

RALEIGH LECTURE ON HISTORY  
A CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE PRINCE:  
THE EMPEROR CHARLES THE BALD

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WESTERN EUROPE of the ninth century—Carolingian Europe—was nothing if not articulate. It loved communication. It still tells us of itself in a rich welter of words, pictures, and artifacts. This aggregate of intellectual activity we call a Renaissance; they called it a *Reformatio* or *Renovatio*; and at its centre we can feel the thrust of the family of Charlemagne. A numerous family indeed: in the seven generations following Charlemagne we know of 359 of his descendants, and there must have been others of whom we do not know.<sup>1</sup> At all times this notably quarrelsome family had a compensating sense of kinship that somehow placed its members above the families of less prestigious magnates. A drop of Carolingian blood was worth something to humbler kindreds on the make.

The Carolingian I wish to look at is Charles the Bald, greatest of his family apart from his grandfather, Charlemagne; pious, secretive, ruthless, masterful, sophisticated, a true Renaissance prince, and thus always a dangerous man. I shall not trouble you with an iron structure of his comings and goings but simply consider some of his actions in relation to writings and artifacts that cluster about them.<sup>2</sup>

Charles's beginnings take us to Aachen, the court of his grandfather, and of his father the Emperor Louis the Pious. They were dismal beginnings; the boy never forgot or forgave the humiliation of his father and of his mother Judith at the hands of his elder half-brothers. Fourteen years after his

<sup>1</sup> See K. F. Werner, 'Die Nachkommen Karls des Großen', *Karl der Große. Lebenswerk und Nachleben: Das Nachleben* (Düsseldorf, 1967), pp. 403–79.

<sup>2</sup> For the political outline of his reign see F. Lot and L. Halphen, *Le Règne de Charles le Chauve* (Paris, 1909) (part i only, 840–51); L. Halphen, *Charlemagne et l'empire carolingien* (Paris, 1947); J. Calmette, *La Diplomatie carolingienne* (Paris, 1901); J. Devisse, *Hincmar, archevêque de Reims*, 3 vols. (Geneva, 1975); and more succinctly, my *Early Germanic Kingship* (Oxford, 1971). I also note here the great assistance I have had from Rosamond McKitterick's unpublished work on Charles the Bald's library.

accession, magnates find it prudent to swear an oath of fidelity to him as 'Karolo, Hludowici et Iudit filio'.<sup>1</sup> His daughter bore his mother's name. Nor did he forget that he alone of his generation bore the name of his grandfather, and indeed of his great-great-grandfather. Always he showed awareness of *nomen*, and of the past of his dynasty—of men who, whether or not they wore an imperial crown, ruled all the Franks there were. This sense of the past will have lost nothing from the teaching of his tutor, Walahfrid Strabo, editor of Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni*. In the prologue to his edition,<sup>2</sup> written in the 840s, Walahfrid emphasizes the truthfulness of Einhard's account: Charlemagne's court was indeed a centre of learning, a magnet to *sapientes*, such as no longer existed. This was unjust to the court of Louis the Pious, whose memory was dear to the young Charles; but there was a contrast: the exemplar was Charlemagne, not Louis. A copy of the *Vita Karoli* will have been in the court library; probably what is now the Leningrad MS was a copy of the personal copy of Charles the Bald.<sup>3</sup> In it he would have traced the success-story of a ruler who combined secularity with piety and saw his authority as God-given, not Church-given. Walahfrid took this point also but was kinder to Louis. In his curious panegyric, *De imagine Tetrici*,<sup>4</sup> he reflects on the statue of the heretic Theodoric, brought by Charlemagne from Ravenna to Aachen. There sat Theodoric on his horse, a splendid sight despite the pigeons nesting in the horse's mouth and nostrils; but what was he in comparison with the orthodox Emperor Louis, that second Moses, who talked with God? One's tutor's words sometimes sink in: Charles's predecessors needed no clerical mediation to talk with God, in whose hands the *fortuna* of the house was safe. Like others, Walahfrid recognized Charles's intellectual precocity; he had a future, whatever his half-brothers might think. He was well educated in the liberal arts, and probably also in law and theology. Hincmar, no flatterer, said that Charles learnt theology (or perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Legum Sectio II, Capitularia Regum Francorum, ii, part ii* (Hanover, 1893), p. 278 (*Capitulare Missorum Attiniacense*). For further evidence of Charles's reverence for his father, see the letter in Mansi, *Amplissima Collectio*, xv, pp. 796 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Eginhard, *Vie de Charlemagne* (Paris, 1947), ed. L. Halphen, appendix.

<sup>3</sup> Leningrad MS F. iv. 4. We do not know what books Charles inherited from the extensive library of his father, on which see B. Bischoff, 'Die Hofbibliothek unter Ludwig dem Frommen', *Medieval Learning and Literature* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 3–22.

<sup>4</sup> Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 114, cols. 1089 ff.

scripture?) and law, both canon and secular, *ab infantia*,<sup>1</sup> which must mean at court. Ermoldus Nigellus, telling a story about the boy dispatching a deer under the eye of his anxious mother, concludes 'hunc patris virtus, nomen et ornat avi'.<sup>2</sup> The *nomen* matters, and the harking back to the past. Charles also received a history-book. Freulf of Lisieux sent to Judith (together with some flattery of herself) the second part of his universal Chronicle for her son's education.<sup>3</sup> This covered the Roman Empire to the end of the seventh century. Charles was to consider the past glories of his house in the wider context of Rome. He was to think of Constantine. At a later date, but still before the death of Louis, Freulf added an emended text of Vegetius, to help the young man in the study of the art of war, no doubt with special reference to the Vikings.

Charles's effective reign started not in June 840, when his father died, but on the battlefield of Fontenoy, twelve months later. Two brothers against two brothers, it was a frightful slaughter; but of a special kind. Charles at least saw it as a set piece: God would decide whether his claim to rule over the lands given him by his father were good or bad. Having the initial advantage in battle, he considered the matter settled, and therefore did not pursue the Emperor Lothar. God's judgement was not accepted by Lothar.<sup>4</sup>

What the young king gained was a breathing space of some years in which to impose himself on Aquitaine, where his claims to rule were reasonably disputed; and (but less successfully) on the independent Bretons on his western Marches. The menace of Viking assaults complicated matters. He was dealing both with invasion and at the same time, and ruthlessly, with what he would have called rebellion and infidelity. By what authority? Reassurance came from Lupus, abbot of Ferrières, in a series of three letters written between 843 and 845. The first was a letter of admonition which had, surely, direct relevance to the situation Charles found himself in. It did not belong to the literary class of Carolingian Mirrors of Princes—exhortations

<sup>1</sup> P.L. 124, col. 881.

<sup>2</sup> *Ermold le Noir, Poème sur Louis le Pieux*, ed. E. Faral (Paris, 1932), p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> P.L. 106, cols. 917–1258. For further literature see Wattenbach-Levison-Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter*, iii, p. 350.

<sup>4</sup> *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, ed. F. Grat, J. Vielliard and S. Clémencet (Paris, 1964), s.a. 841; *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. F. Kurze (*Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum* (Hanover, 1891), s.a. 841; Nithard, *Histoire des Fils de Louis le Pieux*, ed. P. Lauer (Paris, 1926), pp. 72–8; *Versus de bella quae fuit acta Fontenato*, ed. E. Duemmler, MGH, *Poet. Lat.* ii, pp. 138–9.

to reach Heaven by the *via regia*, of which the first had been that of Smaragdus to Charlemagne, and the second that of Jonas to Pippin of Aquitaine. Lupus deals with the situation on the ground. Unlike Jonas, he does not urge the just king to be prudent and to watch his step. The times require something tougher. So, Lupus writes:

consider carefully what you have to do, go over the ground with a sharp eye, deliberate with those most faithful to God and yourself . . . Never submit to the sway of any man so as to do whatever he wants. For why pretend to the title of king if you don't know how to reign? Without meaning to reflect on anyone, it is bad for you and your people if you allow yourself to have an equal, let alone a superior . . . Never fear the *potentes*, whom you have made and can put down when you wish . . . Think much, but do not reveal everything in talk . . . Observe these rules and you will please God and all good men. You will snuff out and put down rebels if, as I believe, God fights for you.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously Lupus had high hopes of the young king. He advises him to rule with an iron fist, which was exactly what he proceeded to do. In a second letter,<sup>2</sup> Lupus urges him to follow the example of the blessed King David by keeping clear of evil men. If he will act justly it will not only commend him to God but also confirm his *terrenam potestatem*. Thus, personal virtue brings immediate gains to a king. 'Think before you act', he goes on, paraphrasing Sallust, 'and when you have thought, act decisively'. He ends thus: 'I have been to some pains to provide you with a short résumé of imperial deeds'—he seems to mean the *Epitome de Caesaribus* of Aurelius Victor—'so that you can easily see what to imitate and to avoid. Above all I advise you to consider Trajan and Theodosius'. Trajan, once seen as a persecutor of the Church, had got a better press as the centuries passed, till Gregory the Great could intercede for his memory as that of the exemplar of the just pagan ruler.<sup>3</sup> The example of Theodosius I was also recommended by Sedulius Scottus in his treatise on Christian princes directed, as I believe, not to Lothar II but to Charles.<sup>4</sup> Lupus's third letter<sup>5</sup> accompanies

<sup>1</sup> *Loup de Ferrières, Correspondance*, ed. L. Levillain (Paris, 1927), i, letter 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, letter 37.

<sup>3</sup> See A. Linder, 'Ecclesia and Synagoga in the medieval myth of Constantine the Great', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, liv, p. 1030.

<sup>4</sup> *Liber de rectoribus christianis*, ed. S. Hellmann (Munich, 1906, repr. 1966), pp. 35–6, 54 ff. The case for Charles as recipient was cogently put by Levillain in his review of Hellmann in *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, lxxvii, p. 104, and has never been satisfactorily countered. See O. Eberhardt, *Via Regia: der Fürstenspiegel Smaragads von St Mihiel und seine literarische Gattung* (Munich, 1977), p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. Levillain, ii, letter 124.

the gift of Augustine's sermon on oaths, as Lenten reading, together with advice that the king shall warn those who swear oaths lightly that perjury will cost them eternal life. This, too, faces an immediate, practical problem. Charles received much advice throughout his long reign, some of it at his own request; but none was more to the point or, I suspect, more taken to heart, than what Lupus told him. He must be an iron king, like his grandfather, and not the victim of other men's counsel, like his father.<sup>1</sup> Churchmen with ideas about defining royal power were to find that he knew his own business.

In the Royal Annals, kept up through Charles's reign in the shape of what are now called the Annals of St. Bertin, there existed a record of events based on access to official documents. The king himself commissioned Bishop Prudentius to continue the writing at the beginning of his reign, in 841.<sup>2</sup> Hincmar, who succeeded Prudentius as annalist, said that the king had his own copy: 'ipsum autem annale . . . rex habet'.<sup>3</sup> It was to this extent an official record. Yet at the same time Charles commissioned a second and more personal record. He ordered his cousin Nithard to write an account of things as they happened, from the king's point of view.<sup>4</sup> It was to be a partisan account that accepted the infamy of his brothers in challenging his claims; and an account for the future to read. Already he saw his place in history. Where does Nithard begin? With Charlemagne, 'avi . . . vestri venerandam memoriam',<sup>5</sup> and thence moves to the dissensions of the reign of Louis, 'pii patris vestri'.<sup>6</sup> We could not be told more plainly that Charles wished his career to be seen as a prolongation or fulfilment of that of his grandfather. Unhappily, Nithard got no further than Charles's marriage to Ermentrud, in December 842, for next year he was killed in battle. An anonymous poet, seeing which way the wind was blowing, also took his chance to remind the young king of his ancestry: the *Carmen de exordio gentis Francorum* was dedicated to the king.<sup>7</sup> In it the virtues of St. Arnulf, Charlemagne, and Louis the Pious are paraded before him as

<sup>1</sup> He can scarcely not have known the *De institutione regia* of Jonas of Orleans and the principles of kingship expounded by the Council of Paris in 829, yet seems to have been less influenced by them than his father had been.

<sup>2</sup> Hincmar to Egilo of Sens, MGH, *Epist. Karo. Aevi*, vi. i, p. 196.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Lauer, prologue.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> MGH, *Poet. Lat.* ii, pp. 141-5.

exemplars. It is, then, of some interest that when Charles looked for a model for his *denarius* coinage he copied the reformed coinage struck under Charlemagne in such a way that it is very difficult for numismatists to distinguish between them.<sup>1</sup>

There is yet another side to Charles that emerges in these early years which also ties him to his forebears. Theology was more than a matter for learned clergy; it affected the king himself and the objectives of his rule. One can see this most clearly in the battle over predestination started by the monk Gottschalk, who preached predestination not only to eternal bliss for some but also to eternal damnation (not necessarily through sin) for the rest.<sup>2</sup> Gottschalk had supporters as well as opponents. Charles was consulting Lupus about it in 849 and received a treatise by way of explanation.<sup>3</sup> He further obtained, directly or indirectly, expositions from Ratramn of Corbie,<sup>4</sup> from Hincmar of Reims,<sup>5</sup> and from John Scotus Eriugena.<sup>6</sup> His frequent bullying of Hincmar to get the matter settled and his subsequent treatment of the wretched Gottschalk betray his dismay at the prospect of damnation for so many of his subjects but plainly also his indignation that his clergy should be thrown into confusion. He demanded certainty of belief, like any other Carolingian. His advisers shared his passion for certitude, one aspect of which was his fear of heresy—a fear deeper than any he entertained of the Jews. He had only to refer to Book xvi of the Theodosian Code to discover that his forebears had done no more than Roman Law sanctioned in treating Judaism more mildly than heresy. He meant to understand theological issues. Therefore he also resolved to be sure about the nature of the Eucharist. Ratramn provided him with a suitable résumé, *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, in 843,<sup>7</sup> while the abbot of Corbie,

<sup>1</sup> See P. Grierson, 'Money and coinage under Charlemagne', *Karl der Große: Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, p. 503; and for his coinage and seals with reference to their *Gratia Dei Rex* inscription, S. E. Rigold, *British Numismatic Journal*, xlv, pp. 101–2.

<sup>2</sup> See Devisse, *Hincmar*, chap. 2; and H. Liebeschütz, 'Western Christian thought from Boethius to Anselm', *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (1967), pp. 579 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Liber de tribus quaestionibus*, P.L. 119, cols. 619–48; and letter 78 in Levillain, ii.

<sup>4</sup> *De praedestinatione Dei*, P.L. 121, cols. 12–79.

<sup>5</sup> *De praedestinatione contra Gothescalcum*, P.L. 125, cols. 49–56 and *De praedestinatione Dei et libero arbitrio*, *ibid.*, cols. 65–474.

<sup>6</sup> *De divina praedestinatione liber*, P.L. 122, cols. 355–440.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink (Amsterdam–London, 1974). See also J.-P. Bouhot, *Ratramne de Corbie* (Paris, 1976).

Paschasius Radbert, sent him a copy of his own treatise, written some years earlier, on the same subject, with a special dedication and a poem invoking the *Sophia Virgo's* help for the 'Rex virtute potens . . . Karole, cui nomen serie descendit avita'.<sup>1</sup> These learned men addressed him as their intellectual equal. What interested them, as pressing issues, interested their king. It was his business, too.

Corbie, thus far, worked for the king. But the second part of Paschasius's *Epitaphium Arsenii*<sup>2</sup> (a lament for the Abbot Wala) completed in or around the difficult year 853, by no means suggests that everyone at Corbie had accepted Charles's rule as inevitable, even after thirteen years. The son of the detestable Judith might still be overthrown. Such at least is a possible reading of this extraordinary outburst.<sup>3</sup> I would not count Corbie as safely loyal to Charles as were certainly St. Denis, St. Riquier, St. Amand, or St. Martin's of Tours. Like so many of the greater monasteries, Tours was placed under a lay abbot the king could trust: Vivian, also count of Tours and formerly his chamberlain.<sup>4</sup> This was in 844, the year in which his mother Judith died at Tours. A year later the king received a present from Tours: a superb copy of Boethius's *De Arithmetica*,<sup>5</sup> dedicated to the Caesar who bears the unconquered name of his grandfather'. Charles was not in the habit of receiving secular books, but this was one.<sup>6</sup> *De Arithmetica* may not have interested him much, except as a splendid exemplar of one of the arts of the *quadrivium*. But he received another book from Tours, a year

<sup>1</sup> Ed. B. Paulus, *Corpus Christianorum*, xvi (Turnholt, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Ed. E. Duemmler, *Abh. d. königl. preuß. Akad.* (Berlin, 1900). Also *P.L.* 120, cols. 1559–1650. See L. Weinrich, *Wala, Mönch und Rebell* (Lübeck–Hamburg, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> On Corbie as a well-established centre of intrigue, see Lot and Halphen, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> Now Bamberg, Staatliche Bibliothek MS Class. 2.

<sup>6</sup> We do not really know what Charles's attitude was to secular classical texts. We cannot tell what he would have made of the advanced classical interests of Corbie under Hadoard (cf. B. Bischoff, 'Hadoard und die Klassikerhandschriften aus Corbie', *Mittelalterliche Studien*, i, pp. 49–63) or of Lupus at Ferrières. Eriugena's influence may in the end have pulled him decisively towards *patristica*, though it must be remembered that Eriugena himself started as a court-grammarian who knew his Martianus Capella (see H. Liebeschütz in *The Mind of Eriugena* (Dublin, 1973), pp. 49–57), and that the learned Prudentius was a friend of both men. However, at Corbie itself Paschasius could wonder about the value of secular studies (*P.L.* 120, cols. 181–4), and Lupus could insist in his last recorded letter on the priority of *sapientia* over *scientia*, as if the latter were being overdone.

or two later. This was a Bible, now known as his First Bible. It was a thank-offering from Count Vivian. Like the *De Arithmetica*, it is a book we can still look at.<sup>1</sup> It is rich in historical illustrations that have attracted much attention; particularly that showing the donor presenting the book to the king, who sits enthroned among his monks under the protecting hand of God. There are no bishops present. We cannot take it as a portrait of the king, for it is highly stylized, if realistic. Professor Bullough stresses its private character: it is a reminder to offer prayers for the king, his family, and his subjects.<sup>2</sup> But primarily it is a reminder to the king himself. The book is a Bible; largely, therefore, the sacred account of God's first Chosen People, the People of David, Solomon and Josiah, whose mission was now entrusted to a second Chosen People, the Franks. Continuity of mission is always present to Carolingian minds. Later on, Charles was to give the great book to the Church of Metz.

In June 848 Charles caused himself to be chosen, crowned and anointed king of the Aquitanians at Orleans. His consecrator (soon to desert him) was Wenilo, archbishop of Sens. 'Almost all' the Aquitanian magnates, together with bishops and abbots, were reported to have been present.<sup>3</sup> No coronation *Ordo* survives for the occasion—probably there was none—but at least it is clear that the king thought that this very unusual ceremony strengthened his hand against Aquitanian enemies, the supporters of his rival and nephew, Pippin II, who was not anointed. It was not a surrender to the Church. So far as is known he never needed to strengthen his claim to rule his Neustrian Franks by submitting to a comparable ceremony: it was enough that his father had crowned him in September 838.<sup>4</sup> But Aquitaine was a different matter. It reminds us that no Carolingian could be sure of any prescriptive hereditary

<sup>1</sup> Now Paris, BN MS Lat. i. The dedicatory verses are in MGH, *Poet. Lat.* iii, pp. 243–8, 249, 250–2. See J. Hubert, J. Porcher and W. F. Volbach, *Carolingian Art* (London, 1970), pp. 137 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Donald Bullough, 'Imagines Regum and their significance in the early medieval west', *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice* (Edinburgh, 1975), p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> *Ann. Bert.*, s.a. 848.

<sup>4</sup> Boehmer-Muelbacher, *Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern* i, 2nd edn. by J. Lechner (1908), 982a. W. Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of kingship* (London, 1969), pp. 80 ff. has valuable observations on the Aquitanian ceremony. See also P. E. Schramm, *Der König von Frankreich*, i (Weimar, 1960), p. 16; W. Kienast, *Studien über die französischen Volksstämme des Frühmittelalters* (Stuttgart, 1968), pp. 62 ff.; and Janet Nelson, 'National synods, kingship as office, and royal anointing: an early medieval syndrome', *Studies in Church History*, vii, p. 50.

right to rule over any particular part of Frankish territory. A solemn inauguration with crowning and unction emphasized a different sort of right to do so. We are in a world of symbols that betray insecurity. Orleans was the first occasion when the clergy gave Charles a substitute for what he lacked: the gravely religious provision for his elder brothers made by the Emperor Louis in his *Ordinatio* of 817. It is absurd to dismiss as mere self-seeking the wavering loyalties of magnates, including clerical magnates, some with lands scattered over more than one kingdom. Their problems have never been sympathetically investigated. They are easily confused with wandering malefactors and fleeing rebels of lower social standing.<sup>1</sup> It was for the notorious Count Matfrid that Jonas of Orleans wrote his *De Institutione Laicali*.<sup>2</sup> Charles tended to be very harsh with what he considered their treachery. This boiled up into a full-scale invasion of Aquitaine by Charles's brother Louis the German, in 858, for reasons which may not have been fictitious.<sup>3</sup> The bishops were not at first united in their opposition to the coming of a senior Carolingian. Louis the German was a formidable elder brother, and the only one of them to have good sons. His hopes of supplanting Charles in western Francia were no idle day-dream, and I think he never abandoned them. What turned the scales was the intervention of Archbishop Hincmar of Reims, henceforth to be the most powerful influence in West Frankish affairs.<sup>4</sup> Now, or a little earlier, he presented the king with a piece of writing—the first of many—which the king seems to have asked for. This, the *Ferculum Salomonis* as it is called,<sup>5</sup> is a commentary on verses 9 and 10 of the Song of Songs, chapter 3:

King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon, he made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> See the observations of Devisse, pp. 283, 309, 312 ff., 499. Some families are elucidated by Werner, 'Die Nachkommen', pp. 83 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *P.L.* 106, cols. 121–278. Also relevant are the libraries of Evrard of Friuli and of Dhuoda.

<sup>3</sup> *Ann. Fuld.*, s.a. 858. See also U. Penndorf, *Das Problem der Reichseinkunfts-idee nach der Teilung von Verdun* (Munich, 1974), pp. 39 ff. Louis the German's court-circle was sophisticated and quite capable of arguing the case that Charles had indeed behaved like a *tyrannus* to some of his discontented subjects.

<sup>4</sup> See Hincmar's great letter, written on behalf of the provinces of Reims and Rouen, to Louis, excusing their attendance upon him and questioning his motives in invading his brother's lands: *P.L.* 196, cols. 9–25.

<sup>5</sup> *P.L.* 125, cols. 817–34; Devisse, pp. 54 ff.

I am not concerned with Hincmar's difficult exegesis but with the fact of the king's interest. He hears of a commentary on an action of one of the Old Testament exemplars of modern kingship and gets his copy. He is thinking about Solomon. Shortly before, he had been present at the translation of St. Remigius and the dedication of Hincmar's new cathedral at Reims.<sup>1</sup> He was not often to be at Reims but he now subsumed, by the fact of his presence, another national saint.

Shortly afterwards he subsumed a third: St. Dionysius or Denis of Paris. In 827 the Byzantine Emperor Michael the Stammerer had sent to Louis the Pious a copy<sup>2</sup> of the Greek writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. The Abbot Hilduin of St. Denis prepared a Latin translation of what he believed were the works of his patron saint, Dionysius of Paris, whose Life he had written. Hilduin was a good scholar, but his translation was thought unsatisfactory.<sup>3</sup> So far as we can tell, it was Charles himself, anxious for the reputation of a national saint, who sought a new translator and turned to the great Irish scholar, Eriugena, then resident either at court or at Laon, an Irish centre of Greek studies. The result<sup>4</sup>—addressed *meo Karolo*—was so pleasing that the king invited him to translate the *First Ambigua* of Maximus the Confessor.<sup>5</sup> Thence he proceeded on his own account to other translations and philosophical writings, and most notably the *Periphyseon* or *De Divisione Naturae*,<sup>6</sup> the majestic book that so well exemplifies the natural flight of the medieval mind from grammar to theology. What matters now is the personal link between Eriugena (a foreigner and a dangerous thinker) and his patron. Eriugena's occasional verse addressed to Charles shows how close they were to each other;<sup>7</sup> the one, the philosopher-king

<sup>1</sup> See Devisse, p. 906.

<sup>2</sup> Now Paris, BN MS gr. 437.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. P. G. Thèry, *Études Dionysiennes*, ii (Paris, 1937).

<sup>4</sup> *P.L.* 122, cols. 1029–1194. For the letters of Pope Nicholas I and Anastasius to Charles on Eriugena's translation, *ibid.*, cols. 1025–30.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 1193–1222. The dedicatory verses are *ibid.*, cols. 1235–6. On Eriugena's writings in general, I. P. Sheldon-Williams, 'A bibliography of the works of John Scottus Eriugena', *Journ. Eccles. Hist.* x.

<sup>6</sup> *P.L.* 122, cols. 441–1022. Sheldon-Williams published a valuable edition with notes of Books i and ii; *Iohannis Scotti Eriugena Periphyseon* (Dublin, 1968, 1972).

<sup>7</sup> *P.L.* 122, cols. 1221 ff. Note the eulogy addressed to Queen Ermentrud, 'orans, ac legitans libros, manibusque laborans', *ibid.*, col. 1227, and the hailing of Charles as *Heres Davidicus* (col. 1229) and as *rex atque theologus* (col. 1234).

of a new Athens (the image was Alcuin's) and the other, his learned foreign mentor, who revealed to him something of Greek patristic thinking. Almost at the end of his life Charles wrote a letter to the clergy of Ravenna,<sup>1</sup> in which he speaks of a celebration of the Constantinopolitan mass of St. Basil in his presence. The liturgy of St. Basil was the chief eucharistic formulary of the Byzantine rite. He seems also to have been familiar with the liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem. This may reveal a royal penchant for liturgical experimentation. It would not be surprising, considering the number of Greek clerics in the West,<sup>2</sup> to say nothing of the interests of his father, whose chancery could comfortably employ the Byzantine *Legimus* in the renewal of a diploma to a Jew.<sup>3</sup> If this is so, the king's interest need not have been belatedly awakened in Italy. He might much earlier have been led in this direction by the *schola graeca* of Metz,<sup>4</sup> by Eriugena and his Irish friends—friends themselves, one supposes, of Greeks resident in Francia—and possibly by Sedulius, an Irishman and a Greek scholar.<sup>5</sup> However, Eriugena's special service to the king had been his translation of the works of one whom all believed to be St. Dionysius of Paris, legendary converter of Gaul and bishop of Paris. The great monastery of St. Denis, living proof of the claim, had been specially beloved by Frankish kings since the seventh century. Charles Martel<sup>6</sup> and Pippin III<sup>7</sup> lay buried there, in due course to be joined by Charles the Bald himself.<sup>8</sup> To St. Denis the Carolingians turned for some of their best administrators and rewarded the house accordingly. Charles's sense of its importance caused him to assume the lay-abbacy in person and to interest himself directly in its defence against

<sup>1</sup> André Jacob, 'Une Lettre de Charles le Chauve au clergé de Ravenne?', *Rev. d'hist. écles.* lxxvii, pp. 409–22. This letter does not figure in Tessier's *Receuil* but is based on the text of Pithou. It seems to be genuine. See also the views of Mabillon, *P.L.* 72, col. 103.

<sup>2</sup> On whom Bischoff, 'Das griechische Element in der abendländischen Bildung des Mittelalters', *Mittelalt. Stud.* ii, pp. 265–8.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Michael D. Metzger, 'The Legimus subscription of Charles the Bald and the question of Byzantine influence', *Viator*, ii, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> See E. H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae* (California, 1946), p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> On his Greek, Bischoff, 'Das griechische Element', p. 267.

<sup>6</sup> Chronicle of Fredegar, continuation, chap. 24 (ed. B. Krusch, MGH, *Script. Rer. Mero.* ii, p. 193; ed. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 97); K. H. Krüger, *Königsgrabkirchen* (Munich, 1971), p. 181.

<sup>7</sup> Fred. Cont. chap. 53 (ed. Krusch, p. 193; ed. Wallace-Hadrill, p. 121); Krüger, p. 182.

<sup>8</sup> Krüger, p. 187.

the Vikings.<sup>1</sup> From St. Denis we have the best evidence of Charles's revival of the earlier practice of *Natales Caesarum*, that is, official commemoration of his anniversaries and those of his consort by chant and prayer, in return for which a feast was granted. He may well have been influenced, as Kantorowicz suggested, by late Roman anniversary lists such as the *Natales Caesarum* in the Calendar of 354, which was certainly copied in Carolingian times.<sup>2</sup> Several monasteries and churches were thus involved in this new form of commemoration, which required rather more of them than the traditional prayers for the royal family.<sup>3</sup> We have Charles's charter for St. Denis, specifying what the community shall perform in return for *refectiones annales*.<sup>4</sup> More than that, he had his tomb prepared before one of the principal altars and established a daily service and mass.<sup>5</sup> St. Denis was his *pretiosissimus protector*. In this way he tied his destiny to the tutelary saints of his dynasty: their unceasing service mattered quite as much to him as what in a material way the Church at large could provide for his court's upkeep, for lands to reward faithful service, and for men at arms.<sup>6</sup> The good fortune of his family, the *progenies sancta*,<sup>7</sup> was tied up with the cult of the national holy men.

This takes us to Metz and the second phase of his reign. One might call it the return to St. Arnulf, father of the dynasty.<sup>8</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> *Ann. Bert.*, s.a. 867.

<sup>2</sup> *Laudes Regiae*, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> *Refectiones* in return for prayers or some other form of commemoration are specified in the following charters (in G. Tessier, *Recueil des Actes de Charles II le Chauve* (3 vols., Paris, 1943-55): Marmoutier, no. 147; Châlons, no. 153; Mâcon, no. 162; Auxerre, no. 195; Mâcon, no. 236; Tours, no. 239; St. Denis, nos. 246, 247; Arras, no. 324; Soissons, no. 338; Lyons, no. 355; St. Germain, no. 363; Paris, no. 364; St. Bertin, no. 370; St. Denis, no. 379; Châlons, no. 381; Those commemorated include Charles's grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, wives (both together on occasion), children, and other relatives (e.g. the Abbot Louis) and connections (e.g. Boso). His own anniversaries include birth, unction, victory in the field, marriages, and prospective death.

<sup>4</sup> Tessier, no. 246. The recital of these anniversaries leaves a vivid impression of the king casting his mind back over the crucial events of his life.

<sup>5</sup> Tessier, ii, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> Treated at length by C. Brühl, *Fodrum, Gistum, Servitium Regis* (Cologne-Graz, 1968).

<sup>7</sup> Charles was hailed by Walahfrid with the words 'Salve regum sancta proles / Care Christo Carole' (MGH, *Poet.* ii, p. 406) and acclaimed when entering Metz as 'Carolus praeclarus progenie sancta / Quem Deus elegit regere gentes' (Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p. 74).

<sup>8</sup> See O. G. Oexle, 'Die Karolinger und die Stadt des heiligen Arnulf', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, i, pp. 250-364.

begins with a small exercise in aggression and ends with a large one. Provence was ruled by a childless and very sick man, the youngest of the sons of the late Emperor Lothar. It was understood that his successor would be his elder brother Lothar II of Lotharingia. In the autumn of 861 Charles attacked Provence, conceivably on the invitation of dissatisfied magnates. He quickly withdrew. Hincmar, writing the St. Bertin annals, is the soul of discretion: 'rebus parum prospere ingestis . . . redit'.<sup>1</sup> Charles may already have had his eye on Frankish hegemony or on a possible path to Italy, and even to the imperial crown. The Emperor Lothar I, who had died only six years previously, had stood firm for the principle of imperial control of the Frankish world; and it continued to be spoken of, particularly in east Francia.<sup>2</sup> His imperial successor, Louis II, had no sons. His heir could only be Louis the German or Charles. The expedition to Provence alerted Louis the German, and his nephews. Aggression was built into the Carolingian idea of Christian kingship. If Charles ever read the *Via Regia* of the Abbot Smaragdus, he would have found some telling passages on God as the true warlord, under whom the Christian king takes the field.<sup>3</sup> A direct affront to Lothar II in Provence opened up the possibility of an attack on Lotharingia, the rich Rhineland territories in which lay Aachen, Charlemagne's capital. It was delayed for some years, however, while Charles did what he could to weaken Lothar by supporting the wife he was trying to divorce.<sup>4</sup> At least this brought him into the good books of the great Pope Nicholas I. From now on, one watches Charles playing a papal game that certain of his bishops, including Hincmar, deeply mistrusted. It is sometimes said that Charles was in the hands of his clergy. Certainly his sophisticated administration was, if the splendid series of *acta* from his reign are anything to go by, or the heavy record of meetings, arrangements, and recriminations recorded in the *Capitularia*. But politically he followed his own counsel. He could be very brusque with clerics at court, and merciless with bishops whose loyalty was in doubt.<sup>5</sup> 'We kings of the Franks', he once wrote (using the pen of Hincmar), 'are not the surrogates of bishops

<sup>1</sup> *Ann. Bert.* s.a. 861.

<sup>2</sup> Penndorf, pp. 10 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Eberhardt, *Via Regia*, pp. 366 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Devisse examines this phase at length, *Hincmar*, i, pp. 386-96.

<sup>5</sup> His treatment of Hincmar of Laon suggests to me that the bishop had misjudged the king's power, not that of his uncle, the metropolitan of Reims. Devisse, *Hincmar*, p. 771 appears to take a different view.

but *terrae domini*,<sup>1</sup> which in fact was the view of Hincmar himself. The king was quite ready to say how fed up he was by the chatter of bishops, larded with scripture—'tota die per Scripturas parabolare'.<sup>2</sup> But there was another side to this brusqueness. The clergy had books to offer their master, increasingly from the central years of the century; and as purveyors of books they were always welcome.

Did Charles have a court school? A teaching-centre is likely also to be a place of book-production and a workshop for skilled craftsmen. Much, then, hangs on the answer. No one can deny the intellectual activity of his court, or the attraction of his patronage to scholars and artists. 'Hi palatina plerique morantur in aula': such was the witness of Gottschalk,<sup>3</sup> which Eriugena could have confirmed.<sup>4</sup> Among others, the future Bishop Radbod of Utrecht migrated from the school of his uncle, Archbishop Gunther of Cologne, to the court because the liberal arts were well taught there. He adds that his master at court was the philosopher Manno, and that among his contemporaries were Stephen and Mancio, both of whom ended up as bishops.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Herefrid, nephew of Bishop Walter of Orleans, migrated from Chartres to the king's service at court in order to achieve *literalis scientiae summa*.<sup>6</sup> Lupus, advising Bishop Aeneas of Paris how to approach the king, writes: 'I have informed our king, zealous as he is for learning, that I should like to resume, God willing, the study and teaching of the liberal arts, if he himself had leisure and would indulge me so far. He consented with a smile and words of flattery, and promised to do his best.'<sup>7</sup> This seems to imply school-instruction at court and sounds conclusive enough, though it cannot be taken as evidence that Charles shared the advanced humanist interests of scholars like Lupus or Hadoard of Corbie.<sup>8</sup> Yet we have another opinion from Heiric of Auxerre, a stern scholar, who observes that Charles's palace *deserved* to be called a school

<sup>1</sup> P.L. 124, col. 878 and again col. 886.

<sup>2</sup> P.L. 126, col. 97.

<sup>3</sup> MGH, *Poet. Lat.* iii, p. 736.

<sup>4</sup> Y. Christe, *Mind of Eriugena*, pp. 182 ff., shows that Eriugena remained influential with Charles till the latter's death and may, too, have influenced iconographical ideas at court.

<sup>5</sup> MGH, *Scriptores*, xv, p. 569. See also *Neues Archiv*, xiii, pp. 347–62, for further mention of Manno at court.

<sup>6</sup> MGH, *Scriptores*, xiii, p. 400.

<sup>7</sup> Ed. Levillain, ii, letter 122.

<sup>8</sup> See Bischoff, 'Hadoard'.

since every day there were lessons as well as military training. He adds that Charles surpassed Charlemagne in his *studium erga immortales disciplinas* and notes the attractiveness of the king to foreign scholars who came to court *ad publicam eruditionem*, and particularly the *grex philosophorum* from Ireland.<sup>1</sup> It deserved to be called a school, but was not one. Heiric may be judging by high standards, such as those pertaining at Auxerre or Laon or those he understood to have pertained at Charlemagne's court. Plainly some teaching went on, and much talking. Hincmar took a broader view. A *palatium*, he said, was so called because it was the home of *rationabiles homines*; and again, the *domus regis* was called a *scola* not simply because of *scolastici* but because it corrected the moral lives of others.<sup>2</sup> The strongest argument against a palace school on a permanent basis is the absence of any settled headquarters. Charles was not much attached to his royal *villae* apart from Quierzy but moved his court from one monastery or bishopric to another, battenning unmercifully on the clergy for entertainment of his entourage.<sup>3</sup> He lacked Aachen. I should hazard the guess that his failure to provide a fixed headquarters till almost the end of his reign stemmed from his resolve to have Aachen. There remains, however, a marvellous outpouring of what can only be described as court-inspired productions, the work of masters closely associated with the court, as of or at St. Denis, Tours, Reims, Metz, and St. Amand. But if we try to date them with precision we are in trouble. They fall within the years 860–77, and since my impression is that they fit more comfortably in the 870s than the 860s, I shall leave them for the present.

Charles's ambition to possess Lotharingia and Aachen was soon to be revealed. Meanwhile, he suffered severe losses of his own highly unsatisfactory family. Of his sons, Lothar died in 865, Charles in 866, and the twins Drogo and Pippin in one or other of these years at St. Amand, where they had been sent for education. Their epitaph survives.<sup>4</sup> This left the king with Louis the Stammerer, whom he detested, and Carloman, soon to break into open rebellion.<sup>5</sup> He made this an occasion for the

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Vita Germani*, MGH, *Poet. Lat.* iii, p. 429. J. Fleckenstein, *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige* (Stuttgart, 1959), pp. 159 ff., accepts the existence of a *Hofschule*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. his letter to Louis the German, MGH, *Capit.* ii, p. 436.

<sup>3</sup> See Brühl, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> See MGH, *Capit.* ii, p. 243; epitaph: MGH, *Poet. Lat.* iii, pp. 677–8.

<sup>5</sup> See MGH, *Capit.* ii, p. 453. Charles was himself getting old and sickly. With only Louis left to succeed him, unless further sons were born to him,

coronation of his consort Ermentrud in the hope that she might yet bring him sons more satisfactory than their elder brothers.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, the death of Ermentrud in 869 was rapidly followed by the acquisition of a new wife, Richildis,<sup>2</sup> from whom better offspring were devoutly but vainly expected. It may be that this failure of the line to some extent explains the attitude of the magnates to Charles in the last years of his reign. Even in 877 the poor man was still hoping. The second marriage was an occasion for a new Bible, known as his Third, or San Callisto, Bible.<sup>3</sup> Its splendid illustrations were pasted into a still incompletely decorated text, presumably for the special purpose of celebrating the marriage. As a series, they are a remarkable reflection of Carolingian thought about the nature and origins of kingship. We find Joshua an exalted figure, Saul inaugurated as king in the Carolingian fashion, and David as king and author of the Psalms, the beloved book of the Old Testament to its ninth-century readers.<sup>4</sup> A Byzantine model was certainly used by the artists, but not slavishly. The frontispiece to the Book of Numbers shows peace and order disturbed by paganism, heresy, and magic: artistically a new idea that reflects a common Carolingian concern. We may recall the king's great anxiety in 873 to extirpate *malefici homines et sortiariae*, who were bringing death to his people.<sup>5</sup> Above all, the Bible contains a dedicatory illustration of Charles enthroned, with his veiled consort before him. Below the picture is a long verse-inscription on purple, now rather worn. It refers to the 'noble consort on the left, by whom distinguished issue may rightfully be given to the realm'. It is an invocation. Two years later, Charles the future could indeed have started to look bleak to his magnates. It may be from this point that we should reckon the growing restiveness of magnates that finally exploded in the rebellion of Boso.

<sup>1</sup> The *ordo*: MGH, *Capit.* ii, pp. 453–5. Perhaps Hincmar's work. See also Lot, 'Une année du règne de Charles le Chauve', *Le Moyen Âge*, xv, pp. 393 ff., repr. in *Recueil des travaux historiques*, ii (Geneva–Paris, 1970), pp. 415 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The niece of the Lotharingian Queen Theutberga, principal sufferer in her husband's famous divorce proceedings. Her brother Boso brought her to Charles a few days after Ermentrud's death. He married her on 22 Jan. 870.

<sup>3</sup> Unnumbered MS in the basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome. See Hubert, Porcher and Volbach, pp. 140 ff.; Kantorowicz, 'The Carolingian king in the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura', *Selected Studies* (New York, 1965), pp. 82–94; and J. E. Gachde in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, v, pp. 359–400; viii, pp. 351–84; ix, pp. 359–89.

<sup>4</sup> Some words of Dhuoda well illustrate this feeling: *Manuel pour mon fils*, ed. P. Riché in *Sources Chrétiennes*, ccxxv (Paris, 1975), p. 366.

<sup>5</sup> MGH, *Capit.* ii, p. 345.

issued a charter in which the Church of Paris and the monks of St. Eligius were required to hold the customary annual celebrations of his family-anniversaries, which should include any future offspring 'if it should come to pass that such be granted by the prolific Virgin; and a refecton shall be held . . . on the day of the birth of new offspring if, as we said, such shall have been granted by the Mother of God'.<sup>1</sup> The Virgin, *Maria Genetrix*, is importuned, as if she were the old Roman goddess *Fecunditas*, to do what unction and coronation had so far failed to do. But in vain. Charles sits there, hopefully, with his new queen in the San Callisto Bible; but he is only one in a company of kings, his predecessors; and of these, the most significant is Solomon, bearded and crowned in the centre of one illustration but appearing also in two smaller scenes at the top of the page. One of them shows his anointing as king. He stands, a beardless young man, between Zadok and Nathan. In an unfinished Metz sacramentary, a kind of coronation manual and so perhaps dating from 869, we can see a strikingly similar scene of a young Frankish prince, presumably Charles himself, being crowned by the Hand of God.<sup>2</sup> He stands between two haloed bishops, probably Popes Gelasius and Gregory, the fathers of the Frankish liturgy. So like are Charles and Solomon to minds that make pictures: the centuries between matter nothing. Charles seems to have presented the Bible to Rome on the occasion of his imperial coronation.

But first, there was a coronation at Metz. Lothar II died unexpectedly. Charles was on to his kingdom in a flash, no doubt holding that his father had presented it to him in 839.<sup>3</sup> Others considered it pure aggression. But Hincmar rallied the Lotharingian bishops to his cause; and Hincmar composed the *ordo* for coronation and unction that took place in Metz cathedral on 9 September 869. It was an inauguration to a new

<sup>1</sup> Tessier, *Receuil*, ii, pp. 314-15.

<sup>2</sup> Paris, BN MS Lat. 1141, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>. Cf. plate 140 (p. 152) in Hubert, Porcher and Volbach, who identify the supporting figures as the archbishops of Trier and Reims; but J. Croquison, 'Le Sacramentaire Charlemagne', *Cahiers Archéologiques*, vi, pp. 55-70, has shown that they are Popes Gelasius and Gregory; and Kantorowicz, *Studies*, pp. 93-4, suggests Charles the Bald rather than Charlemagne as the young king. This must surely be right.

<sup>3</sup> Charles was acclaimed on his arrival as *Novus Constantinus*. See Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p. 69, and E. Ewig, 'Das Bild Constantins des Großen in den ersten Jahrhunderten des abendländischen Mittelalters', *Spätantikes und frankisches Gallien*, i (Zurich-Munich, 1976), p. 113.

kingdom and momentarily it gave Charles his heart's desire—Aachen. In his allocution,<sup>1</sup> Hincmar dwelt on history. Long ago St. Remigius had received holy oil from heaven to anoint Clovis, now claimed as ancestor of the Carolingians. This same oil from Reims *adhuc habemus*; and now presumably he used it to anoint Charles. Did this make him a churchman's king? Certainly the clergy insisted on a promise or *professio*. What this did was to mark out a specifically Christian path for the exercise of royal power. The advice of experts would clearly be required. But nothing suggests that Charles resented it or thought that it made him anyone's servant but God's. He would have regarded it as an enhancement of power. He knew from experience that oaths were reciprocal; one may instance his oath at Quierzy in 858, when he swore to honour his faithful subjects as a *fidelis rex* should.<sup>2</sup> Behind this lay a heavy documentation, stretching back into the Merovingian past. Further, in 859 Charles acknowledged that his consecrators at Orleans still had the power to authorize his deposition if he failed as a Christian king.<sup>3</sup> No doubt such would have been his fate if Louis the German had defeated him. Even as early as 844, at Ver, there was an implied threat of excommunication, or possibly more, in the final words of the bishops to their king.<sup>4</sup> However, he was safe in his person and office so long as he did not manifestly act *contra Deum et contra vos*. Indeed, he required obedience from his bishops.<sup>5</sup> If we wish to see a king crawling before his bishops we must wait for the *Responsio* of Boso on the occasion of his election as king of Burgundy in 879.<sup>6</sup> None of Charles's bishops suggested that he was other than an excellent king; and Hincmar stood in awe of him, as indeed of kingship generally. To usurp royal functions or to emulate royal power was, as he pointed out, to behave like Lucifer; 'we cannot all be kings'.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, all those not designated by God to be kings were

<sup>1</sup> MGH, *Capit.* ii, p. 340. The literature on the subject is subsumed by Devisse, *Hincmar*, pp. 704 ff., where he lays stress on Hincmar's innovation of the *promissio*. See also C. A. Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning* (Groningen, 1957), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> MGH, *Capit.* ii, p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 451.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387.

<sup>5</sup> There are many instances of this. At Epernay in 847 Charles rejected much of the bishops' programme, which made them see that they were helpless without him. Cf. Nelson, 'National Synods', p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> MGH, *Capit.* ii, p. 367.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

subjects, whether clergy or laity.<sup>1</sup> Whatever his claims to rule in Lotharinga, Charles was plainly believed to deserve good fortune. The Fulda annalist, however, saw this as a step to yet higher things, menacing Louis the German: Charles, he alleges, ordered that he should be called *imperator et augustus*, as lord of two kingdoms.<sup>2</sup> This lacks proof, but, if it had proof, would have no constitutional meaning, any more than had the words of Eriugena some years earlier when he hailed him as *eusebestate igitur regum*,<sup>3</sup> most pious of kings: a Byzantine borrowing, proper to the Grecian, but one supposes arcane to the king.

Some art historians ascribe to this coronation the making of the little bronze statuette of a Carolingian ruler on horseback. Certainly it is contemporary work of the Metz metal-school.<sup>4</sup> It could be Charles or, as was once thought, Charlemagne. It does not matter which. There was a Carolingian image, in plastic art as in painting. Differentiation from his ancestors was not what Charles sought. To the same occasion we can ascribe the Metz sacramentary, but it remained unfinished, presumably because Charles's occupation of Metz was so brief. At least it can be said that a political occasion produced the book to mark it.

For a little while Charles had Aachen and from it brought back treasures that reached other destinations. But the Metz venture did not work out quite as intended. There was a successful counter-attack. He may now have begun to think of founding a second Aachen on safer territory. Still there was no permanent royal residence, and therefore no *Hofschule* in the strict sense. Yet we find works of art and fine books associated with him that may well belong to the early 870s and clearly imply his patronage of craftsmen and writers from several centres, including Metz and St. Denis. I cannot here refer to all of them but will draw attention to one or two that tell us something about him.

First, Charles's personal psalter,<sup>5</sup> which is clearly a book that saw some use. It contains a portrait of the king, if it is a

<sup>1</sup> MGH, *Epist. Karo. Aevi vi*, i, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Ann. Fuld.* s.a. 869

<sup>3</sup> *P.L.* 122, col. 1196.

<sup>4</sup> See Bullough, 'Imagines', p. 246; Hubert, Porcher and Volbach, p. 225; *Karl der Große, Werk und Wirkung* (exhibition catalogue, Aachen, 1965), pp. 42-3.

<sup>5</sup> Paris, BN MS Lat. 1152. The contents are described by Leroquais, *Les Psautiers Manuscrits*, ii, p. 67, no. 314.

portrait. From Charlemagne's day there had been representations of kings; but not until the mid century do we find anything like portraiture. The earliest claimant is the picture of the Emperor Lothar in his Gospel Book:<sup>1</sup> one seems to see a real man. Nor is there any reason why we should not see a real man. Paschasius Radbert, writing shortly before the death of Louis the Pious, could say of painters who knew their job that they could often achieve a speaking likeness of a face without the assistance of letters or voice.<sup>2</sup> Then we have Charles in more than one book, but he fails to look other than a symbolic ruler till we reach the psalter (of uncertain date). Jean Porcher declared that there was nothing else like it for royal portraiture in French art before the early fifteenth century.<sup>3</sup> One wonders. The portrait is clearly idiosyncratic: drooping Carolingian moustache, greying hair, puffy cheeks, a strained look (shared by the Emperor Lothar), crown at a rakish angle. But when one compares it with the picture of St. Jerome translating the psalms, facing the king in the same book, one could be tempted to say that the artist favoured one type of face. If it was done from the life, it was also heavily symbolic. What matters more is that Charles is ranked by his painter among the divine kings of old, and sits there under the protecting hand of God. His picture vividly recalls the Carolingian idea of King David—author of the Psalms (as was believed), prophet and warrior<sup>4</sup>—though it may also owe something to contemporary Byzantine practice. Above the portrait runs an inscription in gold on purple. It reads: 'Cum sedeat Karolus, magno coronatus honore. Est Iosiae similis, parque Theodosio.' This is not vainglorious but a reminder to the king of his great exemplars. He is to think of Josiah, who reformed Israel, and of the Christian Emperor Theodosius II, codifier of Roman Law. However, it is possible that Theodosius I, who submitted to penance imposed by St. Ambrose, is meant. Both Theodosii were heroes to the ninth century. Sedulius celebrates them in a single sentence as emperors 'qui in tantum Omnipotenti placuerunt'.<sup>5</sup> But to return

<sup>1</sup> Paris, BN MS Lat. 266, fol. 1v; Hubert, Porcher and Volbach, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> *P.L.* 120, col. 1584.

<sup>3</sup> Hubert, Porcher and Volbach, p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> Now Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Bibl. fol. 23. See F. Mutherich, 'Die verschiedenen Bedeutungsschichten in der frühmittelalterlichen Psalterillustration', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, vi, pp. 232–44, and my *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. Hellmann, p. 52; Ewig, 'Das Bild Constantins', p. 110.

to the psalter; if I question whether we really have a portrait of Charles, it is not because he fails to display his baldness.<sup>1</sup> Why should he? It is because I think he would have been more interested in the type than in reality. And perhaps the inscription tells us more than the picture.

In the great Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram at Regensburg<sup>2</sup> we see the king once more; this time under a magnificent baldacchino, blessed by the hand of God, attended by angels and receiving the homage of his provinces, Francia and Gotia. Again, there is a long inscription.<sup>3</sup> Other illustrations in the Bible, for example, that showing Gregory the Great, help us to grasp something of the intellectual setting of Carolingian kingship in its historical and biblical context. Yet another Bible, called his second, is associated directly with the king. It belongs to a group of Franco-insular manuscripts and so is a book of patterns, not portraits. It comes from St. Amand, of which he was patron.<sup>4</sup> In the verse-dedication the writer alludes to the king's loss of his son Charles in 866 and to the rebellion of his son Carloman in 870. The scriptorium thus has a direct interest in the fortunes of the royal family. It speaks to the king of recent and painful events and does so in a splendid Bible.

Also from St. Amand comes a contribution to a special interest of this aggressively pious king: Saints' Lives. Milo sends him a new edition of his life of St. Amand with verses praising the king's power and peaceableness.<sup>5</sup> A poem on sobriety, also intended for Charles, was presented after Milo's death by his nephew Huchald,<sup>6</sup> who also perpetrated an appalling poem on baldness—which he had the good sense not to present to the king, although it finishes with a eulogy of him.<sup>7</sup> A greater man, Heiric of Auxerre, dedicated to him a verse-life of St. Germanus, praising him for perpetuating the wise rule of his father and

<sup>1</sup> I have not seen K. U. Jaschke, 'Die Karolingergenealogien aus Metz und Paulus Diaconus, mit einem Exkurs über Karl den Kahlen', *Rhein. Vierteljahrsblätter*, xxxiv, pp. 190–218, or R. Lebe, *War Karl der Kahle wirklich kahl? Über historische Beinamen* (Berlin, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM. 14000, fol. 5v. See F. Mütherich and J. E. Gaehde, *Carolingian Painting* (London, 1977), pp. 106–7.

<sup>3</sup> For these and other verse inscriptions see MGH, *Poet. Lat.* iii.

<sup>4</sup> Paris, BN MS Lat. 2. I am particularly grateful here to Dr McKitterick for letting me read her forthcoming article.

<sup>5</sup> MGH, *Poet. Lat.* iii, pp. 569–609.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 613–75.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* iv, pp. 262 ff. It is dedicated to Hatto of Mainz.

grandfather;<sup>1</sup> Greece he adds, clearly referring to Eriugena and his friends, grieves to see her privileges pass to Charles's kingdom. Paul of Naples contributed to the royal collection a work on the conversion of St. Mary the Egyptian and another on the fall and penitence of Theophilus.<sup>2</sup> And it was at Charles's instance that Usuard, monk of the favoured house of St. Germain-des-Prés, compiled his martyrology.<sup>3</sup> Add all this to St. Denis and the other ghostly patrons I have mentioned,<sup>4</sup> and nothing will shake the impression that Charles saw himself as the prosperous bedesman of as many saints as he could muster. It was nothing unusual; others did the same; but it is an aspect of his practical mind with which one has to come to terms.

Hincmar continued to supply advice. First, around 869, perhaps coinciding with the Metz coronation but certainly on request, *De cavendis vitiis et virtutibus exercendis*.<sup>5</sup> It follows good models and is in effect a *florilegium*. It shows the king the ageless virtues and vices in a traditional way, no doubt reassuring him that he had known them all along. But it seems to emphasize the special vices of the age: gluttony, cupidity, sensual indulgence, and particularly violence—that is, unjustified violence, not wars against enemies or repression of rebels.<sup>6</sup> A year or two later, Hincmar made a more important contribution with *De regis persona et regio ministerio*.<sup>7</sup> Again, the king had asked for advice. He sought comment on certain texts that had a bearing on his royal office and which may have been discussed in his entourage. Hincmar replies in the form of a *Fürstenspiegel* or Mirror of Princes, paying particular attention to the person of the king in the *res publica*, the nature of royal mercy and the punishment of wrongdoers. It is a stern master he paints and no passive servant of the Church; like Charlemagne, his business is *correctio* and active warfare against his pagan enemies, the

<sup>1</sup> MGH, *Poet. Lat.* iii, pp. 428–30. This is perhaps the most impressive of the witnesses to Charles's encouragement of learning, or at least of certain kinds, notably of those connected with the Irish. See M. Cappuyns, *Jean Scot Erigène* (Brussels, 1964), pp. 56–7.

<sup>2</sup> MGH, *Epist. Karo. Aevi*, iv, p. 194, Paul makes it clear that Charles had already lost one copy.

<sup>3</sup> *P.L.* 123, cols. 599–992. Usuard's letter to Charles is also in MGH, *Epist. Karo. Aevi*, iv, p. 193. A better text of the martyrology is J. Dubois, *Le Martyrologe d'Usuard* (*Subsidia Hagiographica*, xl, Brussels, 1945).

<sup>4</sup> For yet more, see Krüger, *Grabkirchen*, pp. 121, 133, 137, 191, 203.

<sup>5</sup> *P.L.* 125, cols. 857–930.

<sup>6</sup> See Devisse, *Hincmar*, pp. 527, 680 ff.

<sup>7</sup> *P.L.* 125, cols. 833–56; Devisse, pp. 710 ff.

Vikings. The profession of arms is not to be despised, as by some it clearly was. What is curious is that armed resistance seemed to require any justification. All we know of Charles from earlier years suggests that stern measures came naturally to him. His vengeance could be terrible: executions and blindings punctuate his reign.<sup>1</sup> But now he had doubts. However, the purpose of *Fürstenspiegel* was not to correct present backslidings but to show a king that his actions already conformed to traditional ideals and that he was well set on the *via regia*, the Christian's way through the world to heaven. Otherwise, he would not have invited what he was clearly expected to relish.<sup>2</sup> No less for his own sake than for that of his hard-pressed, bewildered magnates Charles would welcome theological backing in the business of resisting Vikings: It enforced his claims on them to give him the support in the field he so often lacked over years of grim pressure.<sup>3</sup> We have, then, in the exhortations of Lupus, Hincmar, and in my opinion Sedulius, a serious body of advice to the king. It comes to this: of royal blood and born to rule, he is to see himself in a clear context, as an office-holder on whose personal comportment hangs the well-being of Christian society, lay and clerical, and as heir to a complex tradition of classical, patristic, and Jewish roots. He must never forget the timeless unity of God's people that reaches back to the Israelites (*patres nostri*, as Sedulius calls them) and to their kings (*sancti reges*, says Sedulius).<sup>4</sup> Among the virtues, he must fasten on to *sapientia*, as the poets also tell him. Solomon will be his model here. Merciful and prudent he must certainly be; but religious *sapientia* demands a positive outlet in good government, sensible counsellors, sometimes severity that inspires terror, a will not only to defend his people with arms but to extend the bounds of Christian society. God was a god of war, as Smaragdus reminded Charlemagne.<sup>5</sup> Thus the king is invited to take his place in a great succession: David, Solomon, Josiah, Trajan, Theodosius—indeed, both Theodosii—Constantine, Charlemagne. What the three writers urged was in the minds of others less distinguished. The long verse dedications in Charles's

<sup>1</sup> Examples of severity are in J. Dhondt, *Études sur la naissance des principautés territoriales en France* (Bruges, 1948). Particularly for Charles's vengeance on Bourges, *Ann. Bert.* s.a. 868.

<sup>2</sup> See Eberhardt, *Via Regia*, esp. pp. 306 ff. and 488–90.

<sup>3</sup> Hincmar's approval of the cultus of heroes who die in battle is arresting: *P.L.* 125, col. 844.

<sup>4</sup> See Eberhardt, *Via Regia*, pp. 81, 522.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

Bibles are panegyrics certainly, but also pocket-mirrors of princes, little essays on the ethics of rule that we often overlook. Much more than his grandfather, Charles is surrounded by worried men who look to the past to help a hard-pressed king. Only in a special sense do they presume to tell him his business: they relate it to Christian morals. Since a bad king must in practice be tolerated, much more must a good king be left to his own devices. His advisers' concern is with what makes him a good king; and this, largely, is the practice of moral virtues proper to any man. A king must be an example to his subjects and he will not mind being told this if what it amounts to is taking Solomon and Charlemagne for models. His prestige can only be enhanced. If we wish to see how far Charles thought this ethical framework applicable in practice, we have only to look at the immensely long edict promulgated at Pîtres in June 864,<sup>1</sup> which rehearses the perils and horrors brought upon Francia by the Vikings and does so in the light of moral shortcomings at home. Only through repentance could he and his people hope to win divine aid in their resistance. Repentance, not capitulation, is the Church's remedy.

Since at least 872 the papacy had seen Charles as the most suitable imperial successor to his nephew, the Emperor Louis II.<sup>2</sup> In papal eyes this meant an emperor in Italy, fit to carry on Louis II's endless campaigns against dissidents and Arabs in the hostile south. But it meant more. We ought not to dismiss as unserious the exalted papal view, soon to be expressed, of an emperor. He was *salvator mundi*,<sup>3</sup> established by God in imitation of Christ, the true king; what Christ had by nature, the emperor attained by grace. The Christ-imitating ruler, the *christus Domini*, was no stranger to Charles, for he was already implicit in the exhortations addressed to him.<sup>4</sup> All this could hardly please his elder brother, Louis the German, not least since Charles must have seen the pope's offer in a different light: the imperial crown, Charlemagne's crown, might once again unite the Frankish world. Even the Emperor Louis II, who spent his entire reign in Italy, could inform the Byzantines that he

<sup>1</sup> MGH, *Capit.* ii, pp. 310–28.

<sup>2</sup> Hadrian II to Charles, *P.L.* 122, col. 1320.

<sup>3</sup> Mansi, *op. cit.* xvii, appendix, col. 172.

<sup>4</sup> R. Deshman, 'Christus rex et magi reges', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, x, pp. 367–405, seems to me to underestimate this component in Carolingian kingship by concentrating on the evidence of symbolism in art. See Y. Congar, *L'Écclésiologie du haut moyen-âge* (Paris, 1968), pp. 74 ff. on the ninth-century sense of the reign of Christ.

reigned over all the Franks, 'since it can be said that we rule all the territories of those who are of our own flesh and blood'.<sup>1</sup> It was a formal statement of Frankish political theory. As long ago as 833, Agobard of Lyons had meant much the same when he told Louis the Pious that if the emperor entrusted parts of his *regnum* to his sons, there was still only one *regnum*, not three.<sup>2</sup> Similarly when the three brothers met at Meerssen in 851 they spoke of the *regnum*, not of their separate *regna*.<sup>3</sup> When they referred to their kingdoms in formal documents where distinctions were necessary, they liked to envisage them personally, and thus temporarily, as *regnum Hludowici*, *regnum Karoli*, although *Gallia*, *Germania*, *Francia occidentalis*, etc., were common if imprecise usages.<sup>4</sup>

Louis II died in August 875, and Charles at once made for Rome where he was crowned emperor by the pope on Christmas Day, as Charlemagne had once been. He found himself in a Byzantinizing atmosphere which hung about him for the remaining two years of his life. (That at least is what we call it, though to Charles, a friend of Eriugena, it may have appeared no more than a seemly atmosphere for any ruler.) There were discussions with the learned papal librarian, Anastasius, who had already interested himself in the works of pseudo-Dionysius, so revered by Charles. Anastasius was very fulsome on the subject of the *praestantissimus princeps* and *dictator sublimis* of the Franks.<sup>5</sup> Charles also listened to a reading of the *Cena Cypriani*, or a versified version of it, by John the Deacon, appended to which is John's epilogue on Charles's imperial coronation, 'quando victor coronatur triumphatis gentibus', as he puts it.<sup>6</sup> He neatly summarizes Charles's peaceful triumph over dissidence that had started long ago in 841 on the bloody field of Fontenoy. He grasped that the emperor required praise above all else; reassurance that his reign had reached its natural culmination. For his part, the emperor gave presents to the pope (seen as bribes by the hostile Fulda annalist).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MGH, *Epist. Karo. Aevi*, vii, pp. 388-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v, pp. 224-5.

<sup>3</sup> MGH, *Capit.* i, pp. 72-4.

<sup>4</sup> See Penndorf, p. 93; Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*, pp. 358 ff.; Wattenbach-Levison-Löwe, iv, p. 466.

<sup>5</sup> MGH, *Epist. Karo. Aevi*, v, pp. 431-4.

<sup>6</sup> MGH, *Poet. Lat.* iv, 2, p. 871. See D. Lohrmann, *Das Register Papst Johannes VIII* (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 237 ff. on John the Deacon and Anastasius.

<sup>7</sup> *Ann. Fuld.* s.a. 875: 'more Iugurthino corruptit'.

These presents included the San Paolo Bible and a remarkable ivory throne,<sup>1</sup> the work of Metz craftsmen either in Metz or in Charles's court-workshop, which, assuming its existence, some scholars think was now attracting craftsmen from the best centres. The ivory panels of the throne—possibly inspired by Solomon's throne in 1 Kings 10: 18—show Charles in the act of being offered two crowns by angels. It is an impressive piece of work but whether the king's portrait is significantly like that of the bronze statuette and other post-869 representations, and unlike those of the earlier Paris psalter and Munich prayerbook, is not for the lay eye to decide. The throne, at least, bears no resemblance to the stone throne in Charlemagne's chapel or to the metal travelling-throne used by Charles and known as Dagobert's, which he took from Aachen and gave to St. Denis. If he had given the pope nothing else, the ivory throne would have left a vivid impression of the new emperor as patron of the arts, and as a ruler who liked to see himself in the line of succession from David to Charlemagne, the evident choice of God.

The papacy did its best to support Charles in the difficulties that faced him, first in northern Italy and then at home, where he returned to find that Louis the German had invaded his territory in his absence. Again, we must remember that any legitimate Carolingian had a prima-facie claim to rule over any part of Francia where most people would accept him. Many in west Francia would support the outraged Louis, feeling that Charles had deserted them; but not enough. Louis retreated. And Charles held a great council at Ponthion in June 876.<sup>2</sup> Its aim was to get the bishops and magnates of west Francia and Lorraine to recognize his titles of emperor and king of Italy. There were many sessions, largely taken up with Roman rehearsals of his claims, and with the business of imposing his new adviser, Archbishop Ansegis of Sens, as papal vicar over the north. To this the bishops of Hincmar's persuasion objected; they feared the threat to the autonomy of the Frankish provinces. But the problem remains: what did Charles understand by his new titles? Attention focuses on the last session. It was a liturgicized occasion. The emperor arrived, reports Hincmar,

<sup>1</sup> See F. Mutherich, 'Der Elfenbeinschmuck des Thrones', *La Cattedra lignea di S. Pietro in Vaticano*: App. iii of *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, series iii. *Memorie*, x (Vatican, 1971), and also the contributions of P. E. Schramm and K. Weitzmann.

<sup>2</sup> MGH, *Capit.* ii, pp. 348 ff.

'grecisco more paratus et coronatus', followed by the Empress Richildis, whereupon the two papal legates intoned the imperial litany.<sup>1</sup> (The Fulda annalist is equally sour about Charles's tendency to go Greek when in formal dress, as, for example, by wearing an *epirrhiptarion* or diadem with silk veil in church.)<sup>2</sup> The session at Ponthion closed with the official *laudes* or acclamations of the pope, the emperor, and empress 'et ceteros iuxta morem'. In other words, the Frankish Church as there represented formally accepted the new emperor crowned by Rome. It does not tell us that Charles saw the ceremony as removing him from the hurly-burly of Frankish politics into the more rarefied atmosphere of pope's man in Italy. The value, to him, of the imperial title lay north of the Alps. It lent colour to his immediate entry into Aachen on the news of the death of Louis the German, and his further advance towards Germany, only to be checked by a decisive defeat at Andernach. There is no evidence that this last bid for pan-Frankish dominance, repugnant to many across the Rhine, was in itself disturbing to his west-Frankish subjects, who simply wanted Charles to be active in defending them from increasing Viking pressures; and the very impressive measures he took show that he meant to defend them.<sup>3</sup> Work on the *palatium* at Compiègne, already begun, and the foundation of a chapel there, dedicated to the Virgin—'nos quoque more [Caroli Magni] imitari cupientes'<sup>4</sup>—suggests that he hoped to stay where he was; and it may well be that he himself named his new headquarters Carlopolis, as at least one eleventh-century source reports.<sup>5</sup> Eriugena wrote a poem for the dedication of the chapel, which he describes.<sup>6</sup> Plainly it was modelled on the chapel of Aachen. Charles, like his grandfather, was to sit on his throne, looking down on the congregation, the heir of David and the faithful man of the Virgin. And even now, in 877, Eriugena can wish him a long and prosperous reign: 'Heros magnanimus longaevus vivat in annos.' Charles, for his part, provided the hundred *clerici* of his new collegiate

<sup>1</sup> *Ann. Bert.* s.a. 876.

<sup>2</sup> *Ann. Fuld.* s.a. 876. See Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> MGH, *Capit.* ii, pp. 355–61.

<sup>4</sup> Tessier, *Receuil*, ii, p. 451. Even as he left on his last journey to Rome, Charles could request that 'the *castellum* of Compiègne begun by us should be completed for love of us as witness of your affection for our benignity' (MGH, *Capit.* ii, p. 360).

<sup>5</sup> See Brühl, *Fodrum*, p. 41 n. 150; and H. Löwe, in *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel*, ii (Göttingen, 1972), p. 204 n. 25.

<sup>6</sup> *P.L.* 122, cols. 1235 ff.

establishment with a lavish foundation-charter (or what was seen as one)<sup>1</sup>, in which he plainly states that his model has been the imperial chapel at Aachen, dedicated to the Virgin by his grandfather, *divae recordationis imperator*. This he has done because Aachen has not yet (*nondum*) come to him. So he founds Carlopolis but he goes on hoping for Aachen. Yet he was not buried there but at St. Denis, for which he had already made provision. Louis the Stammerer, however, was buried at Compiègne, and so, too, by a strange irony, was Louis V, last of the Carolingians.<sup>2</sup> We do well to remember that in the year of his death Charles was still looking to the future. But urgent cries for help from Rome, pressed by enemies, sent him south once more, after making detailed arrangements for the government of his kingdom in his absence. It was the business of a Christian king, and much more an emperor, to make war on infidels and rebels. This did indeed cause dismay in Francia; it looked like desertion in the face of the Vikings. Revolt broke out. It was on his hasty return from Italy to deal with this that Charles died unexpectedly in an Alpine hut, on 6 October 877, from dysentery or poison or both.<sup>3</sup> It had proved too much for one man. His problems had been greater than those of his grandfather, and his resources less.

Before his last journey south, the emperor had named his executors and provided for the disposal of some at least of his books if he were not to return alive.<sup>4</sup> He knew he was a sick man. The books were to be divided between St. Denis, Notre Dame of Compiègne, and his son and successor Louis the Stammerer. This will probably explain some of the treasures of the two great monasteries. But not all the books reached their destination. Two of the executors seem to have deflected certain books to the cathedral of Laon as gifts from themselves.<sup>5</sup> Other executors may have done likewise. But we see Charles, at the end, thinking of his collection 'in thesauro nostro'.

Hincmar, also near his end, celebrated the emperor's death by publishing a vision.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps he knew the monk Wettin's

<sup>1</sup> Discussed by Tessier, *Receuil*, ii, p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> See Ewig, p. 406.

<sup>3</sup> *Ann. Bert.*, *Ann. Fuld.*, *Ann. Vedast.*, Regino of Prum, s.a. 877.

<sup>4</sup> MGH, *Capit.* ii, pp. 358-9.

<sup>5</sup> See Devisse, *Hincmar*, iii, pp. 1499, 1505.

<sup>6</sup> *P.L.* 125, cols. 1115-20. Discussed by Devisse, *Hincmar*, ii, pp. 821 ff., and by U. Nonn, 'Das Bild Karl Martells in den lateinischen Quellen vornehmlich des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, iv, pp. 70 ff.

vision of Charlemagne doing time for the obscenities of his life.<sup>1</sup> No king answered all the requirements. According to Hincmar, Bernold, a layman in the province of Reims, had been carried in spirit to a place where, among others, he met Charles the Bald, devoured by worms and reduced to a skeleton. 'Go and find Bishop Hincmar,' begged Charles, 'and tell him that I failed to respect his advice and that of my other faithful men; and thus for my sins I endure these tortures.' Bernold carried out his mission; Hincmar and his clergy prayed for Charles and freed him. Hincmar states in his account that he had not personally interviewed Bernold but only the priest to whom he had confessed his vision. Whether such a story was indeed in circulation or simply invented by Hincmar, it shows us Charles in purgatory, the home of the strayed elect, not far from Paradise, and getting off rather more lightly than did his ancestor, Charles Martel, in Hincmar's own version of the *Visio Eucherii* transmitted to Louis the German in the famous letter of 858.<sup>2</sup> The emperor had listened to the wrong people and gone to Italy; his realm had suffered for it; and so for a time must he. Disillusioned as he was, Hincmar was careful how far he went. He still respected the dead king.<sup>3</sup>

It was a long way from the field of Fontenoy to the Alpine hut; and the journey had taken a long time—thirty-six years. If we ask whether Charles the Bald's actions bore any relation to the advice he constantly got and to the pictured images of kingship that came his way, our answer must be that they did. He was required to be a Solomon in wisdom, a warrior like David, a champion of religion like Constantine, an observer of law like Theodosius, a father of his people like Charlemagne. A tall order. He was none of these things but he tried, believing that his models enhanced his authority. The recurrent themes of his capitularies are the rule of law, civil and canon, as established by *avi et patris nostri, antecessores nostri*, and the pursuit of justice, reason, moderation, and peace as bulwarks of a stable Christian society. His is the responsibility for *correctio*, for the eradication of infidelity and sin, the harbingers of social disruption. He filled no passive role. The opinion of his clergy was that he succeeded to a large degree. We do not know what

<sup>1</sup> Heito's prose version is MGH, *Poet. Lat.* ii, pp. 271 ff. Hincmar is more likely to have seen Walahfrid's metrical version, *ibid.* v, pp. 460 ff. I have not seen the more recent edition of David Traill (Bern, 1974).

<sup>2</sup> *P.L.* 126, cols. 15-16.

<sup>3</sup> As did others, e.g. Anastasius (Lohrmann, *Register*, pp. 256 ff.).

his magnates thought: certainly they did not object to the kind of king he was though many objected to his measures affecting them at different times. At a time when the moral basis of rule was undermined by the débâcle of Louis the Pious and the divorce proceedings of Lothar II, Charles accepted that he was bound by the texts of Christian morality. His job was to be an example, to honour God, to correct, to protect, to avenge wrongs, to observe written law. He was no mere warband leader. Still less was he a kind of monk or bishop. His models lay more in the Old Testament than in the New.<sup>1</sup> His father's trouble may have stemmed in part from his preference for the New Testament, so attractive to the asceticism of monks. Thus Hincmar, often critical, could warn a pope that Charles was a Christian, learned and law-abiding, and so above reproach.<sup>2</sup> His acts of violence could be misdirected, his attitude to his kindred and their lands only excusable on the ground that to strike first was the way to survive; but he knew what being a king of a new kind entailed. He had a view of society, and his place in it. In excess of any other member of his dynasty, he was made to understand that kingship was a special form of Christian life. It started at birth,<sup>3</sup> was shaped by baptism and by education to his *ministerium*, was confirmed by the acclamation of his people and by the rites of inauguration, was proved by his capacity to rule, and rewarded at last by access to the heavenly kingdom. The ninth century knew what it wanted: not simply a Christian king (the Frankish kings had long been such) but a king conceived on an Old Testament pattern interpreted in the light of the Carolingian Renaissance. Alone of the Carolingians, Charles the Bald can be said to have ruled by the book.

<sup>1</sup> The point is emphasized by Eberhardt, *Via Regia*, p. 628.

<sup>2</sup> *P.L.* 124, col. 879. General approval of Charles's rule is implicit in Hincmar's *De Ordine Palatii* addressed to Carloman in 882, though less so in his advice to Louis the Stammerer in 877 (*P.L.* 125, cols. 983–90) than Devisse believes (*Hincmar*, ii, p. 967).

<sup>3</sup> There is always a danger of underestimating this element in kingship apparently dominated by clerical notions. It was not underestimated by Alcuin or Smaragdus (cf. Eberhardt, *Via Regia*, pp. 555 ff.).