav’s ability to protect the people and their possessions, a central purpose of secular authority. The victory proved short-lived, as below, s.a. 872. See AF: 67–70, s.a. 869; Reuter 1992: 58–61 for the military campaigns.

¹⁹⁵ AF: 72–75, s.a. 871; Reuter 1992: 64–67 notes that Rastislav was condemned to death, but Louis mercifully commuted the sentence to blinding.

¹⁹⁶ That is, via the river networks of western Europe, which were typical routes of invasion.

quendam eiusdem gentis Sclavum elabuit, et grandis exercitus de parte Karlomanni cecidit. Eodem anno infestatio tonitruorum et ymbrium atque grandinum humano generi nocuit nimium in frugibus et aedificiis. Nam principalis mater aecclesia sancti Petri apostoli Vangionae civitatis, nuper a novo restaurata per Samuelem episcopum et abbatem monachorum sancti Nazarii, ictu fulminis prostrata atque succensa est. Iterum ingens exercitus ex omni parte Francorum collectus est contra Margos. Qui hostes fugaverunt et in civitatem munitissimam propulerunt. Ibique obsessi diu grande dampnum sustinere. Et Karlomannus frequenter patriam vastavit. Item eodem anno Adrianus papa obiit, et successit in locum eius vir preclarus, nomine Iohannes. Guntio episcopus Vangionensis obiit, et successit in locum eius Adhelhelmus iuvenis de titulo sancti Cyriaci martyris Christi.

Anno DCCCLXXIII. *Ludewicus rex orientalis placitum publicum episcoporum ac laicorum ad Vadum-Francorum celebravit. Ibique venerunt contra eum duo filii eius, pleni iniqua cogitatione, convocus et Karolus, tirannidem moliri et iuramenta priorum postponere, patrem regno privare et in*

Carloman by means of a certain man of the same people of the Slavs, and a great army from Carloman's region [Bavaria] was slain.¹⁹⁷ In the same year an infestation of thunder, rain, and also hail harmed humankind excessively in regards to crops and buildings. For the principal mother church of St Peter the Apostle at the city of Worms, recently restored to new condition by Samuel, bishop and abbot of the monks of St Nazarius [at Lorsch], was struck down by a bolt of lightning and set on fire. Again a huge army was collected from all parts of Francia against the Moravians. This army put the enemy to flight and drove them into highly fortified cities.¹⁹⁸ There, they were besieged for a long time and sustained great damage. And Carloman frequently devastated their homeland.¹⁹⁹ Also, in the same year Pope Hadrian died, and in his place succeeded an illustrious man by the name of John [VIII]. Bishop Gunzo of Worms died, and in his place succeeded the young man Adelhelm²⁰⁰ from the titular church of Saint Cyriacus the martyr of Christ.²⁰¹

In the Year 873. Louis, king of the east, celebrated a public convention of bishops and laypeople at Frankfurt. There two of his sons came against him, *filled with hostile plans*,²⁰² his namesake son [Louis the Younger] and Charles, to set up a tyranny and cast aside their oaths of prior days, to

¹⁹⁷ Cf. AF: 72–75, s.a. 871; Reuter 1992: 64–67, which shows that Carloman sent an army with Svatopluk, Rastislav's nephew, in order that he might recapture his kingdom from Sclagamar, who had been installed by the Moravians while Svatopluk was on trial for treachery in Carloman's kingdom. Svatopluk entered the great city of Staré Město and led a surprise sally upon the Bavarian camp, which was caught unawares and slaughtered.

¹⁹⁸ The most prominent of these, Mikulčice and Staré Město, were notoriously impregnable. Goldberg 2006: 284–88, 313. Flight into fortresses was a typical Moravian strategy against large Carolingian campaigns.

¹⁹⁹ Ravaging the landscape in an attempt to affect a surrender was a common Carolingian tactic, rather than resorting to direct assault of these massive fortifications.

²⁰⁰ Presided as bishop until c. 888.

²⁰¹ Near Worms at Neuhausen.

²⁰² Daniel 13. 28.

custodiam mittere[.] Sed Deus, iustus iudex et patiens, grande miraculum palam omnibus ibidem monstravit, ita ut malignus spiritus videntibus cunctis Karolum invasit eumque horribiliter discrepantibus vocibus agitavit. Sed in eodem die orationum suffragiis et coniurationibus diversorum sacerdotum eiectus est. Viso hoc terrore frater senior pedibus patris provolutus commissum nefandum profitetur, indulgentiam postulans. Pater vero pius haec omnia prudenter cum moderamine disposuit. Eodem hiemis tempore insperatum diluvium nive madens repente inolevit, maxime in litoribus Rheni fluminis. Ex influentia aquarum multarum multitudo hominum cum aedificiis et frugibus innumerabilibus deperiit. Iterum in aestivo tempore eiusdem anni predictus rex Aquis palatium secundum sinodum ac placitum suorum consedit. Ibi rationabiliter cunctis dispositis, venit ad regem quidam clericus orbus, filius Karoli fratris sui, regis Galliae, quem ipse pater luminibus privari iussit et postea in monasterium retrudi, promittens inferre peiora, presidium petens. Itidemque venit ad eum Ruorich, fel Christianitatis, tamen ei repositis obsidibus plurimis in navi, et subditus effectus est regi ac iuramentis constrictus inconcussam ei servare fidem. Ac non post multum temporis Ruodoldus nepos predicti tyranni, qui transmarinas regiones plurimas regnumque Francorum undique atque Galliam horribiliter et pene totam Fresiam vastavit, in eadem regione, in pago Ostrachia ab eadem gente cum quingentis viris agiler interfectus est et, quamvis baptizatus esset, caninam vitam digna morte finivit. Postea vero mediante mense Augusto

deprive their father of his realm and send him off into custody. But *God, most just judge and patient*,²⁰³ revealed a great miracle before all in that place, so that an evil spirit entered Charles — seen by all — and aggravated him horribly in discordant voices. But in the same day, he [the spirit] was expelled by the pronouncements of prayers and invocations of many priests. With this terror seen, the older brother [Louis the Younger], prostrating himself before the father's feet, admitted the wicked deed, praying for lenience. The pious father, however, prudently managed all these things with moderation. In the same wintertime, melting from the snow suddenly caused an unexpected deluge, especially on the banks of the Rhine River. From the onrush of the great waters a multitude of men perished, along with buildings and innumerable crops. Again, in the summertime of the same year, the aforementioned king [Louis the German] established himself at the palace of Aachen following the synod and gathering of his men. There, with all things arranged rationally, there came to the king a certain bereft cleric begging for protection, son of his [Louis's] brother Charles, king of Gaul, whom the father himself ordered to be deprived of his eyes and afterwards driven into a monastery, promising to inflict worse things [upon him].²⁰⁴ And also there came to him Roric, gall of Christianity, with many hostages in his ship restored to him [Louis], and he [Roric] was made a subordinate of the king and bound by oath to preserve unshakeable fidelity to him.

²⁰³ Psalms 7. 12.

²⁰⁴ This was Charles' son Carloman, who had been tonsured as a youth to exclude him from succession, rebelled, was condemned to death, and had the sentence commuted to blinding, before fleeing to Louis the German as noted here. See AB: 44–45, 121–25, s.aa. 854, 873; Nelson 1991: 78–80 and 180–85, respectively, for additional detail.]

antiqua Egiptiorum plaga, id est locustarum innumerabilis turma more apium de alveo exeuntium, ab oriente nova exorta est per terras nostras, quae in aere volitantes, vocem subtilem velut aviculi parvi dantes. Et dum elevarentur, caelum vix velut per cribram intueri potuit. In plerisque locis vero pastores ecclesiarum et omnis clerus cum kapsis et crucibus occurrerunt eis misericordiam Dei implorantes, ut defenderet eos ab hac plaga. Non tamen ubique, sed per loca nocuerunt. Item in Kalendis Novembris usque ad sexagesimam nix totam superficiem terrae cooperuit, et diversis plagis Dominus assidue populum suum afflixit et visitavit in virga iniquitates eorum et in verberibus peccata eorum.

Anno DCCCLXXIII. [No entry provided]

And after not much time Rodulf,²⁰⁵ the nephew of the aforementioned tyrant [Roric], who devastated many overseas regions and the realm of the Franks everywhere, as well as Gaul horribly and almost all Frisia, came into the same region in the *pagus* of Ostergau, and he was swiftly killed with 500 of his men by the people of the same region, and, although he was baptised, he ended his dog's life in a deserved death. Afterwards, however, in the middle of the month of August came the ancient plague of the Egyptians, that is, an innumerable squadron of locusts in the manner of bees coming from a hive, sprang up newly from the east through our lands, which creatures, flying in the air, producing a thin voice just like little birds. And while they were raised up [flying], one could scarcely see the sky, as if through a sieve. In many places, the shepherds of the church and all the clergy rushed to them with relics and crosses, imploring the mercy of God, that he might defend them from this plague. Yet it was not everywhere, but they harmed many places. Also, from November 1 up to Sexagesima,²⁰⁶ snow completely covered the whole surface of the land, and God afflicted his people unceasingly with diverse plagues, and *visited their iniquities with the rod and their sins with blows.*²⁰⁷

In the Year 874.²⁰⁸ [No Entry Provided]

²⁰⁵ Son of Harald the Younger (above, s.a. 850; Coupland 1998: 101–3).

²⁰⁶ 14 February, 874.

²⁰⁷ Psalms 88. 33.

²⁰⁸ On this dismal note the annals end abruptly, with a heading but no entry for the year 874.

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