

# Charlemagne and Europe

*Raleigh Lecture on History*  
*read 12 November 2013*

JINTY NELSON

*Fellow of the Academy*

*Abstract:* This paper, ‘Charlemagne and Europe’, is a revised and expanded form of the lecture I read on 12 November 2013. I begin by asking what Europe has meant to medieval historians in recent times, focusing on some answers given in the 1990s and around the year 2000, and reflecting on the different ways Charlemagne is being commemorated in different parts of Europe now, 1,200 years after his death. I then re-examine Charlemagne through evidence from his own time, as a ruler of a recognisably European empire, and, in the light of recent research and new approaches, I reconsider his record as a political figure. A brief survey of his posthumous reputation as man and myth in the middle ages, and after, leads into a closer look at the roles assigned to him in post-war rhetoric. Finally I ask whether Charlemagne has, or might have, anything to offer Europeans today.

*Keywords:* Charlemagne, Europe, empire, commemoration, myth

To be invited to give the Raleigh Lecture is, as it has been since it was endowed almost a century ago, a tremendous honour. It also presents a new challenge, for the British Academy is changing with the times, and today’s Raleigh Lecturer is now invited to connect the Academy with a broad public. The occasion has become part of the Academy’s opening-wide of its doors. Implicit in my chosen title, therefore, is an assignment to ask if or why Charlemagne and Europe should ever have mattered, and to whom, and to show why this pairing could still matter today to a broad public interested in history. Sir Walter Raleigh, whom the Lecture commemorates, and whose *History of the World in Five Books* was published in 1614, took seriously the wide dimensions of Europe ‘with all the islands adjoining and compassing it about’. The Europe of my theme was and is one that included the isles.

Christopher Clark, author of a fine book on 1914, *The Sleepwalkers*, said recently: ‘our [meaning British] culture is obsessed by anniversaries’.<sup>1</sup> In 2014, Britons are

<sup>1</sup> *The Guardian*, 16 Jan. 2014, 22.

commemorating, as are very many others, but perhaps with particular British determination, the anniversary of 1914. In 2014 too, many Europeans are commemorating another anniversary, the 1,200th anniversary of the death of Charlemagne, on 28 January 814. The planned commemorations are very unevenly distributed, though. In Germany, there are to be quite a number, including a large exhibition at Aachen and several big academic events, and at least two conferences in France. Elsewhere in Continental Europe there is not much to report, not even in Italy, or Catalonia, where some public consciousness of Charlemagne's legacy might have been expected. In the UK, there took place on 28 January 2014, the anniversary of Charlemagne's actual death-day, an interdisciplinary commemoration in London (involving some 200 people including sixth-formers), and a small academic symposium in Edinburgh. And that seems to be it: not a lot for a Europe of 28.

This concerns me as a historian of Europe. Myths apart—and there have been plenty of those—Charlemagne has loomed large in the academic study of European history and culture since recognisably modern university curricula came into being in the 19th century, and especially in Germany. The critical editions of texts by the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* allowed Charlemagne's reign to be examined critically.<sup>2</sup> Political events in Germany and France generated huge interest in Charlemagne and his legacy not just among university students but for a wide reading public that, later in the 19th century when national governments made schooling compulsory, came to include schoolchildren. German and French textbook writers produced attractive books on Charlemagne, naturally with different spins on his significance for the two different nations who competed for the role of Charlemagne's heir.<sup>3</sup> The divergent branches of the same thematic stock flourished into the 20th century; and in Germany, divergent offshoots generated ideological conflict that was brief but fierce.<sup>4</sup> There will be more to say presently about divergence. But here at the outset, I want to raise the question of what has become of Charlemagne since the Second World War, and in our times. One answer is that he has become an icon of Europe. Another is that he has become an irrelevance to Europe. This lecture's object is to explain why both answers are true, up to a point—but also to explore the possibility that the second is truer than the first, then to see how that has come about, and finally to ask if the icon can be remodelled, or re-imagined, so as to become helpful in connecting Europe past with Europe present.

In 2001, I was invited to give a talk to a scholarly audience in Warsaw on 'Charlemagne—the father of Europe?'<sup>5</sup> I answered my own question with five reasons

<sup>2</sup> Knowles (1963: chap. 2).

<sup>3</sup> Morrissey (1997); Kapfhammer (1993); Kintzinger (2005).

<sup>4</sup> Lambert (2012: 97–125); Lambert (2013: 13–6).

<sup>5</sup> Nelson (2002: 3–20).

for saying yes: first his empire in territorial terms bore some resemblance to what was to come—admittedly long after—in the shape of the EEC, and less obviously the EU, which in 2001 did not include Poland though the Poles' application was already on the table; second, a conception of Europe as containing multiple laws and languages, combined with governmental decentralisation, and willingness, in practice, to coexist with neighbouring peoples, seemed to foreshadow such modern arrangements as subsidiarity; as did, third, the empire's mixed economy, in which public fiscal interests operated alongside 'private and non-fiscal ones', including market exchange, with a potential for the development of urbanism; fourth, a style of consensual government in which oaths of loyalty were sworn in return for royal acknowledgement of responsibilities; and fifth and finally, a government determined to realise justice, and demanding that all (women were included, even if seldom mentioned in official pronouncements) who lived in its territories should try to do the same at micro-level, prefigured in some ways the rights to justice that modern states and citizens are concerned to defend.

That was 2001. By then, I had been inspired by Jacques Le Goff's confident insistence, in the preface to each volume in the series he began to edit in 1994, celebrating the year of his seventieth birthday, *The Making of Europe*, that 'a Europe without history would be orphaned and unhappy', and that it was on the combined foundation of Europe's history and geography, 'rich and creative, united yet diverse—that Europe's future will be built'.<sup>6</sup> Invited to Budapest in 1994 to speak on 'Les périphéries de l'Occident médiévale', and asked about the different evolutionary speeds of 'the two or three Europes' proposed by the Hungarian historian Jenő Szűcs, Le Goff protested that this perspective 'made little sense from his point of view . . . [a view in which] Europe extended from the *Ultima Thule* of Ireland to Jerusalem, from Santiago de Compostela to the lands of the ferocious Scythians. Europe was, and is, something to be made and remade, which cannot be done by enumerating the defections of internal and external peripheries, but rather by integrating them while learning from their differences.'<sup>7</sup>

Both past and future look different today; and I would put the points I made in 2001 differently today, partly because I didn't make enough allowance for Europe's changed realities, and meanings, over recent times, partly because I am no longer sure that it's plausible, even with a three-line *mutatis mutandis*, to make any very specific claims for Charlemagne paternity of today's Europe, and partly because it matters where as well as when you ask a question. Yet still ringing in my ears is Le Goff's clarion call for a perspective that integrates rather than divides. In Germany, no fewer than three books on Charlemagne, plus one on Einhard have appeared in 2013 or are

<sup>6</sup>The first volume came out in 1994, and more than twenty have followed.

<sup>7</sup>Klanizcay (1997: 223–37), at 236–7 (where 'defects' rather than 'defections' seems to have been meant).

imminent.<sup>8</sup> All these books have got, or will get, reviewed in national broadsheet newspapers. All, it must be said, are Germany-focused, and yet all devote some thought to the European dimension of their theme. If German minds have not lost long-term historical memory, and encompass 814 as well as 1914, they also have room for the space that is Europe.

Certainly there are historians writing in French, Italian and English today who would still assign Charlemagne a key role in Europe's making: that of inventor and promoter of a cultural renewal that historians have called and still call the Carolingian Renaissance. The term is a modern construct, but the renewal it denoted was real to the men and women who made it and absorbed it. Renovating, and 'baptizing', ancient knowledge was a task for an intellectual elite of professional clergy. Had it stayed in those hands, Jacques Le Goff would have been right to call this 'hoarding not sowing', and to deny it the name of 'renaissance'.<sup>9</sup> But it did more than sow, it harvested and nurtured and scattered again across Charlemagne's Europe. It evolved, already in Charlemagne's lifetime, and then over centuries, into something that resembled mass engagement, engaging lay people too, peasants as well as elites, women as well as men, in reforming religious structures and practices not only in large churches but small and local ones, not only in big houses and at courts, but in small houses and villages.<sup>10</sup> The teachings of the clergy reached the laity through sermons and admonitions and ritual ministrations, scholarly supply meeting lay demand. Vernaculars as well as Latin were the media. Not just a set of directives and duties and dues imposed from above, this renaissance included responses from below: as for example when a letter from Charlemagne himself reported that he had found prospective godparents failing to pass the test of knowing the Lord's Prayer and the Creed and sent them home again to learn, or when within months of Charlemagne's requiring a general oath of fidelity in the spring of 802 a Bavarian charter dated 14 August 802 records locals at a legal assembly actually having sworn the oath.

Mutual communication and exchange underlay the making of Charlemagne's Europe. Far beyond it, the same processes persisted and spread throughout what would later be called, understandably if somewhat misleadingly, Latin Europe: understandably because of the need to distinguish Latin-using west from Greek-using east, or Byzantium; misleadingly, because within the west, Latin was the language of the Church and of lay elites, but the vast majority spoke forms of a *lingua romana* (a Roman language) that increasingly diverged both from classical Latin and from each

<sup>8</sup> Weinfurter (2014); Patzold, (2013); Bredekamp (2014); Fried (2014). See also Hack (2011).

<sup>9</sup> Le Goff (1957: 11–14).

<sup>10</sup> For a small selection of many recent and forthcoming works but all with many suggestions for further reading, see Mayr-Harting (2002: 113–24); Nelson (2001: 76–88); Wood (2006); Ganz (2010: 18–32); Nelson (2014a); Diesenberger (2014, forthcoming).

other, and in the reigns of Charlemagne and his heirs, basic Christian texts like the Lord's Prayer and the Creed were being translated into and written down in Germanic vernaculars.

Rather as some powerful politicians in modern times have lured academics, including those learned in humanities, perhaps in history especially, to their court-equivalents, *mutatis mutandis*, Charlemagne lured scholars to his court. This renewal was never the preserve of the Franks: most of the scholars at, or connected with, the court of Charlemagne were not Franks, that is, they did not belong to the people to whom Charlemagne himself belonged, who lived in the lands now known as northern France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, and west Germany. The scholars came from other places where Roman Christian culture was deeply if differently rooted: Italy, Spain, and from the British Isles, Ireland and especially Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>11</sup> The most prolific and famous of them was Alcuin, lured from York *c.*786: a polymath, interested in astronomy and philosophy, theology and liturgy, rhetoric and history, a scholar who was not a monk but a sub-deacon, that is, a secular cleric, with a teaching vocation that necessarily involved him in using the media of his day.<sup>12</sup> His teaching at Charlemagne's court was diffused far beyond it by means of the script which was the forerunner of the one you are reading at this moment: Caroline minuscule. The language he spoke and taught in was a pure Latin, as taught at York, and he frowned on the romance languages he encountered on the Continent. He encouraged friends and former students at York to imitate the keeping of annals, as practised in Francia. He wrote a great many letters, to other scholars but also to kings and royals, and elite personages, in Charlemagne's realm and beyond it, in his homeland, Northumbria, and in other kingdoms in the isles of Britain.<sup>13</sup> Europe's geographical identity was real in Alcuin's mind.

\* \* \*

Alcuin was heir to long scholarly traditions. Herodotus, the father of history, in the 5th century BC wondered 'why three names [Asia, Africa, Europa] had been laid on the earth [that were] all names of women'. Patrick Geary observed in 2006 that origin-myths typically begin with women.<sup>14</sup> Apropos Europa, St Augustine commented, talking about pagans and Christians in 426, that history and fable appealed to different audiences.<sup>15</sup> Isidore of Seville described the ways in which scriptural terms fitted onto parts of circle of the earth, Europe being the area occupied by the descendants

<sup>11</sup> Brown (1994: 1–51); Fried (1997: 25–43); see also Nelson (2015, forthcoming).

<sup>12</sup> Bullough (2004), posthumously published (the author had died in 2002); see further Ganz (2003: *passim*).

<sup>13</sup> Garrison (1997: 97–124); Story (2003).

<sup>14</sup> Geary (2006).

<sup>15</sup> Augustine ([426], 1955), XVIII, 12.

of Noah's third son Japhet.<sup>16</sup> The earliest example of Christian scholars' so-called 'T-O' map of Europe dates from the 9th century and shows Europe constituted by the lands west of the River Don (Tanis)—modern Ukraine, the Carpathian Basin and Balkans, and Greece.<sup>17</sup> But Europe had special meaning for what turns out to be a more specific group. Virtually every early medieval text that refers to *Europa* was written by someone who was Irish or Anglo-Saxon. Cathwulf, for instance, probably Anglo-Saxon, possibly Irish, wrote *c.*775 when Charlemagne had just taken over the Lombard kingdom in Italy urging him to 'thank God for raising you to the honour of the glory of the *regnum Europae*'.<sup>18</sup> Alcuin in 793, not long after returning to Francia after a 3-year stay in England, heard that the monastery of Lindisfarne had been attacked by pagan Northmen, and he wrote to the abbot offering some history as consolation: 'nearly all *Europa* was laid waste [in the 5th century] by . . . the Goths and Huns but now, thanks to God, Europe shines adorned with churches as the heavens shine with stars'.<sup>19</sup> A generation before Alcuin, a much wider audience had been evoked by the probably Irish author, *c.*700, of the *Life of St Gertrude*: 'Who living in *Europa* does not know the loftiness, the names and the localities of [Gertrude's] lineage?'—'as if', commented Karl Leyser, 'there were a European public to discuss such matters'.<sup>20</sup> That 'as if . . .' tempts the thought that such a public did exist, and that lay elites too were familiar with a concept of Europe that combined mythological and geographical meanings with a social reality of courts, halls, linked with family-endowed churches: places where 'birth, names and localities' mattered, milieux not wholly confined to elites. The very people portrayed by the Roman poet Virgil as in a land 'sundered far from the whole world', that is, people in and from the British Isles, where Charles never ruled, reached out to what would become his empire in their claims to belong within Europe.

\* \* \*

The author of the epic 'Charles the Great and Pope Leo', one of a number of poets at

<sup>16</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XIV, at points in the text that differ in different manuscripts, and *De natura rerum* following c. 48, 'de partibus terrae'. See below, n. 17.

<sup>17</sup> The 'T-O' Map (in French 'la carte OT') was so-called because within the O of the *orbis terrarum* (circle of lands) the cross-bar of a T formed schematically by the rivers Don and Nile marked off Asia in the upper half of the circle, while in the lower half of the circle the T's column formed schematically by the Mediterranean divided Europe to the onlooker's left and Africa to the right: see Gautier Dalché (1997), chap. VIII, 693–764, esp. 705–8, 709–33, and Plates I, II (9th-century), III, VIII (9th-century). Gautier Dalché has demolished the idea that Isidore's own text (or any now-lost early copy) was accompanied by a T-O Map, though he thinks that later readings of Isidore's text could have given rise to such a map.

<sup>18</sup> Cathwulf to Charles, *Epistolae variorum Carlo magno regnante* no. 7, in Dümmler, (1895: 501–5, at 503).

<sup>19</sup> Alcuin, *Ep.* 20, to Bishop Higbald of Lindisfarne, in Dümmler (1895: 56–8, at 57).

<sup>20</sup> Leyser (1992: 25–47, at 28–9).

or linked to Charles's court, was the only one to call his patron *pater Europae*, thereby situating the king's paternity firmly in the present, c.800, and in a world of patriarchal authority linked to the classical past.<sup>21</sup> The theme of the epic was Charles's reign up to July 799: his deeds in war and in peace, his learning and patronage, his building of Aachen. There was a vivid description of Charles's royal hunt preceded by a splendid court procession. The rest of the poem told how the king, while taking a nap during the hunt, had a terrible dream that Pope Leo III had been attacked in Rome (this was on 25 April 799, when an enemy faction blinded him and cut out his tongue but by a miracle he recovered) and had fled Rome to journey across the Alps, and how Charles received him at a great military assembly at Paderborn in Saxony. The details on the ritual staging of Leo's arrival and reception suggest a date of composition not far from the time of these events.

The poet began by imagining himself a sailor, his boat blown 'to where the lighthouse or beacon of Europe [*Europae pharus*] gleams with light from afar'. Later, the poet extolled 'King Charles . . . | the venerable apex of Europe [*Europae apex*], best father, hero, | Augustus, and also mighty in the city where a second Rome | flowering anew, arises with its mighty mass to great heights.' The king was described setting out for the hunt, as 'the venerable beacon of Europe'. The poem's climax was the meeting at Paderborn of 'the king, *pater Europae*, and Leo, the highest pastor in the world'. Charles makes a tremendous show of his military power; and when Pope Leo comes close, he's astonished to see 'the peoples of such diverse parts of the world, and how varied they are in looks, speech, clothes and weapons'.

The king as lighthouse belonged with the nautical metaphor of the poet's voyage towards his patron.<sup>22</sup> Charles in 811 ordered the rebuilding of the actual lighthouse at Boulogne 'put up in antiquity for the guiding of sailors'.<sup>23</sup> Imperial lighthouse-building at (probably) Boulogne is mentioned in the Roman historian Suetonius's *Life of Caligula*. Charles's courtier Einhard (d.840) drew heavily on Suetonius's *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* in his own *Life of Charles* written in (probably) 829.<sup>24</sup> What makes

<sup>21</sup> 'Karolus magnus et Leo papa' Dümmler (1881a: ll. 1–536, 366–79) (here attributed to Angilbert). The authorship of the poem is much debated: Schaller (1976: 136–68), greatly improves on an older case for Einhard as author; Godman (1985: 22–4, 196–207) (translating ll. 1–176 only), proposes 'Einhard' as author; and Godman (1986: 82–91), leaves the authorship uncertain; Stella (2001: 19–33) proposes Moduin as author; Hack (1999: iii: 19–33, at 22–4) sits on the fence; Scheck (2012: 13–38) feistily proposes a nun as author, but disregards the major themes of the poem. See below.

<sup>22</sup> See Curtius (1953: 128–30).

<sup>23</sup> *Annales regni Francorum* (s.a. 811), ed. F. Kurze (1895: 135). Sea-borne enemies were already active in 810 when a Danish fleet of '200 ships'(!) attacked the Frisian Islands, possibly en route for the mouths of the Loire and the Garonne: Astronomus, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris* c. 15, ed. Treppe (1995: 325 and n. 181).

<sup>24</sup> Tischler (2001: i: 151–235).

Einhard plausible as the author, perhaps 30 years before, of ‘Charles the Great and Pope Leo’ is that he is mentioned in a poem on the court written by Alcuin in 796 as a skilled designer and manager of great building works, hence his nickname ‘Bezaleel’, after the temple-builder in Exodus 31: 2–5, and also as ‘expert in poems about Troy’, that is, Virgil’s *Aeneid*.<sup>25</sup> ‘Apex of Europe’ comes in the lengthy Virgil-inspired section on the construction of ‘second Rome’ at Aachen, including its splendid church, still to be seen today. Einhard, in charge of all this building, perhaps rebuilt the lighthouse too, and even saw to its being mentioned in the court-produced Royal Frankish Annals. Empire was being reinvented in practical as well as ideological dimensions. Einhard’s poem (and I am going to assume it is Einhard’s) conveys the built and written legacies of ancient Rome, and the geographical extent of Charles’s realm as viewed from Aachen in 799.

If poetry were all there was to it, there would be room for scepticism. But by 799, there were signs in a range of prose genres that Charles’s sights were fixed on empire in the Roman sense of an accumulation of provinces. In 790, a huge treatise correcting Greek (that is, Byzantine) errors on images and image-veneration was begun at Charles’s behest. The preface gave Charles’s title an imperial ring: king of the Franks, the Gauls, Germany, Italy, and the provinces neighbouring these.<sup>26</sup> At the Council of Frankfurt in July 794, the bishops of the various provinces sent letters in varied styles which could also be seen as representing multiple lands and peoples, as in the Roman Empire.<sup>27</sup>

Charlemagne’s wars looked Roman too. They played a crucial part in his empire-building in the 790s: new momentum, vital for military success, was gained not so much by wars against the Saxons which continued, on and off, for 30 years, but the wars launched from Bavaria in 791–3. Using old Roman military roads and forts along the Danube river, as well as the river itself, Charlemagne’s armies and boatmen took the eastern frontier (or at least zone of influence) to Rome’s old frontier region, Pannonia, which resulted in the annexation of what would later become Austria and part of Hungary.<sup>28</sup> In 795–6, armies recruited from plural peoples led by generals appointed by Charles crushed the power of the Avars, a Eurasian people long settled in Central Europe. Vast quantities of Avar loot were brought back to Aachen: Einhard wrote in *The Life of Charles*, ‘the Franks seemed to have been poor until then, so rich

<sup>25</sup> Alcuin, *Carmen XXVI*, in (Dümmmler, 1881b: l. 21, 245): ‘Beleel [i.e. Bezeleel] Hiliacis [i.e. Ilianis] doctus in odis’.

<sup>26</sup> *Opus Caroli regis contra Synodum* [i.e. against the Council of Nicaea of 787] (*Libri Carolini*), ed. Freeman & Meyvaert (1998: 97).

<sup>27</sup> Concilium Franconofurtense of 794, ed. Werminghoff (1908: 110–71, at 111–56). See Close (2011: 101–19, 146–53). See also Fried (1994: 25–34).

<sup>28</sup> Wolfram (1987: 253–60); Pohl (1988).



did they now become'.<sup>29</sup> Though Einhard characteristically highlighted the Franks, they were not the only beneficiaries. A contemporary Anglo-Saxon author writing annals at York, presumably informed by Alcuin from Aachen, wrote that transporting all the gold and silver and precious robes of silk from Avaria [central Hungary] to Aachen took 15 wagons, each pulled by 4 oxen.<sup>30</sup> The *Royal Frankish Annals* reported: 'God's steward [Charles] sent a large part of the treasure to Rome to the thresholds of the apostles, but the rest he distributed to his great men, clerical and lay, and to his other faithful men.'<sup>31</sup> Roman-style triumph was followed by imperial largesse. The contemporary Byzantine chronicler Theophanes (died 817/818), registered the new reach of Charlemagne. Theophanes' historical work went back to antiquity, and included information on the Avars from the 5th century down to the 8th. He clearly had in his mind a division of space that resembled Isidore's and gave rise to a T-O map of the world. Theophanes consistently locates the Avars in Europe, that is, west of the Don, Ukraine and the Balkans, and he distinguishes them from other enemies of the 'Romans' in Asia.<sup>32</sup>

As it happened, there was what might be retrospectively identified as a Europe-wide window of opportunity, opening onto eastern as well as western parts, in the years between 797 and 802. To appreciate the window, it's necessary to stand back, and look at the early years of Carolingian rule in the Frankish kingdom. Between the 720s and the 750s, two successive Byzantine emperors had commanded the destruction of icons, whose veneration had bonded for centuries the whole of Christendom, in east and west.<sup>33</sup> The first Carolingian king Pippin, Charles's father, stood firm in support of icon-veneration and a series of popes denounced Greek heresy. But this did not prevent growing contacts with the Greeks, sometimes Pippin taking the initiative, sometimes responding to theirs. There was an attempt to forge a dynastic marriage alliance in 767, when the Greek Emperor Constantine V urged Pippin to agree to the marriage of his daughter to the young Byzantine emperor Leo IV.<sup>34</sup> Pippin died in 768, and the princess became an abbess. In 774, Charlemagne took power in most of Italy, in a near-bloodless conquest.<sup>35</sup> This I think was the most important single

<sup>29</sup> Einhard (1911: 16).

<sup>30</sup> On these 'York Annals', the so-called *Annales Nordhumbrani*, preserved in Symeon of Durham's (12th-century) *Historia regum* (s.a. 795), see Story (2003: 101).

<sup>31</sup> *Annales regni Francorum* (s.a. 796: 98, 99).

<sup>32</sup> Mango & Scott (1997: 446–7).

<sup>33</sup> For this and an excellent account of what followed, see Noble (2009: 46–110, 140–5); see also McCormick (2004: 221–41).

<sup>34</sup> Codex Carolinus, ed. Gundlach (1892: no. 45: 562); see McCormick (1994: i: 130–1).

<sup>35</sup> Cathwulf to Charlemagne (see above, n. 18), 502, where this is the seventh of God's blessings on the king: 'Alpes intrasti, inimicis fugientibus, opulentissimam quoque civitatem etiam Papiam cum rege sine cruoris effusione et insuper cum omnibus thesauris eius adprehendisti.'

moment in Charlemagne's reign. It recreated what had been the transalpine axis of the western Roman Empire, linking Gaul with Italy under one ruler. Still more important, it brought the Franks into quite new relationships with a set of Mediterranean powers, including the papacy but also Byzantium. In 781, a year after Leo IV's death, envoys of his widow Irene, now the regent, came west to seek Charles's eldest daughter Hrotrude as a bride for the ten-year old Constantine VI.<sup>36</sup> What was envisaged was a traditional diplomatic alliance, where the bride was given by her parents and sent to live in her husband's land. During her betrothal, Hrotrude prepared herself by studying 'Greek language and literature and Roman imperial ways' with a scholar sent from Constantinople.<sup>37</sup> The decision of 'the most pious Eirene' and her son Constantine in 786 to restore icon veneration was intended to win support in the east and to restore harmonious relations with the papacy and the Franks. But Charles's response was at first hostile. He knew that the Greeks were intriguing against him on the southern border of his Italian kingdom, with the duke of Benevento, de facto a separate Lombard principality. In 788, Charles broke off Hrotrude's betrothal (let's hope she did not see all that learning of Greek as a waste of time), personally led a war against a Greek force that had landed in Benevento, and won a great battle: Alcuin wrote to an Irish friend, '4,000 Greeks were slain and 1,000 have been taken captive'.<sup>38</sup> News (and this news sounds reliable) travelled from one end of Europe to the other.

By the late 790s, the situation had changed dramatically. In a classic royal family scenario—as the anthropologist Jack Goody pointed out: 'the history of monarchy is stained with the blood of close kin'<sup>39</sup>—relations between Irene and her son had deteriorated. His lacklustre performance as emperor enabled her to stage a coup in August 797: she had him blinded in such a way that (unlike Pope Leo) he could make no come-back; her five-year stint as empress regnant astonished contemporaries. She sent embassies in 797 and 798, to seek 'peace and alliance' with Charles. He returned envoys of his own.<sup>40</sup> These were times of many travels. When the pope, miraculously healed, fled to Charles's protection in Francia in July 799, envoys from Constantinople were with him at Paderborn.<sup>41</sup>

Charlemagne may well have had personal experience of being stained with the blood of close kin. After his younger brother's death back in December 771, his widow had fled with her sons to Italy 'for no apparent reason, having spurned her husband's

<sup>36</sup> *Annales Mosellani* (s.a. 781), ed. Lappenberg (1859: 497).

<sup>37</sup> Theophanes, *Chronicle* [s.a. 781/782], ed. Mango & Scott (628).

<sup>38</sup> Alcuin, *Ep.* 7 [to Colcu], 32.

<sup>39</sup> Goody (1966: 142).

<sup>40</sup> *Annales regni Francorum* (s.a. 797, 798: 100–1, 104–5). For the evidence of the so-called 'Cologne Notice', see Nelson (2007a: chap. XII: 17).

<sup>41</sup> *Annales Guelferbytani* (s.a. 799), MGH SS I, 45: 'Et hic [ad Phaderprunnin] venit papa Leo ad eum et alii Romani consiliatores eius 203; et missi imperatissa [sic] ibi fuerunt.'

brother': thus Charlemagne's biographer Einhard writing disingenuously or deeply ironically in c.829.<sup>42</sup> In Italy, during the early months of 774 in which Charlemagne consolidated his power in northern Italy, he captured his nephews. They are never heard of again. In 806, in the projected division of the *regnum* after his death, Charlemagne forbade any of his sons to 'cause to be accused before him, to kill or mutilate or blind or tonsure against their will' any of their nephews, 'our grandsons'.<sup>43</sup> Bad memories lay behind those words. When it came to ruthlessness Irene and Charles were a match for one another. Observing this is not to condemn but to understand. Both were in positions of high office in hereditary succession systems which Goody's larger view enables European historians to see in their own histories as structurally requiring dynastic exclusion, shedding, demotion, or being 'quietly liquidated' in a wicked uncle scenario.<sup>44</sup>

Could this hard-bitten middle-aged pair (they were aged respectively 52 and perhaps 50) have contemplated marriage? According to Theophanes, they could—though he imputes the proposal to Charlemagne.<sup>45</sup> True, they lived 2,250 km apart. But chaste spiritual marriage of elderly couples was a venerable Christian tradition, and the role of women in peace-making was an even more general and not specifically Christian one. Their rule together could, as Theophanes put it, 'unite Eastern and Western parts', meaning parts of Europe. In the west, Alcuin's letters reverberated with biblically derived warnings: '*tempora periculosa sunt*. These are dangerous times . . .'.<sup>46</sup> In Charlemagne's imperial coronation by the pope in Rome as emperor of the Romans on Christmas Day 800 were many meanings, but one was eschatological, that is, it pertained to measurings of time and prophesies about the end of time. Calculations based on the Book of Daniel's six ages reckoned the end of the sixth age would fall at the end of 800, or, to be precise, and since writers of annals frequently reckoned the new year from Christmas Day, it would fall on 24 December 800. Roman prophesies were reworked and amplified in the 7th-century work on the Apocalypse by a Syriac writer Pseudo-Methodius, translated into Latin early in the 8th century, to predict 'a Last Emperor of the Greeks, that is, the Romans, who would come out against the enemies of God, establish himself in Jerusalem, destroy the Son of Perdition, and

<sup>42</sup>Einhard, *Vita Karoli* c. 3, 6: ' . . . defuncto Karlomanno, uxor et filii . . . Italiam fuga petiit et nullis existentibus causis, spreto mariti fratre, sub Desiderii regis Langobardorum patrociniū se cum liberis suis contulit'. Translators have handled this statement delicately.

<sup>43</sup>*Divisio regni*, ed. Boretius (1883: 130).

<sup>44</sup>Goody, 'Introduction' (1966: 24–39, esp. 29–34).

<sup>45</sup>Theophanes, *Chronicle*, ed. Mango & Scott (653).

<sup>46</sup>Brandes, (1997: i: 49–79, at 66–70) pointing out that the future tense in 2 Tim. 3, 1: 'in novissimis diebus instabunt tempora periculosa', frequently cited by Alcuin, was turned into a present tense in a number of the adaptations of this warning in his own letters: Epp. 116, 121, 122, 174, 193, 206, in MGH Epp. KA II: 171, 176, 179, 288, 320, 342.

ascend Golgotha to place his crown upon the Cross'.<sup>47</sup> In the late 790s (there's something about the '90s isn't there?), men interested in prophecies were to be found close to both Irene and Charlemagne.<sup>48</sup> Archbishop Hildebald of Cologne, Charlemagne's archchancellor, had a collection of calculations and synchronicities made which included: 'in 798 AD king Charles received one third of the people of Saxony as hostages, and envoys came from Greece to hand over *regnum et imperium* to him'.<sup>49</sup> Not everyone thought about or knew, let alone succumbed to, the terrors of the end-time. But eschatology was grist to the rumour-mills of courts in Aachen and Constantinople, and also Jerusalem whence the patriarch in 799 sent an envoy to Charlemagne with relics from the holy sepulchre. The king responded by sending back an envoy, whom the patriarch sent back along with two envoys of his own in 800, 'bearing the keys of the sepulchre and the keys of the city and mount Zion, with a banner'.<sup>50</sup> They arrived at Rome on 23 December 800. These people were capable of timing long-distance travel connections to a T. Shrewd diplomatic plans jostled with eschatological fantasies in the brains of Charles and Irene and their counsellors. Could the problem of the imperial title be solved at a stroke in this window of opportunity?

As things turned out, it couldn't—but not because the solution itself was unthinkable. The window closed when a former henchman of Irene's removed the empress from power on 31 October 802, and later that same day had himself crowned emperor in the Great Church, Hagia Sophia. From this moment, *femineum imperium* was a thing of the past (Irene died in exile a few months later). Normal service had been resumed as soon as possible. Intermittent hostilities and negotiations between east and west ended only when a two-emperor solution was agreed in 811/812 between the Emperor of the Romans (meaning Greeks) in the east and the emperor (without further definition) in the west. There followed a long-term stand-off. As for a united Europe: that had already been postponed indefinitely by the time Charlemagne died on 28 January 814. Soon springing to life were fictions and fantasies about him.

This is a good time to pause and take stock: to assess from the vantage-point of 814 how historians nowadays assess Charlemagne's achievement, making allowances for what he himself could not possibly have achieved, or even conceived. My focus in this section will be, as it were, on Charles before Charlemagne, without anachronism, and on his government's impact across much of what is now Europe. The effectiveness of that government is currently being reaffirmed, chiefly because the administrative

<sup>47</sup> Brandes (1997: 51–63); see now also Latowsky (2013).

<sup>48</sup> Theophanes, *Chronicle*, ed. Mango & Scott (638–9); Brandes (1997: 56–7).

<sup>49</sup> See Brandes (1997: 56). For a convincing reconstruction of how the York Annals, and specifically their account of 800, were compiled (cf. above, n. 30), see Story (2003: 112–26, esp. 115).

<sup>50</sup> *Annales regni Francorum* (s.a. 799, 800: 108–13).

records have been undergoing an overdue re-evaluation.<sup>51</sup> The surviving records are being recognised for what they are: chance survivals, tips of an iceberg. There were a lot of records about in Charles's realm, and in them his agents were encouraged to see themselves as office-holders, competent accountants, made literally accountable. I have chosen just one such record, both for its exemplary significance, and because though long known it has only very recently become possible to appreciate, thanks to the fine work of Michael McCormick.<sup>52</sup> This is a copy, perhaps made in the late 820s in the same routine administrative format as the original, that is, a roll, of a document made in 808. *Breve Commematorii*, 'Summary of a report' could not look more ordinary. In fact it is quite *extraordinary*. It reports on the houses of God and monasteries in the Holy Land viewed, and their inmates enumerated, by Charles's *missi*, officers-cum-envoys, in 808. Its purpose was to allocate financial support, alms, from the west. Lines 22–3 have a little gem of information: *Monasteria puellarum xxvi, de imperio domni Karoli quae ad sepulchrum Domini serviunt Deo sacratas xvii*, 'a convent of 26 women, of whom 17 are nuns or consecrated widows from the Lord Charles's empire who serve at the Holy Sepulchre': a little outpost of Europe in Asia.<sup>53</sup>

Especially in Charles's imperial years, high functionaries were being summoned frequently to Aachen: so frequently, in fact, that some built and maintained houses there.<sup>54</sup> There they heard a peremptory voice urging greater efforts, castigating in anger but also in sorrow their corruption and carelessness, reminding them of the needs of the *pauperes*, the less powerful and unprotected—for the empire needed their services too.<sup>55</sup> Charles's empire was an empire of the mind—or minds: a collective enterprise. There were some large assemblies, usually at Aachen but sometimes at other important palaces; but there were far more local ones, attested chiefly in private charters.<sup>56</sup> The state was always a congeries of statelets, to which power devolved. Charles himself said he could not supervise everyone, but that each must strive to observe their own duties to God and emperor 'as far as understanding and strength

<sup>51</sup> Innes (2011: 155–203); Esders & Haubrichs (2015, forthcoming); Davis (2015, forthcoming), with comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography; and the AHRC-funded 'Making of Charlemagne's Europe' project, directed by Alice Rio, a searchable database of all charters, public and private, known from the reign of Charlemagne (in progress).

<sup>52</sup> McCormick (2011).

<sup>53</sup> McCormick (2011: 65) (with text and translation at 206–7) noting that 42.8 per cent of all monastic personnel in Jerusalem in 808 were women.

<sup>54</sup> See Innes (2011: 186–203), for the 802 assembly and its spin-offs; for 811, see Nelson (2001). For magnates' houses, see Nelson (2007b: chap. XIV: 7–8).

<sup>55</sup> Nelson (2010a: 383–401).

<sup>56</sup> Major assemblies documented in capitularies include those of Thionville & Nijmegen (805, 806), and Aachen (808, 809, 811), MGH Capit. I, nos. 43–6, and 8–53, 61–5, 72–3. Regional and local assemblies documented in charters include the Bavarian ones discussed by Fouracre (1995: ii: 771–803), and by Brown (2001: esp. 102–23), on the role of Archbishop Arn.

allow'.<sup>57</sup> Like many political utterances, this was trite, but true. Viewed spatially, elites regionally and locally held the stage, intimately involved in sharing and grasping power, intermittently in touch with the palace. Decentring was required then. Historians need to decentre now. Structurally, and in terms of lived experience, assembly politics at local and regnal levels were geared in to one another.<sup>58</sup> Charles, given such embedded forms of social power, and limited communications technology, could never have contemplated changing this situation. The workings-out of dynastic inheritance made division inevitable, and the parts increasingly separate, especially those that would become Germany and France, and Charles never planned otherwise. Italy was different, in that attempts to restore a working transalpine axis and imperial presence recurred. After the 10th century, however, this had little to do with Charlemagne, except as a form of myth-history.<sup>59</sup> The longer-run consequence was that decentred power in regional territories and in lordships survived the weakening of royal government.

Nevertheless, as long as Charlemagne ruled, and thereafter through the reigns of his sons and grandsons, assembly politics could never be separated from the needs of war. The keeping of the peace within the patria, and the defence of local people, were main tasks of counts and bishops, abbots and abbesses, and their deputies and subordinates, whether the threats came from human predators, such as feuding nobles or troops marching towards the frontiers, or wild animals like wolves. Taking armed men beyond the frontiers was almost an annual event. All earlier medieval kings were expected to direct and often to lead campaigns. Charlemagne's youthful training was in war, and his reputation grew during and after his lifetime, thanks especially to his wars against the Saxons, which loom large in the narrative of the Royal Frankish Annals, and thence in Einhard's *Life of Charles*. Bloody battles in the civil wars that dogged the reign of Charlemagne's successor were described, exceptionally, by participants who were also laymen: Nithard, Charlemagne's grandson, and a noble, Angilbert. Nithard praised Charlemagne for having in his lifetime 'tamed the ferocious iron hearts of Franks and barbarians with controlled terror [*moderato terrore*]'.<sup>60</sup> The two rebellions of Franks in Charlemagne's reign were ruthlessly crushed but the very few documented exemplary executions of ringleaders were apparently enough to deter imitators.

Can Charlemagne, then, be regarded as a man of peace, a suitable icon for Europe post-1945? Or has he been thus represented by post-war Germans, to fit a German bill? The answers to both questions may be, yes: but that does not make them

<sup>57</sup> Capit. I, no. 33, c. 3: 92.

<sup>58</sup> Reuter, (2006: 193–216).

<sup>59</sup> Wickham (1994: 275–93); MacLean (2010: 394–416); Bullough (2003: 389–97, esp. 393–7).

<sup>60</sup> Nithard (2012: 4).

historically wrong. In the early Hitler years, many north Germans refused to stomach Charles the Saxon-slayer, perpetrator of a ‘bloodbath’ at Verden in Saxony, where, according to both versions of the Royal Frankish Annals (but no other sources), 4,500 Saxons were beheaded on a single day at Charles’s behest.<sup>61</sup> These were legal proceedings, justified on the grounds that *fides*, fidelity, had been sworn by those Saxons on oaths, and the oaths then flagrantly broken. The men who handed over those Saxons to death were other Saxons who had kept their oaths. The exemplary punishments apparently had the desired effect. By 785, further large numbers of Saxons had accepted Christianity and sworn faith to Charlemagne. Later, when still-resisting Saxons were deported en masse with their families into Frankish territory, there is no mention in any source of slaughtering the men and enslaving the women and children. The aim, rather, was to assimilate the deportees into Christendom, just as the high-born sons of the Saxon nobility were held as hostages in the households or on the properties of Charlemagne’s regional elites. Similarly, the defeats of the Avars in 795 and 796 were immediately followed by a drive for conversion, and strong warnings from Alcuin that to repeat the harshness shown to some of the Saxons would be counter-productive. The limited evidence suggests Avar elite conversion accompanied by intermarriage with Slav populations, and slow christianisation in the course of the 9th and 10th centuries.

Something similar had occurred in the religious practice of those in the Franks’ own territories, and in conquered areas that had long been nominally Christian from Brittany to Bavaria, and from Frisia to central Italy. The Carolingian Renaissance helped generalise processes of internal and expansionary christianisation. Promoting these was the work of elites and functionaries and patrons, ecclesiastical and lay. Charles drove their efforts forward, and funded them up to a point; but they mostly operated in regions far away from the court, and it was in the regions that these efforts persisted after 814, and increasingly from the 830s.<sup>62</sup> Decentring is, again, the right word for a realistic approach. Alms-giving, and relic-veneration may stand as emblematic.<sup>63</sup> In both, huge collective investment was involved, before and after Charles’s reign, in material terms. Yet Charles’s reign was critical in setting a standard for practice and extending it, however patchily, across Europe. It might be said that he won wars, and also won a series of truces, which in time became peaces entrenched under his successors, and repeated in regions such as Carinthia and Normandy. Neither in Saxony nor Avaria did Charlemagne make a wilderness and call it peace.

Geography focused Charles’s mind, and constrained what he could do. Economic change, even growth, had already begun before Charles’s reign began, but there is

<sup>61</sup> *Annales regni Francorum* (s.a. 782: 62, 65); see now Nelson (2013: 1–29, at 23–9); cf. above, n. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Wood (2006), Part II.

<sup>63</sup> Mordek, (2005: 1–52); Smith (2012: 143–67).

considerably more evidence during and after it than before. Charles's coinage, and interventions in market prices during times of famine (and here I would stick with what I said in 2001) show a new combination of public and private interests. In the countryside, markets proliferated, and peasant producers could participate because credit was available.<sup>64</sup> A cluster of small monasteries datable to the late 8th century with a quality of artwork signalling powerful patronage were remote from population centres, but they served as, and protected through the relics they housed, commercial thoroughfares between Italy and southwest Germany.<sup>65</sup> The Rhine was an artery of trade that very effectively linked south-central Germany with Frisia. Two of Charles's three greatest projects, the building of a bridge across the Rhine at Mainz, and the making of a canal linking the Main (and via that the Rhine) and the Danube which flowed across Europe to its eastern frontier, were inspired not just by military and ideological (though certainly those), but also commercial concerns. The third project, the creation of a capital at Aachen, was strongly ideological. All three were in some sense short-lived, yet the trends that were already shaping the European economy unfolded long-term. The canal of 793, abandoned because of difficult climatic and geological conditions (a contemporary recognised these as occurring *naturaliter*), would have needed to be less than 4 km long. Both Napoleon and King Ludwig of Bavaria in the 19th century, and Hitler's engineers in the twentieth, made fresh attempts using different routes, but were unsuccessful. In 1991 the canal, taking still another route, was finally finished at 171 km long: its economic impact has been great. Some 2 km of Charles's canal survive at a place called Graben, 'ditch', conspicuous in the landscape, and recent excavations have revealed how Charles's men attempted to prop up the sides of their digging with oak timbers dendrochronologically dated to 793.<sup>66</sup>

\* \* \*

How was Charles made to connect with Europe after him? How did an empire of the mind become an empire of memory? Through an inexorable process of forgetting, neither the Carolingian Renaissance nor the administrative developments were to be greatly celebrated by medieval posterity. The memory of the Saxon Wars was smoothed into peaceful acculturation, the memory of Avaria obliterated. Two memories that endured were transmitted by Einhard. One, in chapter 9 of the *Life of Charles* dealing with events in 778, I shall deal with presently. The other, in chapter 16, was the

<sup>64</sup>The case was formidably made by Hendy (1988: 29–78). See further Bruand (2002: 155–84); Bougard (2010: 439–78).

<sup>65</sup>Nelson (2010b: 116–48, at 120–3).

<sup>66</sup>Ettel, Daim, Berg-Hobohm *et al.* (eds) (2014). My warm thanks go to Falko Daim of the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum at Mainz for keeping me abreast of his research and sharing the excitement of the team's findings.



description in the years *after* the imperial coronation of the arrivals at Charles's court of embassies from the king of the Persians, also known as the Caliph Har'un al-Rashid, in 801–2 and 807, bearing fabulous eastern gifts. Einhard deployed an old classical topos in which eastern gifts signalled submission to a universal empire. Rhetorically, the 'king of the Persians' displaced the emperor of the Greeks as the submissive ruler.<sup>67</sup> In 886, Notker of St-Gall, drawing on Einhard but viewing the Greeks in an 'orientalising mirror' (Chris Wickham's felicitous phrase), affirmed universality by contrasting the Greek king to the emperor in the west.<sup>68</sup> 'When Charles's chief envoy told the king at Constantinople that all was at peace in Charles's realm except for the trouble caused by the Saxons, that man [!] who was sluggish in idleness and useless for war replied, "O dear, why does my son [Charles] struggle against enemies who are very few and totally lack reputation or manly courage? You can have that people [the Saxons] with all that belongs to them!" When the envoy returned and reported this to the most warlike Charles, he laughed and said, "That king would have done you a lot more of a good turn if he'd granted you [a pair of] linen pants for your long journey back.'" No matter whether the all mouth and no trousers joke was actually Charles's, or Notker's (the words Notker uses for linen pants are those used in 9th-century church legislation on monks' apparel): either way, to dismiss the joke as 'coarse and vulgar' is to miss an entrée to 9th-century meanings and double-entendres which disparage both Saxons and Greeks as weak and unmanly, while asserting the manliness of Franks whether laymen or monks.<sup>69</sup>

Yet throughout the Middle Ages, prophecies and dreams connecting Charlemagne with some kind of united Europe became part of the European imaginary.<sup>70</sup> Among the earliest of such texts was one written for the West Frankish queen who was also the sister of the East Frankish king by an author hedging bets in the mid-10th century. Charlemagne's transferring of empire to the Franks paved the way for, in some unspecified future, a Frankish emperor to come to Jerusalem and hang his crown on the Mount of Olives. A more elaborate Italian version depicted King Harun assigning Charlemagne his power over the Holy Sepulchre: a unifying vision. The *Description of the Lord's Key and Crown*, produced in France at the royal court or at St-Denis,

<sup>67</sup> See Latowsky (2005: 25–57), and also Latowsky (2013) (see above, n. 47).

<sup>68</sup> Haefele (1959: 53); and see Wickham (1998: 245–56, at 55). (The translation below improves slightly on the one I offered in, 'Did Charlemagne have a private life?', in Bates, Crick & Hamilton (eds) Nelson (2006: 15–26, at 26).

<sup>69</sup> Barbero (2000: 142): 'la grossolanità e diciamo pure la volgarità'; cf. Latowsky (2013: 38–57). For the manliness of monks, see Coon (2010: 69–97).

<sup>70</sup> For what follows, see Morrissey (1997: 71–160); Gabriele (2011: 13–70, 107–28); Latowsky (2013: 58–96, and chaps 4 & 5, *passim*). For Germany, see Folz (1950); and for competing French and German appropriations, see Folz (1953), English trans. (1969), and especially Ehlers (2001), and Kintzinger (2005: 49–74 and *passim*). For Charlemagne in Spain, see Herbers (2003: 15–28).

presented a French Charlemagne who reached Jerusalem with a vast army, making the pagans flee without a battle. Charlemagne received relics of the Passion from the Greek emperor, and returning west via Constantinople ordered a magnificent church to be built at Aachen: a pacific imperial vision. In 1165, the emperor Frederick Barbarossa had Charlemagne canonised by the bishop of Liège, the diocese in which Aachen lay, and to whom the anti-pope Paschal III had delegated his authority in this particular case.<sup>71</sup> A huge candelabra in the Aachen church still documents the occasion. By now, the appeal of Charlemagne's journey to the East had been registered by a mass constituency. Prophecy had absorbed history, and with dynastic and military alliances between the Comnenan emperors in Byzantium and the Staufer in the West, a European project became, briefly, a reality. It dissolved in new rivalries between Germany and France.

Students of literature have contributed much to explaining how and why the legendary Charlemagne was a disputed legacy. But to my mind the best and certainly the briefest discussion remains the interdisciplinary one of James Fentress and Chris Wickham, where the disciplines in question are history and anthropology:<sup>72</sup> this may account for the relative neglect of their book by literary specialists. The emphasis here is on memory's transmission and contextualisation through time. Though Charlemagne was 'ever-present' in historical writings in almost every area historically connected with him, in the central medieval period, it was in France and Germany that he was remembered, but differently. In France (to simplify), oral traditions transmitted notably through the vernacular epic *The Song of Roland* constructed Charlemagne as protagonist of Christian victory not against the Basques of history in 778, but against the Saracens of timeless legend; the historic Roland, already attested in one segment of the manuscript tradition of Einhard's *Life of Charles*, is the heroic noble, faithful unto death. His last act was to blow his horn to summon Charlemagne—too late. 'The memory of the story . . . is as strong and stable as the memory of the actual events at Roncesvaux is fragile.' In Germany, Charlemagne was largely an ecclesiastical construct, a saint. In the 12th century, the two traditions merged with the production of a Latin version of the Roland legend, the *Historia Karoli Magni et Rothlandi*, purportedly by archbishop Turpin of Reims; and this was incorporated into the texts authorising the cult of Santiago de Compostella as well as into the *Grandes Chroniques* of France. Charlemagne, uniquely, was 'a generalized symbol of legitimacy that anyone could claim an association with'. 'The socially irrelevant gets forgotten'; that, and genre itself, explain why neither the Carolingian Renaissance nor administration were remembered in vernacular epic. Unexpected new forms of relevance account for

<sup>71</sup> Görich (2011: 268–82).

<sup>72</sup> Fentress & Wickham (1992: esp. 154–62, 171). The quotations below come from 155, 59, 161, 162 & 108.

the memory of the emperor in post-Risorgimento southern Italy as a dealer of justice: ‘brigands put on the mantle of Charlemagne, and invested him with local meaning, local attributes and even a local geography’.

At the level of the state, Charlemagne’s legend, came to reflect and augment not unity but division in Europe. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV developed Aachen in the 14th century as a cult-site for Karl der Grosse; and there was no French look-in. At Cologne in 1521, the first printed edition of Einhard’s *Life of Charles* was dedicated to Charles V, seen by some contemporaries as a future Last Emperor.<sup>73</sup> At Paris in 1623, the first ever map of Charlemagne’s empire was made for the French king Louis XIII who saw in it a blueprint for France’s eastward expansion.<sup>74</sup> Napoleon briefly created a single Europe over the name of Charlemagne. He looked back to the role of the Rhineland, or *Francia media*, in Charles’s empire, the historic heartland between Meuse and Rhine, from the mid-9th century called Lotharingia: Lothar’s-land. This region proved to be ‘the natural heart of Napoleon’s empire’.<sup>75</sup> The geography that underpinned ‘the social, economic and cultural elements at the core of the Napoleonic state system’, what had already been ‘the hub of European cultural and economic dynamism in the early modern period’, was now ‘central’. Here Michael Broers invokes two theories: the first is acculturation, signifying the elimination of indigenous traditions in an empire of conquest but in which the conquering power acknowledged underlying geopolitical forces, in this case the predisposition of compliant elites and already well-policed and assimilable urban populations willing to accept the new regime’s laws and tax demands in return for security and prosperity; the second theory is the blue banana.<sup>76</sup> Here are Lotharingia/the Rhineland viewed c.1990 from a satellite, and looking palely blue because of the light emanating from concentrated homes and factories and nodes of power—the heart of Europe. And here’s the blue banana itself—invented by French geographers who were not innocent academics: their map was meant to inspire politicians to move French industry eastwards—into the imagined banana. Economic geography isn’t the sole arbiter of boundaries.

What it offered were European possibilities, perceived with particular sharpness by Jean Monnet. I have read his *Memoirs*: Charlemagne is mentioned only once and not by Monnet. In March 1950, Monnet wrote that Adenauer was for pooling German and French sovereignty, but that Schuman thought this not yet feasible. ‘To me [Monnet] it mattered little whether these attitudes were sincere or not . . . Like the

<sup>73</sup> Tischler (2001: II: 1667–8).

<sup>74</sup> Goffart (1997: 53–60, at 54 with n. 6).

<sup>75</sup> Broers (2001: 135–54, esp. 138–4).

<sup>76</sup> A Google-search reveals the tendentious view of the geographer, Michel Brunet, who ‘revealed’ the Blue Banana.

chorus of some Greek tragedy, General de Gaulle added his eloquent commentary: “If one were not constrained to look at matters coolly, one would be dazzled by the prospect of what could be achieved by a combination of German and French strength . . . it would mean giving modern economic, social, strategic and cultural shape to the work of the Emperor Charlemagne.” But if in fact we had to look at matters coolly and to reject the dream of a Carolingian Europe totally and immediately integrated, was this any reason for making no effort at all? . . . [T]he time had come to act . . .<sup>77</sup> What drove Monnet was not the memory of Charlemagne, but the thought of coal and steel as the basis of a Franco-German-Benelux economic community. De Gaulle, like most of the founding Fathers of Europe had a strong sense that Christianity still provided distinctively European ideals and values, not necessarily linked with Charlemagne. What drove all these men inexorably was the need for peace, and for Europe’s reconstruction. Winston Churchill shared these views passionately and consistently, from the 1930s through to the 1950s, without ever remembering—or anyone ever mentioning—Charlemagne at all.<sup>78</sup>

Monnet’s contemporary the German medievalist Ernst Curtius pointed to another way of saving Europe post-war. *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* appeared in Switzerland in 1948: ‘When the German catastrophe came, I decided to serve the idea of a medievalistic humanism . . . [My book] grew out of a concern for the preservation of Western culture. It seeks to serve an understanding of the Western cultural tradition . . .’<sup>79</sup> Norman Cantor wrote in 1991, ‘It is through the study of literature, art and philosophy of the Middle Ages that further code-breaking entry into the medieval mentality will primarily occur well into the 21st century.’<sup>80</sup> That is where we are now! You may well agree that Cantor, in pressing the claims of medieval studies in the USA, had a point, though to my mind, further code-breaking will depend on the social sciences as well, and on comparing western with other cultural traditions.<sup>81</sup> A humanist education that has space for the Middle Ages has added value. Only so, will the connection between Charlemagne and Europe remain an intellectual freeway.

In 2000, Max Kerner of the University of Aachen asked, ‘Hat Karl der Grosse eine Zukunft?’—has Charlemagne a future?<sup>82</sup> In Germany, interest in Charlemagne still generates large amounts of cutting-edge research, some of it reaching a wide public. The Paderborn Exhibition was visited by 311,000 people between July and

<sup>77</sup> Monnet (1976), cited from the English trans. by Mayne (1978: 221–2).

<sup>78</sup> I am very grateful to Roland Quinault for letting me read his unpublished paper, ‘Churchill and Europe’.

<sup>79</sup> Curtius (see above, n. 22) (1953: Foreword, viii).

<sup>80</sup> Cantor (1991: 161).

<sup>81</sup> See for instance Goody (2010).

<sup>82</sup> Kerner (2000: 272–7).



**Figure 1.** Once the Eastern Emperor at Constantinople had agreed to recognise Charlemagne's imperial title in 812, Charlemagne ordered a small number of mints to produce an imperial coinage. Only about 40 coins are extant, reflecting the very short period of issue, possibly as late as September 813–January 814; but at least 11 mints produced them, suggesting relatively high productivity. This one bears on the obverse Charles's portrait in profile, with the inscription KAROLVS IMP[er]ator AVGVSTVS and the mint-name M[ainz], and on the reverse XPICTIANA (for Christiana) RELIGIO and a temple, standing perhaps for the Christian Church. This may be considered the only strictly contemporary 'portrait' of Charlemagne, depicted Roman-style, in profile, with imperial laurel-wreath, but also barbarian-style (imitating Theoderic?), with a moustache, and in a military cloak held at the right shoulder with an understated brooch. Courtesy BnF.

October 1999.<sup>83</sup> The 1,200th anniversary of Charlemagne's imperial coronation in 2000 was widely celebrated, not just by scholars but by the public. Interest was intensified by the launch of the euro in various European countries. Kerner insisted that it remained 'important and essential to commit oneself to a European image of Charlemagne (*ein europäisches Karlsbild*)'. Charlemagne had a future in Europe, then?

But does today's Europe, the Europe of 28, want Charlemagne? Relatively few French or Italian historians have devoted themselves to Charlemagne recently. German or North American historians have turned instead to exposing myth-histories. In the United Kingdom Charlemagne is enthusiastically studied in select universities. Yet my media contacts say the Great Man lacks 'name-recognition' among the British public. Most English voters today express little interest in Europe. Many want out of Europe altogether. They are not the only ones to have lost faith in Europe. Mistrust is widespread now in countries most hard-hit by the banking crash of 2008 and its aftermath. A study in 1999 of German politicians' attitudes as expressed in speeches in the Reichstag, found that Charlemagne was 'cold coffee'.<sup>84</sup> Is the coffee any warmer in

<sup>83</sup> Nelson (2000: 295–9).

<sup>84</sup> Kerner (2000: 277).

Germany today? Or in any other EU member state, when so many European citizens feel powerless and voiceless, and perceive EU institutions as remote and unaccountable? Couldn't more be done with the Charlemagne Prize, awarded annually by the city fathers of Aachen for contributions to European unity?<sup>85</sup>

If Charlemagne can play a part in a re-imagined European future, it will be for new reasons.<sup>86</sup> It will be a matter not of falsifying history, but distinguishing it from myth, addressing it squarely and writing about it in terms meaningful to 21st-century Europeans. Here are some thoughts. First, in its multiple and often conflicted forms, Christianity has a part to play in unlocking Europe's medieval and modern pasts. Literacy and Latin learning in Charlemagne's world were modes of communication accessible to lay-people through signs and symbols, sermons and prayers, and coins, all with messages to be decoded. But for access to Europe's multi-religious or irreligious, and multicultural, present and future, other elements are needed as well. Charlemagne's contacts with the emperors in Constantinople and the caliph in Baghdad, his alliances with local powers in Muslim Spain, his gifts to monasteries in the Holy Land, suggest ways of understanding cultural interchange which exclude Charlemagne as proto-crusader. Second, the widespread sense of political belonging inherent in graduated levels of assembly politics, and collective interactions of people with Charlemagne's government, could freshen responses to a perceived deficit of legitimacy in the EU today. Third, Charlemagne enlisted relatively large numbers of local men in the delivery of justice and peace, in grassroots contexts where the boundaries between free and unfree were negotiable and where effective communication was a priority. If History teaches no lessons, it can signpost oracles and provoke questions from us who live in the EU.

Charlemagne and his contemporaries thought much about peace, but to explain *how* they thought, historians have to work like anthropologists, treating another culture on its own terms, thinking across cultures, comparatively and historically. The late Satish Sabarwal, an anthropologist of India who also read widely in European history, saw what was distinctive about Europe not in its science and technology but in its capacity 'progressively to reconstitute itself'.<sup>87</sup> Ideas certainly were reconstituted in Charlemagne's Europe, of conquering peace expressed in liturgy, of rights enshrined in diverse laws, of the responsibilities of office-holders to ruler, and the answerability of ruler to peoples. At Aachen, on 11 September 813, Charlemagne exacted from his son and successor what was in effect a coronation oath. Recently, a Swiss scholar took

<sup>85</sup> An inspection of the list of prize-winners via Google is instructively puzzling.

<sup>86</sup> What follows is an English version (without the endnotes) of the last paragraph of my '*Pater Europae? Karl der Große und Europa*', Nelson (2014b: 420–7).

<sup>87</sup> Sabarwal (1992: 145–61). See Pearson (2011: 504–6).

a pot shot at the Holy Roman Empire: ‘No empire, but, for us Europeans, rather what must remain holy is what brings together and holds together peoples and human beings as different—and this entails a recognition of their differentness.’<sup>88</sup> Diverse we are. What makes Europe is a bundle of paradoxes, but these include historical inspirations for fresh attempts at ‘innovating and retouching’, ‘progressively to reconstitute’. Therein could lie futures for Charlemagne and for Europe.

### *Acknowledgements*

I am very grateful to John Gillingham for critical comment on, and suggested improvements to, the lecture as read.

## REFERENCES

- Alcuin (1895), ‘*Ep. 20, to Bishop Higbald of Lindisfarne*’, in E. Dümmler (ed.), *MGH Epistolae Karolini Aevi II* (Berlin), 56–8.
- Augustine ([426], 1955), *City of God*, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, *Corpus Christianorum*, 47, 48, 2 vols (Turnhout, Brepols), XVIII, 12.
- Barbero, A. (2000), *Carlo Magno un padre dell’Europa* (Rome, Laterza).
- Boretius, A. (ed.) (1883), *Divisio regni*, Capit. no. 45 (806), c. 19, *MGH Capitularia regum Francorum I* (Hanover), 130.
- Bougard, F. (2010), ‘Le crédit dans l’Occident du haut Moyen Âge’, in Jean-Pierre Devroey, Laurence Feller & Régine Le Jan (eds), *Les élites et la richesse*, Collection Haut Moyen Âge 10 (Turnhout, Brepols), 439–78.
- Brandes, W. (1997), ‘“*Tempora periculosa sunt*”. Eschatologisch im Vorfeld der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen’, in Rainer Berndt (ed.), *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794*, 2 vols (Mainz, Verlag der Gesellschaft für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte), i: 49–79.
- Bredenkamp, H. (2014), *Der schwimmende Souverän. Karl der Große und die Bildpolitik des Körpers* (Berlin, Klaus Wagenbach).
- Broers, M. (2001), ‘Napoleon, Charlemagne, and Lotharingia: acculturation and the boundaries of Napoleonic Europe’, *The Historical Journal*, 44: 135–54.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X01001704>
- Brown, G. (1994), ‘Introduction: the Carolingian Renaissance’, in Rosamond McKitterick, ed., *Carolingian Culture: emulation and innovation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 1–51.
- Brown, W. (2001), *Unjust Seizure. Conflict, Interest and Authority in an Early Medieval Society* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press).
- Bruand, O. (2002), *Voyageurs et marchandises aux temps carolingiens* (Brussels, De Boeck Université).
- Bullough, D.A. (2003), ‘Recycling Charlemagne in the fifteenth century, north and south’, *Early Medieval Europe*, 12: 389–97.
- Bullough, D.A. (2004), *Alcuin. Reputation and Achievement* (Leiden, Brill).
- Cantor, N. (1991), *Inventing the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, The Lutterworth Press).
- Close, F. (2011), *Uniformiser la foi pour unifier l’Empire. Contribution à l’histoire de la pensée politico-théologique de Charlemagne* (Brussels, Académie royale de Belgique), 101–19, 146–53.

<sup>88</sup> Muschg (2004: 101–16, at 114).

- Coon, L.L. (2010), *Dark Age Bodies. Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early Medieval West* (Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press), 69–97.
- Curtius, E.R. ([1948], 1953), *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask ([Bern, Francke]; London, Routledge & Kegan Paul), 128–30.
- Davis, J. (2015 forthcoming), *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Diesenberger, M. (2014 forthcoming), *Predigt und Politik im Frühmittelalterlichen Bayern* (Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften).
- Dümmler, E. (ed.) (1881a), 'Karolus magnus et Leo papa', MGH Poetae latini I (Berlin), ll. 1–536, 366–79.
- Dümmler, E. (ed.) (1881b), Alcuin, *Carmen XXVI*, in MGH Poetae latini I (Berlin).
- Dümmler, E. (ed.) (1895), MGH Epistolae Karolini Aevi II (Berlin).
- Ehlers, J. (2001), *Charlemagne: L'Européen entre la France et Allemagne* (Stuttgart, Thorbecke).
- Einhard (1911), *Vita Karoli* c. 13, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SSRG (Hanover), 16.
- Esders, S. & Haubrichs, W. (2015 forthcoming), *Verwaltete Treue. Ein oberitalienisches Originalverzeichnis (breve) mit den Namen von 174 vereidigten Personen aus der Zeit Lothars I*, MGH Schriften.
- Ettel, P., Daim, F., Berg-Hobohm, S., Werther, L. & Zielhofer, C. (eds) (2014), *Grossbaustelle 793. Das Kanalprojekt Karls des Großen zwischen Rhein und Donau* (Mainz, Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums).
- Fentress, J. & Wickham, C. (1992), *Social Memory* (Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell).
- Folz, R. (1950), *Le Souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'empire germanique médiéval* (Paris, Les Belles Lettres).
- Folz, R. ([1953], 1969), *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe*, trans. Sheila A. Ogilvie ([Paris, Aubier]; London, Edward Arnold).
- Fouracre, P. (1995), 'Carolingian justice: the rhetoric of reform and the contexts of abuse', *Settimane di Studi*, 2 vols (Spoleto, Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo), 44, ii: 771–803.
- Freeman, A. & Meyvaert, P. (eds) (1998), MGH Concilia, II, Supplementum I (Hanover).
- Fried, J. (1994), 'Karl der Große in Frankfurt am Main. Ein König bei der Arbeit', in Fried & Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch (eds), *794. Karl der Große in Frankfurt am Main* (Sigmaringen, Thorbecke), 25–34.
- Fried, J. (1997), 'Karl der Große, die *Artes liberales* und die karolingische Renaissance', in Paul Leo Butzer, Max Kerner & Walter Oberschelp (eds), *Karl der Große und sein Nachwirken. 1200 Jahre Kultur und Wissenschaft in Europa* (Turnhout, Brepols), 25–43.
- Fried, J. (2014), *Karl der Grosse. Gewalt und Glaube* (Munich, C.H. Beck).
- Gabriele, M. (2011), *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks and Jerusalem* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- Ganz, D. (2003), 'Donald A. Bullough. Unpublished lectures', *Early Medieval Europe*, 12, 4: *passim*.
- Ganz, D. (2010), 'Giving to God in the Mass: the experience of the Offertory', in Wendy Davies & Paul Fouracre (eds), *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 18–32.
- Garrison, M. (1997), 'English and Irish at the court of Charlemagne', in Paul Leo Butzer, Max Kerner & Walter Oberschelp (eds), *Karl der Große und sein Nachwirken. 1200 Jahre Kultur und Wissenschaft in Europa* (Turnhout, Brepols), 97–124.
- Gautier Dalché, P. (1997), 'De la glose à la contemplation. Place et fonction de la carte dans les manuscrits du haut moyen âge', in his *Géographie et culture. La représentation de l'espace du VIe au XIIe siècle* (Aldershot, Ashgate), 693–764.
- Geary, P. (2006), *Women at the Beginning: Origin Myths from the Amazons to the Virgin Mary* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press).



- Godman, P. (1985), *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, Duckworth).
- Godman, P. (1986), *Poets and Emperor* (Oxford, Clarendon Press).
- Godman, P., Jarnut, J. & Johaneck, P. (eds) (2002), *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung. Das Epos 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn* (Berlin, Akademie Verlag).  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1524/9783050056272>
- Goffart, W. (1997), 'The first venture into "Medieval Geography"', in Jane Roberts, Janet L. Nelson & Malcolm Godden (eds), *Alfred the Wise. Studies in Honour of Janet Bately* (Cambridge, Brewer), 53–60.
- Goody, J. (1966), 'Circulating succession among the Gonja', in Jack Goody (ed.), *Succession to High Office* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 142–76.
- Goody, J. (2010), *Renaissances. The One or the Many?* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Görich, K. (2011), *Friedrich Barbarossa. Eine Biographie* (Munich, Beck).
- Gundlach, W. (ed.) (1892), Codex Carolinus, MGH Epp. KA I, 45 (Berlin), 562.
- Hack, A. (1999), 'Das Zeremoniell des Papstempfangs 799 in Paderborn', in Christoph Stiegemann & Matthias Wemhoff (eds), *799. Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Große und Papst Leo III in Paderborn*, 3 vols (Mainz, Philipp von Zabern), iii: 19–33.
- Hack, A. (2011), *Abul Aziz. Zur Biographie eines Elefanten* (Badenweiler, Bachmann).
- Haefele, H.F. (ed.) (1959), Notker, *Gesta Karoli Magni*, II, 5, MGH SSRG, ns 12 (Berlin), 53.
- Hendy, M. (1988), 'From public to private: the western barbarian coinages', *Viator*, 19: 29–78.
- Herbers, K. (2003), 'Carlomagno y Santiago. Dos Mitos Europeos', in Klaus Herbers (ed.), *El Pseudo-Turpin Lazo entre el Culto Jacobeo y el Culto de Carlomagno. Actas del VI Congreso Internacional de Estudios Jacobeos* (Santiago de Compostela, Xunta de Galicia), 15–28.
- Innes, M. (2011), 'Charlemagne, Justice and Written Law', in A. Rio (ed.), *Law, Custom, and Justice in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London, Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London), 155–203.
- Kapfhammer, G. (1993), *Sagenhaftige Geschichte. Das Bild Karls des Großen durch die Jahrhunderte* (Munich, Bayerische Vereinsbank).
- Kerner, M. (2000), 'Ausblick', in Max Kerner (ed.), *Karl der Grosse. Entschleierung eines Mythos* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, Böhlau), 272–7.
- Kintzinger, M. (2005), *Die Erben Karls des Grossen. Frankreich und Deutschland im Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, Thorbecke).
- Klaniczay, G. (1997), 'Le Goff, the *Annales* and Medieval Studies', in Miri Rubin (ed.), *The Work of Jacques Le Goff and the Challenges of Medieval History* (Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer), 223–37.
- Knowles, D. (1963), *Great Historical Enterprises* (London, Thomas Nelson).
- Kurze, F. (ed.) (1895), *Annales regni Francorum, s.a. 811*, MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum (Hanover).
- Lambert, P. (2012), 'Duke Widukind and Charlemagne in Twentieth-Century Germany', in Catharina Raudvere, Krzysztof Stala & Trine Stauning Willert (eds), *Rethinking the Space for Religion* (Lund, Nordic Academic Press), 97–125.
- Lambert, P. (2013), 'The Immediacy of a Remote Past: the afterlife of Widukind in the Third Reich', *British Academy Review*, 22: 13–6.
- Lappenberg, J.M. (ed.) (1859), *Annales Mosellani, s.a. 781*, MGH SS XVI (Hanover), 497.
- Latowsky, A. (2005), 'Foreign embassies and Roman universality in Einhard's Life of Charlemagne', *Florilegium*, 22: 25–57.
- Latowsky, A. (2013), *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800–1229* (Ithaca, NY, & London, Cornell University Press).
- Le Goff, J. (1957), *Les intellectuels au moyen âge* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil).

- Leyser, K. (1992), 'Concepts of Europe in the Early and High Middle Ages', *Past & Present*, 137: 25–47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/past/137.1.25>
- McCormick, M. (1994), 'Textes, images et iconoclasme dans le cadre des relations entre Byzance et l'Occident carolingien', in *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di Studi, 2 vols (Spoleto, Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo), 41, i: 130–1.
- McCormick, M. (2004), 'Pippin III, the Embassy of Caliph al-Mansur, and the Mediterranean World', in Matthias Becher & Jörg Jarnut (eds), *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751* (Münster, Scriptoria), 221–41.
- McCormick, M. (2011), *Charlemagne's Survey of the Holy Land* (Washington DC, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library).
- MacLean, S. (2010), 'Legislation and politics in late Carolingian Italy: the Ravenna constitutions', *Early Medieval Europe*, 18: 394–416. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0254.2010.00304.x>
- Mango, C. & Scott, R. (trans.) (1997), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813* (Oxford, Clarendon Press).
- Mayr-Harting, H. (2002), 'Charlemagne's Religion', in Peter Godman, Jörg Jarnut & Peter Johanek (eds), *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung. Das Epos 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn* (Berlin, Akademie Verlag), 113–24. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1524/9783050056272.113>
- Monnet, J. (1976), *Mémoires*, cited from the English trans. by Richard Mayne (London, Collins).
- Mordek, H. (2005), 'Karls des Großen zweites Kapitular von Herstal und die Hungersnot der Jahre 778/779', *Deutsches Archiv*, 61: 1–52.
- Morrissey, R. (1997), *L'empereur à la barbe fleurie* (Paris, Gallimard).
- Muschg, A. (2004), 'Karl der Große—Kleineuropa?', in *Karl der Große und Europa*, ed. the Swiss Embassy in the Federal Republic of Germany in collaboration with the German Historical Museum (Frankfurt-am-Main, Peter Lang), 101–16.
- Nelson, J. (2000), 'Representing Medieval Pasts', *History Workshop Journal*, 50: 295–9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hwj/2000.50.295>
- Nelson, J. (2001), 'The Voice of Charlemagne', in Richard Gameson & Henrietta Leyser (eds), *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages. Studies presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford, Oxford University Press), 76–88.
- Nelson, J. (2002), 'Charlemagne: "father of Europe"?', *Quaestiones mediaevalis aevi novae*, 7: 3–20.
- Nelson, J. (2006), 'Did Charlemagne have a private life?', in David Bates, Julia Crick & Sarah Hamilton (eds), *Writing Medieval Biography. Essays in Honour of Frank Barlow* (Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer), 15–26.
- Nelson, J. (2007a), 'Why are there so many different accounts of Charlemagne's coronation?', in J. Nelson, *Courts, Elites and Gendered Power* (Aldershot, Ashgate), chap. XII: 17.
- Nelson, J. (2007b), 'Aachen as a place of power', in J. Nelson, *Courts, Elites and Gendered Power* (Aldershot, Ashgate), chap. XIV: 7–8.
- Nelson, J. (2010a), 'Munera', in Jean-Pierre Devroey, Laurent Feller & Régine Le Jan (eds), *Les élites et la richesse au haut Moyen Âge* (Turnhout, Brepols), 383–401.
- Nelson, J. (2010b), 'The setting of the gift in the reign of Charlemagne', in Wendy Davies & Paul Fouracre (eds), *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 116–48.
- Nelson, J. (2013), 'Religion and Politics in the Reign of Charlemagne', in Ludger Körntgen & Dominik Waßenhoven (eds), *Religion and Politics in the Middle Ages*, 29 (Berlin, Prince-Albert-Studien), 1–29. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9783110262049.17>
- Nelson, J. (2014a), 'Religion in the age of Charlemagne', in John A. Arnold (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook to Medieval Christianity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press), 490–514.

- Nelson, J. (2014b), 'Pater Europae? Karl der Große und Europa', in F. Pohle (ed.), *Karl, Charlemagne, der Grosse. Orte der Macht, Essays*, im Auftrag der Stadt Aachen (Dresden, Sandstein Verlag), 420–7.
- Nelson, J. (2015 forthcoming), 'The Carolingian Renaissance revisited', in Helmut Reimitz (ed.), *Religion, Politics and Society: from Constantine to Charlemagne. Essays in Honor of Peter Brown* (Princeton, Princeton University Press).
- Nithard (2012), *Histoire des fils de Louis le Pieux*, ed. Philippe Lauer, revd Sophie Glansdorff (Paris, Les Belles Lettres), 4.
- Noble, T.F.X. (2009), *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press).
- Patzold, S. (2013), *Ich und Karl der Große. Das Leben des Hoflings Einhard* (Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta).
- Pearson, G. (2011), 'Obituary of Satish Saberwal', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 34: 504–6. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2011.620558>
- Pohl, W. (1988), *Die Awarenkriege Karls des Großen 788–803* (Vienna, Österreichischer Bundesverlag).
- Reuter, T. (2006), 'Assembly politics', in his *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, ed. J.L. Nelson (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 193–216.
- Sabarwal, S. (1992), 'On the Making of Europe: Reflections from Delhi', *History Workshop Journal*, 33: 145–61. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hwj/33.1.145>
- Schaller, D. (1976), 'Das Aachener Epos für Karl den Kaiser', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 10: 136–68. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497216.013>
- Scheck, H. (2012), 'Nuns on parade: memorializing women in Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa', in Margaret Cotter-Lynch & Brad Herzog (eds), *Reading Memory and Identity in the Texts of Medieval European Holy Women* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan), 13–38.
- Smith, J.M.H. (2012), 'Portable Christianity: relics in the medieval west (c.700–c.1200)', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 181: 143–67.
- Stella, F. (2001), 'Autore e attribuzioni del "Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa"', in Peter Godman, Jörg Jarnut, and Peter Johanek (eds.), *Am Vorabend der Kaiser Krönung: das Epos "Karolus Magnus et Leo papa" und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799* (Berlin, Akademie), 19–33.
- Story, J. (2003), *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia* (Aldershot, Ashgate).
- Tischler, M.M. (2001), *Einharts Vita Karoli. Studien zur Entstehung, Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 2 vols (Hanover, Hahnsche Buchhandlung).
- Tremp, E. (ed.) (1995), *Astronomus, Vita Hludowici imperatoris c. 15, MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum 64* (Hanover).
- Weinfurter, S. (2014), *Karl der Grosse: der heilige Barbar* (Munich, Piper).
- Werminghoff, A. (ed.) (1908), *Concilium Franconofurtense of 794*, in MGH Concilia I, I (Hanover), 110–71.
- Wickham, C. (1994), 'Lawyers' Time: History and Memory in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century Italy', in C. Wickham, *Land and Power: Studies in Italian and European Social History* (London, British School at Rome), 275–93.
- Wickham, C. (1998), 'Ninth-century Byzantium through western eyes', in Leslie Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?* (Aldershot, Ashgate), 245–56.
- Wolfram, H. (1987), *Die Geburt Mitteleuropas* (Vienna, Siedler Verlag), 253–60.
- Wood, S. (2006), *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).

*The author:* Jinty Nelson is Emeritus Professor of Medieval History at King's College London. Her main research interests have focused on the earlier middle ages, especially on politics, political ideas and religion, and more recently on gender. She served

as a Vice-President of the British Academy in 2000–1, and as President of the Royal Historical Society in 2000–4. She has published four volumes of papers, the most recent *Courts, Elites and Gendered Power in the early Middle Ages* (2007), and is planning a fifth. She is a member of an AHRC-funded database project based at King's College London, 'The Making of Charlemagne's Europe', which structures and makes searchable the rich and complex data derived from charters produced in Charlemagne's realm and reign. She is currently writing a biography of Charlemagne.

[jinty.nelson23@gmail.com](mailto:jinty.nelson23@gmail.com)

This article is licensed under a  
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.

*Journal of the British Academy* (ISSN 2052–7217) is published by  
The British Academy—the national academy for the humanities and social sciences.  
10–11 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH  
[www.britishacademy.ac.uk](http://www.britishacademy.ac.uk)