

Changing representations

Pippin the Hunchback in Carolingian memory

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List of abbreviations

- AqdE* *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*, ed. F. Kurze, MGH SRG 6 (Hanover, 1895)
- AL* *Annales Laureshamenses*, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS 1 ((Hanover, 1826), pp. 22-39.
- AM* *Annales Mosellani*, ed. J.M. Lappenberg, MGH SS 16 (Hanover, 1859), pp. 491-499
- ARF* *Annales regni francorum*, ed. F. Kurze, MGH SRG 6 (Hanover, 1895)
- AsA* *Annales sancti Amandi*, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS 1 (Hanover, 1826), pp. 3-14.
- CC* *Codex epistolaris Carolinus*, ed. W. Gundlach, MGH Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1892), pp. 469-657
- CLA* E.A. Lowe, *Codices latini antiquiores: a palaeographical guide to Latin manuscripts prior to the ninth century*, 11 vols. plus Supplement (Oxford, 1935-71)
- Chronicon* *Chronicon Laurissense breve*, ed. H. Schnorr von Carlsfeld, ‘Das Chronicon Laurissense breve’, *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 36 (1911), pp. 15-39
- Ganz* *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer: Two lives of Charlemagne*, ed. D. Ganz (London, 2008).
- King* *Charlemagne: Translated sources*, ed. P.D. King (Kendal, 1987)

- Liber* Pauli Warnefredi, *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS 2 (Hanover, 1829), pp. 260-270
- Liber Sangallensis* *Liber confraternitatum Sangallensis*, ed. P. Piper, MGH, *Necr. Supplement* (Berlin, 1884), pp. 1-111
- Liber vetustior* *Liber confraternitatum vetustior*, ed. S. Herzberg-Fränkell, MGH *Necr.* 2 (Berlin, 1904), pp. 4-44
- Lives* R. Davis (trans.), *The lives of the eight-century popes (Liber pontificalis)* (Liverpool, 1992)
- MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica
- Epp.* *Epistulae 3-7 (= Epistulae merovingici et karolini aevi)* (Hanover, 1892-1939)
- Necr.* *Necrologia Germaniae plus Supplement*
- SRG* *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*
- SRG*, n.s. *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, nova series*
- SS* *Scriptores in folio*, 39 vols. (Hanover, 1826-2009)
- MIÖG *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*
- Gesta* Notker, *Gesta Karoli magni imperatoris*, ed. H.F. Haefele, MGH *SRG*, n.s. 12 (Berlin, 1959)
- VCi* Einhardi, *Vita Karoli magni*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH *SRG* 25 (Hanover, 1906)
- Vita Hadriani* *Liber pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne, *Le liber pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1886-1892)

Introduction: Changing representations

In 886, Notker the Stammerer († 912), a monk who lived at the monastery of St. Gall, was commissioned by Emperor Charles the Fat (r. 876-888) to write a book about the virtues of the emperor's namesake and illustrious predecessor Charlemagne. In his *Gesta Karoli*, as the book is nowadays referred to, Notker chose to include an anecdote about the conspiracy of Pippin, the firstborn of Charlemagne, against his father. Notker claimed that Pippin, a hunchbacked dwarf born to Charlemagne by a concubine, who had received his ill-omened name Pippin, fit for a king, from his mother, Himiltrud, had been plotting the death of Charlemagne with a gathering of nobles. The plot, however, was discovered just in time and, with the conspirators punished in one way or another, Pippin was cruelly scourged, tonsured and packed off to the monastery of St. Gall for some time before he was sent to Prüm Abbey.¹

Although many anecdotes by Notker cannot be verified to have happened, this particular event can. Notker's anecdote is based on what was apparently a life threatening conspiracy against Charlemagne and his family that occurred in the autumn of 792. The conspiracy, as it is called by many contemporary sources, was reportedly led by Pippin, then in his early twenties. His participation in the plot marked the end of his secular life and, as Notker writes in the *Gesta Karoli*, led to his incarceration until his death in 811. Carolingian authors tend to represent Pippin as the villain *par excellence* of the Carolingian family who had conspired against the life of his father, stepmother, and half-brothers. Although Carolingian sources admit that he had support among the nobles, both young and older, in plotting against his father, only a few aristocrats have been identified to have actually participated in the insurgence.² Perhaps because so little is known about the other participators of the plot, Pippin's involvement becomes all the more shocking. Indeed his involvement seems to have shaken the Carolingian realm to its core in many different ways as there are different representations of this event and Pippin. What these contemporary authors seem to have found particularly disturbing, is the apparent loathing for Charlemagne and his family by Pippin and the intention to eliminate them literally from the political scene. Indeed, these

¹ *Gesta*, 2 c. 12 pp. 71-74; *Ganz*, p. 100-101.

² C. Hammer, "'Pipinus rex': Pippin's plot of 792 and Bavaria", *Traditio* 63 (2008), pp. 235-276.

contemporaries seem to have slept better after the deposition of Louis the Pious by his sons than they did after the conspiracy by Pippin.

What is one to make of all these representations of Pippin? Usually, these are neglected as most modern scholars use these texts to reconstruct the events that accompanied Pippin's infamous deed. This debate is of some importance to this study but most of the time this thesis cannot engage with those views on what actually happened as they have different aims. This, however, does not alter the fact that many interesting thoughts have been put forward about the life of Pippin. Below, I will discuss the most influential of these ideas and theories. It is best to start with an article by Carl Hammer, who studied the plot of Pippin thoroughly, succeeding in linking at least some aristocrats to it.³ This is an accomplishment in itself as the Carolingian sources tend to pass over the names of those involved in the plot. Moreover, Hammer has contextualised the insurgence very well and his studies dedicated to it, have substantially contributed to our understanding of the incorporation of the Bavarian duchy (*ducatus*) into the Frankish realm (*regnum*) as a whole and the role Pippin may have had in this process,⁴ for Hammer has argued that Pippin may very well have been a short-lived king of Bavaria before things went wrong.⁵ A *damnatio memoriae* was the result of the political mishap of Pippin or so he speculates. In spite of all his interesting theories and pioneering work about the social landscape in Bavaria in the late eighth-century, his work is of relatively little importance in this study as Hammer has tried to reconstruct the past, something this study is only little concerned with.⁶

Among other work on the topic, Janet Nelson's stands out. Although she produced no article that in itself is concerned with Pippin, throughout her career she has observed more than a few interesting things about Pippin. Her view on Pippin is that he may have been born to a concubine although it is more likely that Himiltrud was depicted as such only after her marriage with Charlemagne was dissolved, what means that it was a legal marriage, as the first accusations of

³ Hammer, "Pipinus rex", pp. 241-249.

⁴ C. Hammer, *From ducatus to regnum: Ruling Bavaria under the Merovingians and early Carolingians* (Turnhout, 2007).

⁵ Hammer, "Pipinus rex", pp. 260-261, 263.

⁶ C. Hammer, 'The social landscape of the Prague Sacramentary: the prosopography of an eighth-century mass-book', *Traditio* 54 (1999), pp. 41-80.

Pippin being born out-of-wedlock date from 784.⁷ As she has pointed out, the newly established Carolingian dynasty was unlikely to risk the danger of failing to produce offspring in the first generation born after Pippin the Short was crowned king.⁸ But whatever the nature of the relationship between Charlemagne and Himiltrud had been, Pippin, judging by his very name, was destined to become king from the moment he received his name.⁹ *Nomen est omen*. Pippin was named after his grandfather, the first king of Carolingian blood, Pippin the Short. As Stuart Airlie has put it recently, ‘names have power because they have stories and structures attached to them’.¹⁰

Yet Pippin’s career was cut short due to his role in the plot against his father. This, according to Nelson, may have been triggered by the promotion of Charles the Younger as ruler of the duchy of Neustria by Charlemagne.¹¹ Pippin and Charles may have been subjected to constant fraternal competition by Charlemagne, keeping them both on tenterhooks. That this resulted into inimical feelings on both sides is clearly visible in the so-called *Miracula sancti Goaris*, written in 839 in Prüm. Peace was restored when Pippin and Charles eventually spoke out their minds against each other and their return to fraternal indulgence was celebrated with a festive meal.¹² But according to Einhart, the political involvement of Queen Fastrada, whom Charlemagne married in the autumn of 783, in one way or another seems to have had a profound impact on the change of Pippin’s attitude towards the rest of the royal family.¹³ This may also have been the case in reverse. Perhaps Fastrada encouraged the royal family - that is, Charlemagne and his sons by Hildegard - to turn against Pippin.¹⁴ Brigitte Kasten has suggested that the families of Himiltrud and Fastrada may

⁷ J. Nelson, ‘Woman at the court of Charlemagne’, in: J. Nelson, (ed.), *The Frankish World, 750-900* (London, 1996), pp. 223-242, p. 232; J. Nelson, ‘Charlemagne - *pater optimus*?’, in: P. Godman, J. Jarnut, and P. Johanek (eds.), *Am Vorabend der Kaiser Krönung: das Epos “Karolus magnus et Leo papa” und der Pabstbesuch in Paderborn 799* (Berlin, 2002), pp. 269-281, p. 273.

⁸ J. Nelson, ‘La famille de Charlemagne’, *Byzantion* 61 (1991), pp. 194-212, p. 197.

⁹ Nelson, ‘La famille’, p. 200.

¹⁰ S. Airlie, ‘Earthly and heavenly networks in a world in flux: Carolingian family identities and the Prague Sacramentary’. Forthcoming. I am very grateful to dr. Airlie for allowing me to read his article in advance of publication.

¹¹ Nelson, ‘La famille’, p. 200; J. Nelson, ‘The sitting of the council at Frankfort: some reflections on family and politics’, in: R. Berndt (ed.), *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794: Kristallisationspunkt karolingischer Kultur* (Mainz, 1997), pp. 149-165, p. 156.

¹² Nelson, ‘*Pater optimus*?’, p. 276.

¹³ Nelson, ‘La famille’, p. 206; Nelson, ‘Women at the court’, p. 235.

¹⁴ Nelson, ‘Women at the court’, p. 235.

have been old rivals, what would make such an assumption a likely one.¹⁵ But, although likely, this assumption cannot be corroborated from contemporary sources. Another explanation given by Nelson for the insurgence is the supposition that Pippin was denied a share of the spoils of the most lucrative war Charlemagne ever fought against the Avars.¹⁶ This, together with outmaneuvering Pippin from royal succession, were the cruelties Fastrada committed against Pippin and led him to revolt against his own close kin.

In contrast to the number of articles of Nelson has written about Charlemagne and his family, Walter Goffart has written a single but fundamental article concerned mainly with the early designs of Charlemagne's succession.¹⁷ He has argued that a prospective succession plan is hidden in the *Gesta de episcopis Mettensibus*, written by Paul the Deacon in 784. This early design of the succession plans becomes clear with the baptism of Charlemagne's second son by Hildegard, Carloman, by Pope Hadrian I, who renamed the prince 'Pippin' in the same event. Goffart has maintained that Pippin's hereditary rights were only taken from him after his involvement in the insurgence.¹⁸ Charlemagne was unable to formally disinherit Pippin before 792 although it had been the intention of the former to exclude the latter from succession. In return, Pippin was offered to become the Bishop of Metz.¹⁹ Although this plan had been concocted before 784, presumably in 781, it was only later drawn up by Paul the Deacon. Following this theory, it is striking that Pippin did plot against his father at the *moment supreme*, soon after the bishop of Metz, Angilram, had died in 791. Seen from Goffart's point of view, the revolt shows a prince who was fighting for his hereditary right.

Another article that deals intensively with Pippin as part of a study to Charlemagne's succession plans is the fundamental essay by Peter Classen.²⁰ He has stated that Pippin had been indeed a rightful and qualified person to succeed his father someday.²¹ According to Classen, such a plan of succession can be deduced from the *Annales sancti Amandi*, where it is written that in 780

¹⁵ B. Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur Teilhabe am Reich in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit* (Hanover, 1997), p. 150, fn. 44.

¹⁶ Nelson, 'The sitting', p. 160.

¹⁷ W. Goffart, 'Paul the Deacon's *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*' and the early design of Charlemagne's succession', *Traditio* 42 (1986), pp. 59-93.

¹⁸ Goffart, 'Paul the Deacon', p. 61, 84.

¹⁹ Goffart, 'Paul the Deacon', p. 90.

²⁰ P. Classen, 'Karl der Große und die Thronfolge im Frankenreich', in: C. Classen, J. Fried and J. Fleckenstein (eds.), *Ausgewählte Aufsätze von Peter Classen* (Sigmaringen, 1983), pp. 205-229.

²¹ Classen, 'Die Thronfolge', p. 206.

‘King Charles has divided his *regna* between his sons’ (*Carlus rex divisit sua regna inter filios suos* [...]).²² This passage is followed by the notification that Charlemagne left for Rome ([...] *et perrexit ad Romam*). If this is indeed the chronology of the events, than Charlemagne had already divided the multiple *regna* between his sons before he had his son Carloman baptised and renamed by Pope Hadrian I. Classen has argued that the entry of the *Annales sancti Amandi* should be read this way, suggesting that Charlemagne had divided the realm between all four living sons.²³ We know that Pippin, formerly named Carloman, was to rule the Lombard Kingdom and Louis - later nicknamed ‘the Pious’ - was to rule over Aquitaine. Were the Frankish heartlands divided between Pippin and Charles as suggested by Classen? As Classen has pointed out, Pippin would compete with Charles for another decade while awaiting his share of the Carolingian patrimony. Only after the insurgence against Charlemagne would Pippin vanish from the political stage.²⁴

As can be seen, the main studies concerning Pippin are limited to the historical Pippin. They reflect what is usually studied about Pippin: they tend to discuss the legitimacy of Pippin, the process of Pippin being gradually pushed to the outer margins of the royal family, and the role of Pippin in the insurgence against his father. In writing this study, I have thoroughly studied the extant sources that tell us something about Pippin. In doing so, I became gradually more and more convinced that reconstructing the historical Pippin is in fact nigh possible. I have therefore focussed on what the sources, which reflect voices individuals or groups, actually say about Pippin. I have worried about why the authors wrote what they wrote when they wrote it. Thus, this study is primarily concerned with the representations - the plural is a conscious choice - of Pippin. I have chosen to write a biographical narrative wherein contemporary sources play a major part as they can act as some sort of medium to get as close to the historical Pippin as possible, but always keeping in mind that this study only deals with representations. Of course, when there is enough textual evidence to say something more about what may have actually happened, I will do so. If not, I stick to representation only.

To keep this study clear and not disproportionate long, I have chosen to study the representation of the three most studied elements of Pippin. These are the circumstances of his birth - as his birth is fundamentally important with regard to his legitimacy - as well as the sources reflect the marginalisation of Pippin within the royal family and, last but not least, the sources represent Pippin with regard to the insurgence against Charlemagne in 792.

²² Classen, ‘Die Thronfolge’, p. 212. See also, *AsA*, s.a. 780, p. 12.

²³ Classen, ‘Die Thronfolge’, p. 212.

²⁴ Classen, ‘Die Thronfolge’, p. 213.

Instead of introducing the sources in the biographical narrative I have chosen to introduce the sources at the very beginning of this study so that the narrative may be more accessible. Perhaps these detailed discussion may seem overly long, but I felt it was necessary to do so. In fact, I would have contextualised them even more had I known the ultimate format of this thesis when I began writing it. It is now too late to do so - perhaps next time. The subtitle of this thesis speaks about memory. Within the broad definition of memory, I mainly focus on historiography, as I will examine texts which represent Pippin in a clear and interesting manner. Not all sources can be studied in this RMA thesis although I will discuss those that are relevant. After the sources are introduced, I treat the three aforementioned parts of Pippin's life. What do we know about his birth and the status of the relationship of his parents, Charlemagne and Himiltrud? How did he and his brothers relate to each other according to the sources? And what happened, according to the texts studied here, in 792? In this part of the thesis, I analyse the connections between the different texts in order to find out whether there was some sort of consensus among the Frankish contemporaries about Pippin's role in the royal household, or whether there were perhaps important differences of opinion in specific political or religious circles.

1 The sources

1.1 The *Codex epistolaris Carolinus*

In the *Codex epistolaris Carolinus* - hereafter *Codex Carolinus* - a letter concerning the marital status of Charlemagne in c. 770 is uniquely preserved.²⁵ The *Codex Carolinus* as a whole is a collection of papal letters sent to the Carolingian leaders and kings between 739 and 791, starting with Charles Martel, followed by Pippin the Short, Bertrada, Carloman, and Charlemagne.²⁶ The preface of the *Codex Carolinus* states that the 99 epistles it contains were compiled in 791. The *codex* can be dated even more precisely because its preface states that it was drawn up in 791 and the 23rd regnal year of Charlemagne.²⁷ This means, as has been pointed out by Achim Hack, that the *codex* was put together between 25 December 790 and 8 October 791.²⁸ That year, Charlemagne celebrated both Christmas and Easter at Worms. From there, he set out to Regensburg in Bavaria, where he would stay until autumn in 793. The *Codex Carolinus* was probably compiled in this period, as has been suggested by Hack.²⁹

But it is hard to imagine that Charlemagne, who had never visited Regensburg before, would have carried all the important letters with him there. It is more plausible, therefore, I think, that the compilation was made at Worms, prompted by the fire of the *Kaiserpfalz* there as recorded in the *Annales regni francorum*, probably in early 791. A letter is easily burned. Confronted with the fragility of ‘wisdom and prudence’, as the preface of the *Codex Carolinus* calls its contents, Charlemagne may very well have ordered to collect and copy his sources of wisdom for posterity.

²⁵ W. Pohl, ‘Why not to marry a foreign woman: Stephen III’s letter to Charlemagne’, in: V. Garver and O. Phelan (eds.), *Rome and religion in the medieval world: studies in honor of Thomas F.X. Noble* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 47-63.

²⁶ A. Hack, *Codex Carolinus: päpstliche Epistolographie im 8. Jahrhundert* 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 2006-2007), vol. 1, pp. 74-75. See also, D. van Espelo, *A testimony of Carolingian rule: The Codex epistolaris Carolinus as a product of its time* (PhD diss. Utrecht, 2014).

²⁷ CC, praefatio, p. 476. ‘Regnante in perpetuum domino et salvatore nostro Iesu Christo, anno incarnationis eiusdem domini nostri DCCXCI. Carolus, excellentissimus et a deo electus rex Francorum et Langobardorum ac patricios Romanorum, anno felicissimo regni ipsius XXIII [...]’

²⁸ Hack, *Codex Carolinus*, 1, pp. 61-62.

²⁹ Hack, *Codex Carolinus*, 1, p. 80.

These letters present a papal view on the events unfolding in the Frankish realm. It is unlikely that Charlemagne himself compiled the *Codex Carolinus*, as it is claimed in the preface, but he most certainly supervised its production.³⁰

According to Hack, there was some sort of trend of compiling and thereby preserving earlier letters in the eighties and nineties of the eight-century.³¹ He has suggested that this started when Angilram, bishop of Metz, took over the position of chaplain of the royal court after the death of Fulrad, abbot of St. Denis, on 16 July 784. Although Angilram accompanied Charlemagne in the summer of 791 into Bavaria, where he died, there is no evidence for his direct involvement in compiling these letters as there is no specific reference made to him anywhere in the *Codex Carolinus*. However, it is of course possible that Angilram did play his part in compiling the letters from the royal archives. Whether his role was so important that his death led to the abandonment of the process of the compilation, as the letters in the *Codex Carolinus* reach up to 791, remains uncertain. So although the importance of Charlemagne in the compilation is clear, the process of the production is far more obscure. But it is likely that several important figures at the court, such as Angilram, may have played their part in its compilation. Especially the possible involvement of Angilram in the compilation of the *Codex Carolinus* has far reaching consequences, to which I will return later.

1.2 The *Vita Hadriani*

The very first time Pippin surfaces in history is in the *Vita Hadriani*, which is part of the *Liber pontificalis*. This book was certainly written in the Italian Peninsula, probably in Rome by someone who was very well informed of both the political events as well as the incomes of the churches in Rome, as the long list of donations at the end of this life show. He may very well have been present among the papal entourage when Pope Hadrian I received his royal visitors in late 773 or early 774. It has been argued that the *Vita Hadriani* was written by the same author who wrote the *Vita*

³⁰ Hack, *Codex Carolinus*, 1, p. 62.

³¹ Hack, *Codex Carolinus*, 1, p. 81.

Stephani, the life that precedes the *Vita Hadriani* in the *Liber pontificalis*.³² But given the different political opinions in the *Vita Stephani* and the *Vita Hadriani*, this is rather unlikely.³³

The *Vita Hadriani* was written after Charlemagne had conquered the Lombard kingdom as it only includes political history up to the year 774. If the text was compiled after the death of Pope Hadrian I in 795, it would be puzzling why the account only reaches up to 774 while there are many reasons to include later history as well. For instance, the role of the pope in the renaming of Charlemagne's third son, Carloman, as Pippin and the visit of Charlemagne to Rome in 787 are significant events that go unmentioned in the *Vita Hadriani*. Because of the strange omission of these later events, Raymond Davis has suggested that the first part of the account, that is, chapters 1 to 44, was written in the 770s.³⁴ An explanation for this is the disappointment of Pope Hadrian I about Charlemagne's failure to fulfill certain promises he had made to the pope in 774 concerning the settlement of the division of the spheres of influence in the Italian Peninsula. As observed by Davis, over the years the claims Pope Hadrian I about cities and regions he should rule became steadily smaller. It would then seem that the compiler, who clearly was an insider as he refers to documents and archives, had written his account with the possibility to extend it at a later stage. The failure of Charlemagne to fulfill Pope Hadrian's wishes could then be the reason for the end of the account. Thomas Noble has pointed out that, due to the contemporary unfolding of political events, the author may have written his account in about 778.³⁵ So, the *Vita Hadriani* is a near contemporary report, written within years of the events it refers to, possibly by someone who was well-informed at the Roman Curia.

1.3 The *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*

Perhaps the most telling text informing us about Pippin's legal status before he participated in the insurgence against his father is the *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*, a booklet of which the title is a

³² *Lives*, p. 107.

³³ W. Pohl, 'Why not to marry a foreign woman: Stephen III's letter to Charlemagne', in: V. Garver and O. Phelan (eds.), *Rome and religion in the medieval world: studies in honor of Thomas F.X. Noble* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 47-63, p. 51-52.

³⁴ *Lives*, p. 108.

³⁵ T. Noble, *The Republic of St Peter: The birth of the Papal State, 680-825* (Philadelphia, 1984), p. 141.

nineteenth-century invention.³⁶ Paul the Deacon, a Lombard, stayed at the court sometime between 776 and 785 - probably between 782 and 785 - and argued throughout that time in favour of the release of his brother Arichis, who had been taken captive by Charlemagne after his involvement in an insurrection against Charlemagne in the Italian Peninsula in 776.³⁷ The text, written after October 783, when Charlemagne married his fourth wife Fastrada and certainly finished before Paul the Deacon left for the Italian Peninsula again in 785, was probably produced in 784.³⁸ Composed at the court or in close proximity of it, the *Liber* presents the unique view of an outside opinion - Paul the Deacon was a Lombard - of someone who was perhaps an insider of Carolingian politics. Or at least this is what has been suggested by historians over time.³⁹

Thirty years ago Walter Goffart argued that the *Liber* reflects the early design of Charlemagne's succession whereas Stuart Airlie has recently acknowledged that the *Liber* certainly contains a specific perspective on the legal status of Pippin. Janet Nelson has agreed with this, stating that 'Paul [the Deacon] does preserve the gist of a 'plan', but it was not Charlemagne's, whether in 783 or 781'.⁴⁰ It may very well have been the plan of Angilram, at whose request Paul the Deacon wrote his *Liber*. Airlie has pointed out that Angilram felt the need to demote Pippin, what indicates the prestige Pippin had at the court.⁴¹ As Airlie has put it, 'Pippin was important enough to be besmirched'.⁴² Not the whole *Liber* was about besmirching Pippin or his mother, although one passage arguably does so. The passage is therefore of fundamental importance when studying the representations of Pippin.

³⁶ D. Kempf, 'Paul the Deacon's *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus* and the role of Metz in the Carolingian realm', *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004), pp. 279-299, p. 280, fn. 1.

³⁷ R. McKitterick, 'Paul the Deacon and the Franks', *Early Medieval Europe* 8/3 (1999), pp. 319-339, p. 323.

³⁸ D. Kempf, 'Paul the Deacon's *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus* and the role of Metz in the Carolingian realm', *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004), pp. 279-299, p. 283.

³⁹ Goffart, 'Paul the Deacon', p. 59; Airlie, 'Earthly and heavenly networks'.

⁴⁰ J. Nelson 'Charlemagne: the man', p. 33.

⁴¹ Airlie, 'Earthly and heavenly networks'; Kempf, '*Liber*', p. 280.

⁴² Airlie, 'Earthly and heavenly networks'.

1.4 The *Liber confraternitatum vetustior* of Salzburg

The *Liber confraternitatum vetustior* of the church of St Peter in Salzburg contains a reference to Pippin.⁴³ The confraternity book was written sometime after Charlemagne married Fastrada, in autumn 783, as she features in the ‘list of living kings with their wives and children’ (*ordo regum vivorum cum coniugibus et liberis*).⁴⁴ Because Tassilo, who was deposed in 788 by Charlemagne, and his family are included as well under the ‘list of living dukes with their wives and children’ (*ordo ducum vivorum cum coniugibus et liberis*) it is straightforward that the entry was written sometime before the deposition of Tassilo in 788. But the date of composition may be pinpointed more closely. As Janet Nelson has pointed out, the book was written under the auspices of bishop Virgil of Salzburg, who died on 27 November 784.⁴⁵ Moreover, the entry contains a reference to a certain *Folrad abb.*⁴⁶ This was without a doubt Abbot Fulrad of St Denis who died on 16 July 784.⁴⁷ In the entry, however, he is said to be alive. This pinpoints the date of the entry to sometime between autumn of 783 to 16 July 784.

The persons mentioned in this list of alive kings and their wives and children also include Rotrud, the oldest surviving daughter of Charlemagne by Hildegard. This indicates that the entry was written while Rotrud still played a politically significant role, or at least was a politically more prominent figure than her sisters. This holds especially true for the period between 781 and 787, when she was engaged to Emperor Constantine of Byzantium.⁴⁸ Moreover, the list contains references to the Lombard heir to the throne Adalgisus and his mother Ansa. While it is clear that Adalgisus was still alive at this time, the Lombard royal family had either been captured by Charlemagne, as the case with Ansa, or forced into exile, as is the case with Adalgisus. So, even members of the no longer existent ruling dynasty of the Lombards were included in the entry,

⁴³ K. Forstner, *Das Verbrüderungsbuch von St Peter in Salzburg. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe in Originalformat der Handschrift A1 aus dem Archiv von St Peter in Salzburg* (Graz, 1974).

⁴⁴ *Liber vetustior*, p. 12.

⁴⁵ J. Nelson, ‘Making a difference in eight-century politics: the daughters of Desiderius’, in: A. Murray (ed.), *After Rome’s fall: narrators and sources of early medieval history: essays presented to Walter Goffart* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 171-190, p. 184.

⁴⁶ *Liber vetustior*, p. 12.

⁴⁷ S. Herzberg-Fränkell, ‘Ueber das älteste Verbrüderungsbuch von St. Peter in Salzburg’, *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesamtausgabe der Quellenschriften deutscher Geschichten des Mittelalters* 12 (1887), pp. 53-110, p. 73-74.

⁴⁸ E. Kantorowicz, *Laudes regiae: A study in liturgical acclamations and mediaeval ruler worship* (Berkeley, 1958), p. 37.

perhaps in some sort of an attempt to reconcile with the still living members of this dynasty. This may sound a bit unnecessary to do so for Charlemagne but one has to keep in mind that Liutperga, the wife of Tassilo, was a daughter of Ansa and a sister of Adalgisus. She was a royal Lombard princess and surely had more than one personal issue with Charlemagne, the man who repudiated her sister, defeated her father and carried off her parents and a sister to monasteries.

Given that the *Liber confraternitatum vetustior* originates from Salzburg, where Tassilo was in charge, these references to the former Lombard royal family can easily be explained this way. It seems, therefore, that the entry was written by somebody who both acknowledged the overlordship of Charlemagne over Bavaria as king of the Franks, while at the same time recognising the authority and administrative autonomy of Tassilo and his family.⁴⁹ In short, the list reflects an unexpected and unique voice of the eight-century.

1.5 The *Laudes* of Soissons

The *laudes* of Soissons, which contain a reference to Pippin, survive uniquely in a single manuscript - Montpellier, Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire, Faculté de Médecine, H. 409. Although now resting in southern France, the manuscript originates, according to Bernhard Bischoff, from the Mondsee Abbey in Bavaria.⁵⁰ The manuscript is commonly referred to as the Montpellier or Mondsee Psalter. It was probably written for Tassilo and his family and it may very well have been somebody of this family who carried it with him or her into Francia when Tassilo was deposed in 788.⁵¹ After this, the manuscript came into possession of the royal family and sometime between 788 and 792 the *laudes* were included. The litanies added to the manuscript in the same period link the manuscript with Soissons, one of the older favoured places of Charlemagne. It was certainly used there.⁵² Both Pippin the Short and Carloman I were crowned there so the city carried a certain political weight.⁵³

The *laudes* refer to all male sons of Charlemagne, Fastrada, and again to Charlemagne's oldest daughter, Rotrud. The inclusion of Rotrud implies, in accordance to the text accompanying

⁴⁹ R. McKitterick, *History and memory in the Carolingian world* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 25.

⁵⁰ *CLA* 6, no. 795.

⁵¹ C. Hammer, *From ducatus to regnum*, pp. 195-197.

⁵² *CLA* 6, no. 795.

⁵³ R. McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The formation of a European identity* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 398-399.

her entry, that the litany was used at sometime after 787, when Charlemagne had broken the engagement of her with Constantine. For the text reads that Rotrud was now forever a servant of Christ. This argues in favour of the usage of the *laudes* after 787, for until then, Rotrud was engaged to Constantine and could not have entered religious affairs earlier. This passage reads as follows: ‘Grant me, O Thou Christ, that the sister by the name of Rotrud be content so that she might always serve you.’ (*tu mihi xpe concede sororem nomine rotrude esse beatam ut tibi semper seruiat illa*).⁵⁴ It has been suggested that the Mondsee psalter was used by Louis the Pious, who had the *laudes* included in the manuscript during one of his many visits to Soissons.⁵⁵ Whoever the owner was, the reference to Rotrud was certainly added before her death on 6 June 810.

According to Ernst Kantorowicz has stated that the singing of litanies occurred often ‘in connection with important political events’.⁵⁶ He refers to the three days of fasting and litanies in 817 in the days before the coronations of the sons of Louis the Pious. A similar situation occurred in 791, when the victory over the Avars was celebrated with three days of litanies.⁵⁷ As the entry referring to Rotrud was written sometime after 787, when she was at Chelles, I would suggest that the litany is connected with the victory over the Avars in 791. It would therefore perfectly fit into the context of a great victory, such as the one won over the Avars. It seems therefore, to me, that the *laudes* were actually sung as late as 791, shortly before Pippin’s insurgence.

1.6 The *Prague Sacramentary*

A comparable reference to Pippin can be found in the *Prague Sacramentary* at folium 83v. The manuscript, of uncertain origin but probably written in Bavaria, was written at the end of the eighth-century. It contains a *nota historica* that was added after 29 September 791 but before the summer of 794.⁵⁸ The *terminus post quem* is defined by the reference of Adalung as bishop, a position he attained after the death of his predecessor Sintbert, who passed away on 29 September 791. The

⁵⁴ See, F. Unterkircher, *Die Glossen des Psalters von Mondsee* (Freiburg, 1974), p. 512; The translation is Carl Hammer’s. Hammer, *From ducatus to regnum*, p. 197.

⁵⁵ M. Coens, ‘Anciennes litanies des saints (suite)’, *Analecta Bollandiana* 62 (1944) pp. 126-168, p. 137.

⁵⁶ Kantorowicz, *Laudes regiae*, p. 37, fn. 92.

⁵⁷ *Fragmentum Chesnii*, s.a. 791, p. 34, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS 1 ((Hanover, 1826), pp. 30-34.

⁵⁸ R. McKitterick, ‘The scripts of the Prague Sacramentary, Prague Archiv O 83’, *Early Medieval Europe* 20/4 (2012), pp. 407-427, p. 421.

terminus ante quem is defined by the inclusion of Fastrada, who died in 794. Of course, it is a distinct probability that the *nota historica* of the *Prague Sacramentary* was written before Pippin rebelled in the autumn of 792. The date of composition falls conveniently together with the prolonged stay of Charlemagne in Bavaria, especially Regensburg, between 791 and 793. Especially striking is the adjective applied to Pippin: king (*rex*). The entry reflects a local voice in Bavaria at the end of the eighth century. It may very well have been the voice of someone who had seen Charlemagne during his prolonged stay in Bavaria, perhaps during a visit of a church in which the *Prague Sacramentary* was then used.

1.7 The *Annales Laureshamenses*

The *Annales Laureshamenses*, or Annals of Lorsch, are a set of annals that range, in its fullest form, from 703 to 803, a timespan of exactly one hundred years.⁵⁹ The name given to it in the edition of 1826 implies that the *Annales Laureshamenses* is a single, coherent text. This, however, is not the case. The text can be divided into two parts. The first part, that is, the part covering the years 703 up to 785, was probably written at once. The author may have borrowed the first 60 years or so from the so-called reconstructed *Annales Murbacenses*, or Annals of Murbach. Indeed, as pointed out by Roger Collins, only after 763 a clear connection with Lorsch Abbey is visible in the text as it contains references to the death of its abbots Chrodgang, Gundolandus, and Helmeric in 766, 778, and 784, respectively.⁶⁰ This part of the text ends with a calculation of the number of years passed since the death of Pope Gregory the Great in 604 ‘to the present’ (*A transitu Gregorii papae usque praesentem fiunt anni centum octoginta*).⁶¹ The latter part, that is, the text ranging from 786 up to its last entry of 803, contains no clear connection to Lorsch Abbey.⁶²

Although the last part of the *Annales Laureshamenses* may have been written under the auspices of Richbod, abbot of Lorsch from 784, whose death in 804 coincides with the end of the text in 803, there is no evidence that it was actually written at Lorsch Abbey. For Richbod was also

⁵⁹ R. Collins, ‘Charlemagne’s imperial coronation and the Annals of Lorsch’, in: J. Story (ed.), *Charlemagne: Empire and society* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 52-70, p. 55.

⁶⁰ Collins, ‘Charlemagne’s coronation and the Lorsch annals’, p. 56.

⁶¹ *AL*, s.a. 785, p. 32.

⁶² Collins, Charlemagne’s coronation and the Lorsch annals, p. 57.

bishop of Trier between 791 and 804, so the annals having been written at Lorsch Abbey remains a possible scenario, although just one of many. A Reichenau provenance has also been put forward and because the script in one of the copies is Alemannian, this is certainly a possibility.⁶³

Having mentioned one of its copies already, I will deal here shortly with the transmission of the text. The transmission of this last part of the text - that is, the part from 786 to its end - is no less problematic than its provenance as it survives in only two fragments. The first fragment is a quire containing the complete text - Benediktinerstift St-Paul im Lavanttal, Cod. 8/1 - and the second fragment contains only a part of the entry of the year 794 and then all annals up to the last entry of 803 - Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 515.⁶⁴ Yet, although the transmission is highly complex, the Vienna fragment was probably written in close proximity to the original compilation, in both time and space.⁶⁵

1.8 The *Annales Mosellani*

The *Annales Mosellani*, or Moselle Annals, cover the years 703 up to 798. For the first part, that is, up to 785, the text relies on the *Annales Laureshamenses*. Thereafter, the *Annales Mosellani* contain a unique view on certain matters and it continues the narrative in 788, leaving out 786 and 787. It is this part of the text that features Pippin, although he is mentioned earlier as well. But as that part was copied from the *Annales Laureshamenses*, I will not discuss this reference to Pippin in the *Annales Mosellani*. Still, the end of the first part of this text differs from the end of first part of the *Annales Laureshamenses*. For the part up to 785 misses the calculation of the number of years passed since the death of Pope Gregory the Great. Perhaps the compiler and author, who may have been one and the same person than, wanted the account to appear as an ongoing narrative and omit the otherwise clearly visible break of the narrative.

However, if so, the first entries of the last part of the text were probably written a few years later, for the text is off by a year for the whole last section. Therefore, the insurgence of Pippin against Charlemagne is dated to 791, what is most likely the wrong year. But this may not have been a serious problem to any contemporary as there was no common practice as regards the beginning of a new year. It could be that a year began on Christmas Day, as in the *Annales qui*

⁶³ R. McKitterick, *History and memory*, p. 105.

⁶⁴ Collins, Charlemagne's coronation and the Lorsch annals, p. 59-60.

⁶⁵ Collins, Charlemagne's coronation and the Lorsch annals, p. 63.

dicuntur Einhardi, Easter, or even the Annunciation. This lack of consensus may explain the chronological confusion. As has been pointed out by King, ‘the errors of dating cannot be used as an argument for the non-contemporaneity of the entries themselves’.⁶⁶ Indeed, as the *Annales Mosellani* contains information that does not appear elsewhere, it seems that the text is indeed a contemporary product.

Little is known about its origins. It could be argued that the *Annales Laureshamenses* up to 785 borrows from the *Annales Mosellani* up to 777. For this part of the *Annales Mosellani* - the part up to 777 - ends with a calculation of the years passed since the death of Pope Gregory I.⁶⁷ Heinrich Fichtenau has suggested that this text, perhaps as far as the entry of 785, was the core text the author of the *Annales Laureshamenses* built on. With this in mind, he argued that this first part of the *Annales Mosellani* may have been written in Gorze Abbey.⁶⁸ The part of the text that mentions Pippin is in the later part. I have been unable to study this part of the text thoroughly. Although a lot of questions about this text still remain unsolved, it seems clear, that the author was relatively well-informed about the Carolingian family, mentioning the deaths of two sons, Remigius and Bernard, of Charles Martel in 788.⁶⁹ In the entry for that same year, the author claims that Tassilo, the deposed Bavarian duke and cousin of Charlemagne, had been sent to the monastery of Jumièges.⁷⁰ Aside from these interesting references of otherwise unrecorded deaths and places of exile, what indicates that the author was well-informed, nothing seems to be known about the geographical origins of the text. That there is only one manuscript, now in St Petersburg, containing the text which dates from the late eleventh-century if not the early twelfth-century, complicates things even more.⁷¹

Still, because the author, as has now been pointed out, was relatively well-informed about crucial political events and, for as far as I can see now, about the Carolingian family itself, the text should be credited with some authority. Moreover, the contemporaneity of the text alone should serve as an argument to take this text seriously. The only regrettable thing about it is the uncertainty of its geographic origins. However, as Fichtenau has pointed out, somewhere in the Frankish heartlands, possibly Gorze or Metz, is very likely given the invaluable information the text contains.

⁶⁶ King, p. 19.

⁶⁷ *AM*, s.a. 777, p. 496.

⁶⁸ H. Fichtenau, ‘Karl der Große und das Kaisertum’, *MIÖG* 61 (1953), pp. 257-334, p. 293.

⁶⁹ *AM*, s.a. 788, p. 497. ‘In ipso anno Remigius et Bernehardus defuncti sunt.’

⁷⁰ *AM*, s.a. 788, p. 497. ‘[...] Dassilo, dux Boioariorum, honore ablato clericus factus et ad Gemeticum ductus.’

⁷¹ *AM*, praefatio, p. 492.

One should keep in mind, however, that Lorsch Abbey was a daughter house of Gorze Abbey.⁷² So any similarities of the information both set of annals supply, could be explained by the contact between the two abbeys. The implication of the connection between these monasteries will be pointed out later in this study.

1.9 The *Chronicon Laurissense breve*

In about 807 the *Chronicon Laurissense breve* was written at Lorsch Abbey.⁷³ Soon after its original compilation, the *Chronicon* was continued at Lorsch and Fulda. Pippin is mentioned in both parts of the text, although the manuscript that was continued at Lorsch omits a reference to him in 811 whereas the copy of Fulda does mention his death.⁷⁴ The *Chronicon* draws heavily on the *Continuatio Fredegarii*, finished sometime between 768 and 786, and the *Annales Mettenses priores*, composed around the same time the *Chronicon* was written.⁷⁵ Other sources of the *Chronicon* are the *Annales Laureshamenses* and the *Annales Maximiniani* and the *Annales regni francorum*.⁷⁶

The text has a curious structure, with characteristics of both a chronicle as well as annals.⁷⁷ This can be explained by the use of the style of Bede's *Greater Chronicle*, which precedes the text in four of the seven extant manuscripts. Aside from this stylistic peculiarity, the text itself uses reckoning of time by a calculation of the regnal years of Byzantine emperors. The author was clearly well-informed about what he wrote. Perhaps the text was meant to present some sort of classical or imperial style.⁷⁸ It certainly places Carolingian rule in a continuous line of the biblical

⁷² Fichtenau, 'Karl der Große', p. 293.

⁷³ S. Kaschke, 'Fixing dates in the early middle ages: The *Chronicon Laurissense breve* and its use of time', in: R. Corradini, M. Diesenberger, and M. Niederkorn-Bruck (eds.), *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Frühmittelalterliche Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 115-122, p. 115.

⁷⁴ W. Wattenbach, W. Levison, and H. Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter: Vorzeit und Karolingen, 2: Die Karolinger vom Anfang des 8. Jahrhunderts bis zum Tode Karls des Großen* (Weimar, 1953), p. 264.

⁷⁵ S. Kaschke, *Die karolingischen Reichsteilungen bis 831. Herrschaftspraxis und Normverstellungen in zeitgenössischer Sicht* (Hamburg, 2006), p. 249.

⁷⁶ H. Hoffmann, *Untersuchungen zur karolingischen Annalistik* (Bonn, 1958), p. 85.

⁷⁷ E. Goosmann, *Memorable crises: Carolingian historiography and the making of Pippin's reign, 750-900* (PhD diss. Amsterdam, 2013), p. 184.

⁷⁸ Goosmann, *Memorable crises*, p. 184.

past through Roman and Byzantine emperors. The text does, moreover, include a rather elaborate account of the coronation of Pippin the Short in 751. The author, therefore, aimed to point out the importance and legitimacy of Carolingian rule. Sören Kaschke has pointed out that the author of the *Chronicon* took care to highlight the concord within the Carolingian family. There was little space for quarrels between potential successors of Charlemagne. Kaschke sees a connection between the need for peace advocated in this text and the creation of the *divisio regnorum* of 806.⁷⁹ With this in mind, the passage referring to Pippin, which will be treated later on in this thesis, must be read.

1.10 The *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*

The *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* are in fact a revised edition - to use a modern word - of the *Annales regni francorum*. Uncertainty exists as to when these annals were written although it is more or less certain that they were written by a reviser of the *Annales regni francorum* in close proximity to the court of Louis the Pious.⁸⁰ The *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* can therefore be regarded as the ‘official history’ of the Frankish empire under the rule of Louis the Pious. Yet, textual evidence is relatively scarce as most of the copies do not cover the years 741 to 829, the scope of the text, but only parts of it, as many of the textual witnesses are used in compendia. This has led to them being cut off before 829 or starting later than 741. The differences between the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* and the *Annales regni francorum* are mostly stylistic, although the contents of the entries for certain years differ significantly. Yet, it is clear that the *Annales regni francorum* acted as a core for the reviser and his narrative.

A fundamental difference of the text as a whole is its stress on the legitimacy of Carolingian rule over many different peoples.⁸¹ The text can therefore certainly be regarded as characteristically propaganda of the Carolingians themselves in order to secure their right to rule. The text does pass over Pippin in silence mostly as he is only referred to when linked to the infamous plot against his father. But, as will be pointed out below, Pippin is present in the narrative of the reviser and it can be deduced from the text where Pippin was at certain times in history. Moreover, this work provides a significant clue as to the status of Pippin during his politically active life.

⁷⁹ Kaschke, ‘Fixing dates’, p. 122.

⁸⁰ McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, p. 27; McKitterick, *History and memory*, pp. 21-22.

⁸¹ McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, p. 31.

1.11 The *Liber confraternitatum Sangallensis*

An apparently little-known reference to Pippin can be found in the *Liber confraternitatum Sangallensis*. A list with members of the Carolingian family includes one Pippin too many, if this is not our Pippin.⁸² Moreover, the name contains the epithet ‘king’ (*rex*). Although *Pippinus rex* could refer to Pippin of Aquitaine, son of Louis the Pious, it is more likely to refer to the son of Charlemagne and Himiltrud, an option also preferred by the editor Paulus Piper.⁸³ What is curious about the list is the original absence of Louis the Pious. His name was added only later between Pippin and Pippin of Italy and he can easily be identified as *Hludawicus imp.*. While Louis the Pious was originally excluded, the sons of Charlemagne by several concubines - if we follow Einhart’s classification of the women associated with Charlemagne - Drogo (*Truago*), Hugh (*Huc*), and Theodoric (*Deodericus*), were included immediately. So was Bernard of Italy, his wife Cunigonda (*Chunigund*) and perhaps even his son, Pippin. Moreover, the list seems to include a grandson of Charlemagne through his oldest daughter Rotrud and her lover Rorico. This grandson, Louis, could be identified from an addition in a later hand referring to *Hludowic cler.*, as suggested by Piper.⁸⁴

The reference to King Lothar (*Lodharius rex*), who was crowned king of Bavaria in 814 and co-emperor in July 817, as well as the reference to Louis the German (*Ludawic*), who was not crowned until 817, when he received the title of king of Bavaria, strongly suggests that the list was originally written at some point between after 1st of August 814, when Louis the Pious held a general assembly after which he sent Lothar to Bavaria, and July 817. A later hand continued the list with another Pippin (*item Pippinus*) following Bernard of Italy. It may be assumed that this refers to the son of Bernard of Italy and his wife Cunigonda. As the exact date of birth of this Pippin is unknown, although usually thought to have happened in 815, it could be assumed that he was not yet born when the list was drawn up. However, the column was almost certainly written between the autumn of 814 and the *Ordinatio imperii* of July 817. A more precise dating is impossible although an original column to the right that includes a certain Piccho. This could be Bego, count of Paris, who had married Alpaïda, a daughter of Louis the Pious. If this is the same person, the list must have been written before the death of Bego, which occurred on 28 October 816.

⁸² *Liber Sangallensis*, p. 15.

⁸³ *Liber Sangallensis*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ *Liber Sangallensis*, p. 15.

A possible problem with the reference regarding to Pippin is that he is again called king. This, of course, closely resembles the reference to him in the *Prague Sacramentary*. It is also striking that Charles carries no such epithet with him in this list, similar to the reference to him in the *Prague Sacramentary*. The reference to Pippin in the *Liber confraternitatum Sangallensis* may be explained by his short stay there, if we can believe Notker on this point, immediately after the plot he was involved in. Such a presence of a member of the royal family in the monastery may have been noteworthy and leading to the inclusion of Pippin in this complete list of Carolingian members. The list attracts attention for more reasons than just containing Pippin. As I pointed out above, it includes the sons of Charlemagne born to several concubines, with Drogo and Hugh being born to Regina and Theodoric to Adallinda. This is a rarity. Nevertheless, the epithet ‘king’ applied to Pippin in this list seems to have been added at a later time, perhaps when the second hand was adding Louis the Pious, Judith, Charles the Bald and others. It was, according to the edition of Piper, not already there when the name Pippin was first written down.

If this is so, it raises the question why Pippin was at that moment represented as king in this list. This had probably more to do with the memory of the monks at St Gall than with any political statement. Most telling of all remains that Pippin was actually recorded. Why remains unclear but it shows that Pippin was still being remembered as an integral part of the royal family in *c.* 815. Perhaps the revolt of Bernard of Italy, in late 817, reminded everyone in the Frankish empire how dangerous internal conflicts were and that after this, the memory of Pippin as a prince was found too dangerous to be kept alive. From this point onwards Einhart demonised Pippin further. Indeed, Einhart was the first who omitted Pippin from the list of offspring of Charlemagne, something that was still common in the second decennium of the ninth-century as the list in the *Liber confraternitatum Sangallensis* points out.

1.12 The *Vita Caroli imperatoris*

Einhart’s *Vita Caroli imperatoris* is probably the most famous narrative written in the Carolingian era. Its author, Einhart was born around 770 to his parents Einhart and Engilfrit in the Maingau.⁸⁵ Although not an oblate, Einhart seems to have entered monastic the monastic community of Fulda at a young age. However, he never professed monastic vows and only seems to have been sent to Fulda to be educated. He was sent to the Carolingian court sometime after 791 but before 796,

⁸⁵ P. Dutton, *Charlemagne’s courtier: the complete Einhard* (Toronto, 2009), xi.

probably in 794.⁸⁶ Einhart became a prominent political figure, taking the plan of succession of Charlemagne of 806, the so-called *divisio regnorum* with him to Rome for the pope to sign. He acted on behalf of the party of Louis the Pious for his sole succession in 813, and Charlemagne duly followed his advice - or so we are told. After the death of Charlemagne Einhart retained his honours, acting another twenty-six years as advisor of Louis the Pious.

His *Vita Caroli imperatoris* was written sometime between 817 and 830. The exact date of composition is unclear. This uncertainty is tantalising as some aspects of the text can either be read as praising Louis the Pious as Charlemagne's sole successor or criticising him heavily. For instance, the text contains a passage referring to Bernard of Italy, the son of Pippin of Italy, who is said to have rebelled against Louis the Pious and was then tortured and died after his eyes were put out. If the text was written after his death, on 17 April 818, the text may contain a critical tone towards Louis the Pious. If written before Bernard's death, this is just a reference to Charlemagne acting as *pater familias*.

I tend to follow the view of McKitterick, who has maintained that the *Vita Caroli imperatoris* was indeed written around the same time the *Ordinatio imperii* of 817 was drawn up.⁸⁷ Recently, however, Steffen Patzold has argued that the text was written some ten years later, in 828.⁸⁸ With regard to the reference to Pippin in this text, the discussion of the dating - as to whether it was written in 817 or 828 - of the text is of little importance. What is of importance is that the *Vita Caroli imperatoris* shows us how Pippin came to be remembered after he and his father had passed away.

1.13 The *Miracula sancti Goaris*

The *Miracula sancti Goaris* written by Wandalbert of Prüm in 839 contain a very interesting and lively passage about Pippin. Probably born in 813, Wandalbert never met Pippin in person.⁸⁹ But because he was educated at Prüm Abbey where Pippin was incarcerated for the last twenty years of his life, it is a distinct possibility that the story about Pippin Wandalbert wrote down circulated

⁸⁶ J. Smith, 'Einhard: The sinner and the saints', *Transactions of the royal historical society* 13 (2003), pp. 55-77, p. 63.

⁸⁷ McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, p. 13.

⁸⁸ S. Patzold, 'Einhard's erste Leser: Zu Kontext und Darstellungsabsicht der "Vita Karoli"', *Viator* 42 (Multilingual) (2011), pp. 33-55, pp. 53-55.

⁸⁹ *Miracula*, xxvi-xxvii.

among the monks of Prüm Abbey. It may even have been told to them by Pippin himself once. The *Miracula* was originally commissioned by Markward, abbot of Prüm (r. 829-853) and is the only surviving prose of Wandalbert, who wrote, among other things, also a martyrology and poetry. He may have died before 866, as his name does not appear in a list of monks then alive at Prüm Abbey.

His *Miracula* form the last part of his *Vita et miracula sancti Goaris*. This consists of two books, loosely integrated with each other as the end of the *vita* is clearly mentioned as well as the beginning of the *Miracula*. However, both books were written at once, after 6 July 839, the last date to be mentioned in the *Miracula*.⁹⁰ The *Miracula* seems to be structured in a chronologically correct way. Due to this, the actual events that are described in the part of the text that refers to Pippin can be dated to have occurred shortly before 9 June 790, when Charlemagne donated the villa of Nassau to the monastery of Prüm because of the healing of Fastrada, who had suffered heavily from dental pain, by the saint.⁹¹ That very year is one of the few Charlemagne did not undertake a military campaign but instead he sailed up and down the River Main from Worms to Salz and back again to Worms.⁹² In doing so, Charlemagne and his sons may very well have visited St Goar.

It must be assumed that the Pippin in this anecdote is indeed the son of Himiltrud. First, there is no evidence that Pippin of Italy was with Charlemagne in 790. Second, nothing in the text hints in the direction that this Pippin was king of the Lombards. Moreover, the fraternal feelings between Charles and Pippin of Italy are said to have been friendly by Angilbert in one of his poems.⁹³ Third, inimical feelings are likely to have risen between our Pippin and Charles, who stayed together at the court of their father, and were constantly held on tenterhooks. Therefore, it is most likely that the passage refers to Pippin instead of Pippin of Italy. The passage present us with a unique insight in the relationship between Pippin and Charles. It should be kept in mind, however, that the time in which the *Miracula* was written, was a time when fraternal indulgence had become very actual, with the rebellions of the brothers - the sons of Louis the Pious - against their father in the back of Wandalbert's mind. The anecdote concerning Pippin was used here as an example of how brothers were to behave with regard to each other.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *Miracula*, c. 35, pp. 81–83;

⁹¹ *Miracula*, c. 12, pp. 58-59, esp. endnote 100.

⁹² *ARF*, s.a. 790, p. 86.

⁹³ *Poetae*, 1, pp. 358-360.

⁹⁴ K. Brunner, 'Auf den Spuren verlorener Traditionen', *Peritia* 2 (1983), pp. 1-22, p. 5.

1.14 The *Gesta Karoli*

The *Gesta Karoli*, or Deeds of Charlemagne, was written by Notker of whom we are lucky enough to have more than just one text. Born around 840, he entered the monastery of St Gall at a young age and lived his whole life within the walls of the monastery. He died on 6 April 912. Although known to contemporaries for his wisdom and writing skills, he himself did not shy away to mock himself. For instance, in the *Gesta Karoli* he calls himself ‘stammering and toothless’ ([...] *balbus et edentulus* [...]).⁹⁵ Aside from this work, he wrote a text about Saint Stephen, a *Liber ymnorum*, a martyrology, and a *vita* of Gallus, the patron saint of the monastery. That he set out to write about the life of Charlemagne may have been unexpected, even to Notker. The production of the *Gesta Karoli* was probably set in motion after Charles the Fat (r. 876-888) visited St Gall between 4 and 8 December 883. As has been argued by Simon MacLean, the *Gesta Karoli* was probably written a little later, sometime between late 884 and finished before 30 May 887.⁹⁶ More precisely, Notker wrote the first book of his *Gesta Karoli* between late 884 and finished it around May 886. For the beginning of the second book mentions the death of one of Notker’s informants about Charlemagne, Werinbert, who died in May 886. Immediately after this, he started writing the second book, which was certainly being written in late May 886. This book was probably never finished and the project was presumably abandoned before 30 May 887. By then Charles the Bald had granted protection to St Gall monastery, something Notker asks Charles the Bald to do in the second book, which must therefore have been written before Charles the Bald satisfied Notker’s wish.

That Notker refrained from finishing his text about Charlemagne had a lot to do with his subtle but clearly visible aggressive tone towards certain bishops. Of notable importance here is Liutbert, bishop of Mainz (r. 863-889), who was no friend of Notker. Liutbert’s installation as archchaplain in June 887 changed much for Notker. Even though Notker didn’t shy away from mentioning delicate matters, such as the fact that Charles the Fat had only one son, Bernard, who was born to him by a concubine, sending the text to the court after June 887, with Liutbert as the mighty arch-chaplain, would be a dangerous move. We may assume that Notker’s text would have had some political impact. Probably the fact that the text was never finished is related to the political implications.

⁹⁵ *Gesta*, 2, c. 17, p. 84.

⁹⁶ S. MacLean, *Kingship and politics in the late ninth century: Charles the Fat and the end of the Carolingian empire* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 201-204.

Notker stresses the fact that he built on stories told to him by certain eyewitnesses. Two of them, Adalbert and Werinbert, have been identified.⁹⁷ Adalbert, the father of Werinbert, is said to have fought wars for Charlemagne under the command of Gerold, the brother-in-law of Charlemagne through the marriage of his sister Hildegard to the Frankish king.⁹⁸ The third eyewitness is believed to have been Grimoald, abbot of St Gall from 841 to 872.⁹⁹ The latter was a man with considerable influence at the courts of Louis the Pious and Louis the German. Matthew Innes has argued that the three books were based on the stories of these three persons with Werinbert as symbolising the monk, Adalbert the soldier, and Grimoald the courtier.¹⁰⁰ Even so, these men remain shadowy figures and all that is known about Adalbert and Werinbert comes from this very text itself.

Throughout his text, Notker presents anecdotes of Charlemagne dealing with the daily business to rule the realm. Ultimately, he comes to the part of how Charlemagne dealt with conspiracies that were led against him. Of course, Pippin could not be omitted here. Notker's account of the events that surround Pippin's insurgence is the most lively one. Moreover, it deals with the life of Pippin after he had been exiled to St Gall, or so Notker claims. This alone is enough to study the representation of Pippin in the *Gesta Karoli*. Of great importance to the story of Pippin is the illegitimacy of Charles the Fat's own son Bernard because Notker closes the anecdote about Pippin with the remark that he will only tell about the destruction of Prüm Abbey, where Pippin was ultimately incarcerated, after Bernard has reached majority, thereby encourages Charles the Fat's attempts to legitimise Bernard.¹⁰¹ The link between the treatment of Pippin by Charlemagne and how Charles the Fat should treat his son - according to Notker both were born to concubines - is evident. The story about Pippin in Notker's text, therefore, is about much more than just Pippin. It is about how Charles the Fat should deal with his illegitimate son in order to secure peace and perhaps even succession.

⁹⁷ T. Noble, *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer. Translated with introductions and annotations* (Pennsylvania, 2009), p. 52.

⁹⁸ *Gesta*, 2, praefatio, p. 48.

⁹⁹ M. Innes, 'Memory, orality and literacy in an early medieval society', *Past & Present* 158 (1998), pp. 3-36, pp. 19-20.

¹⁰⁰ Innes, 'Memory', p. 20.

¹⁰¹ *Gesta*, 2, p. 74.

2 Pippin in Carolingian historiography

2.1 The birth of Pippin

The circumstances of Pippin's birth are fiercely discussed among scholars. This has mostly to do with the lack of contemporary sources. Only one source, written in 770, tells us something about the relationship between Pippin's parents. His mother is first referred to about fifteen years later in the *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus* of 784. This historiographical hiatus is tantalising as it has resulted in an equal gap in our knowledge about Pippin and the contemporary opinions about his legal status. For, as has been pointed out, later written sources tend to represent Himiltrud as a concubine. Criticising Pippin by means of claiming that he was born to a concubine may have been one of the aims, as this would rub off immediately on the legal status of Pippin. The changing representations about the birth of Pippin and the relationship of his parents are therefore of major importance.

The sole text that informs us about the nature of the relationship of Pippin's parents is a papal letter, uniquely preserved in the *Codex epistolaris Carolinus*.¹⁰² The letter, dated to the Spring of 770, contains a moral appeal of Pope Stephen III to both Charlemagne and Carloman. The pope urges the two kings to stay loyal to their respective wives the brothers had married 'by the order of [their] father' ([...] *ex praeceptione genitoris* [...]), imploring them not to dismiss their wives nor taking others in marriage as well. Stephen also invokes the kings to love their beautiful Frankish wives and not to take a wife from another people but the Franks.¹⁰³ This papal interference may seem strange, but it had everything to do with the marriage Charlemagne was about to enter with a Lombard princess. An alliance between the Franks and the Lombards was something the pope clearly feared as the Lombards had been hostile towards the papacy for some years by then. The papal panic can therefore easily be explained. That exactly this letter was included in the *Codex epistolaris Carolinus* is particularly interesting.

¹⁰² CC, no. 45, pp. 560-563.

¹⁰³ CC, no. 45, p. 561. '[...] iam dei voluntate et consilio coniugio legitimo ex praeceptione genitoris vestri copulati estis, accipientes sicut praeclari et nobilissimi reges de eadem vestra patria, scilicet ex ipsa nobilissima Francorum gente, pulcherrimas coniuges. Et eorum vos oportet amori esse adnexos. Et certae non vobis licet eis dimissis alias ducaere uxores vel extranae nationis consanguinitate immisci.'

Especially the suggested involvement of Angilram as the compiler of this letter collection is noteworthy. For Angilram was no friend of Pippin as has been pointed out by Stuart Airlie and will be elucidated later in this study.¹⁰⁴ All letters sent with Charlemagne as the sole petitioner postdate 773. Letters between his accession and 774 consist of letters addressed to either Charlemagne and Carloman or to Charlemagne and Bertrada. The omission of papal letters sent to Charlemagne alone between 768 and 774 may be the result of a very conscious process of compiling. Among the omitted letters may have been letters that contained references to the anonymous wife of Charlemagne who may be Himiltrud. The truth may have been so painful that the compiler of the *Codex epistolaris Carolinus* chose to include a letter of Stephen, dated to 770-771, to Carloman in which the former congratulates the latter with his newborn son, offering Carloman to act as the godfather of his newborn son. The letter addressed to Carloman alone is particularly interesting as it clearly illustrates the good relationship between the Carolingians and the papacy and the intention of Stephen to anoint the newborn son of Carloman. The silence about Charlemagne and his private life in these letters stands in stark contrast to our knowledge of the private life of Carloman from these letters preserved in the *Codex epistolaris Carolinus*.

Yet, did Stephen, in an attempt to rally the Frankish kings against the Lombards, speak the truth when he referred to the lawful marriages ([...] *coniugio legitimo* [...]) or did he merely do so to increase the power of his moral appeal? Walter Pohl has recently suggested that Pope Stephen III used the claim of a lawful marriage in order to put more force in his argument, namely dissuading Charlemagne from entering a marriage with a foreign woman. This would only add to the ‘sin of princely polygamy’.¹⁰⁵ He has pointed out furthermore that ‘if the goal of a marriage was prestige and status, papal rhetoric could have an impact by challenging this improvement of the status on the symbolic level’.¹⁰⁶ Seen from this perspective, it seems as if Stephen only referred to the wives of the kings in an attempt to appeal morally to Charlemagne. Even so, it also seems to point out, and quite clearly too, that the marriage between Charlemagne and Himiltrud was regarded as dynastic, and therefore lawful, at the time. This is clear, according to Pohl, from the very name - Pippin - that

¹⁰⁴ S. Airlie, ‘Earthly and heavenly networks in a world in flux: Carolingian family identities and the Prague Sacramentary’.

¹⁰⁵ W. Pohl, ‘Why not to marry a foreign woman: Stephen III’s letter to Charlemagne’, in: V. Garver and O. Phelan (eds.), *Rome and religion in the medieval world: studies in honor of Thomas F.X. Noble* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 47-63, p. 49.

¹⁰⁶ Pohl, ‘Why not to marry a foreign woman’, p. 53.

was given to the sons of both Charlemagne and Carloman.¹⁰⁷ It seems reasonable to believe that Charlemagne was actually once married to Himiltrud. At least their relationship was probably regarded as a marriage by their contemporaries.

The *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus* reflects another voice. Whether Paul the Deacon did indeed consciously demote Pippin when he stated that Pippin had been born before lawful marriage to Charlemagne by the young noblewoman Himiltrud, whom Paul the Deacon calls by name for the first time in history, is a vexed question.¹⁰⁸ Goffart has made a huge issue of this episode. According to him, ‘the discriminatory treatment of Himiltrude’s son is openly motivated; Charles engendered him *ante legale connubium*’.¹⁰⁹ Goffart has argued that Paul the Deacon, by means of an allegorical typology, has hidden a message in the text. The message is that Pippin was to be excluded from his right to succeed. According to Goffart, Pippin was marginalised although not formally excluded from succession until after he plotted against his father. All this seems a bit farfetched. As Nelson has pointed out, the *Liber* ‘does preserve the gist of a ‘plan’, but it was not Charlemagne’s’.¹¹⁰ The plan may have been the one as envisioned by Angilram, as Paul the Deacon wrote his *Liber* at his request.¹¹¹

The reference to Pippin is short but the passage about Charlemagne’s family as a whole is much more interesting. The part of the text that deals shortly with Pippin is essentially about the offspring of Charlemagne and Hildegard. The central importance of Hildegard here can be explained by her being buried in Metz at St. Arnulf shortly earlier, in May 783. The text refers to the fruitful marriage of Charlemagne and Hildegard. Then it reminds the reader that Charlemagne already had a son ‘called Pippin’, born ‘before lawful marriage’ by Himiltrud. (*Habuit tamen, ante legale connubium, ex Himiltrude nobili puella filium nomine Pippinum*).¹¹²

What to make of this ambiguous reference to Pippin and his mother? Traditionally, as already pointed out, scholars tended to believe that this passage can serve as proof that Pippin was already marginalised, perhaps even estranged, from the royal family around the time Paul the Deacon wrote his *Liber*. However, the text contains no real negative representation of Pippin and

¹⁰⁷ Pohl, ‘Why not to marry a foreign woman’, p. 49.

¹⁰⁸ *Liber*, p. 265. ‘Habuit tamen, ante legale connubium, ex Himiltrude nobili puella filium nomine Pippinum.’

¹⁰⁹ Goffart, ‘Paul the Deacon’, p. 87.

¹¹⁰ J. Nelson, ‘Charlemagne the man’, in: J. Story (ed.), *Charlemagne: Empire and society* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 22-37, p. 33.

¹¹¹ Airlie, ‘Earthly and heavenly networks’; Kempf, ‘*Liber*’, p. 280.

¹¹² *Liber*, p. 265.

the text, moreover, can be interpreted otherwise. For it does not clarify whether the birth of Pippin ‘before lawful marriage’ refers to is the lawful marriage between Charlemagne and Hildegard, as is generally assumed among scholars, or whether it means that Charlemagne and Himiltrud were lawfully married, albeit after Pippin was born. For although Paul the Deacon had many reasons to praise Hildegard as the wife *par excellence* of Charlemagne - most notably because she was buried in Metz, the city Angilram was bishop of - Hildegard is acknowledged to be just one of the wives of Charlemagne. This is quite clear as Paul the Deacon does recognise Fastrada as the new wife of Charlemagne. So the more important spouse Hildegard was certainly not the only legitimate wife in the account of Paul the Deacon. Yet, nobody can deny the difference between the epithets as applied to Hildegard ([...] *coniuge* [...]) and Fastrada ([...] *uxorem* [...]) and Himiltrud ([...] *nobili puella* [...]).¹¹³

It would seem then that Paul the Deacon did indeed try to dampen Pippin’s future perspectives. Yet the text is not necessarily as aggressive towards Pippin as has been implied. As already pointed out, Pippin is mentioned just before the author started a list of Charlemagne’s offspring by Hildegard. When treating the birth and names of the offspring of Charlemagne with Hildegard, Paul the Deacon writes that they had another Pippin, the later King of the Lombards, ‘equal in name to his brother and grandfather’ ([...] *fratri atque avo aequivocus* [...]).¹¹⁴ Moreover, when stating that the Pippin of Italy and Louis the Pious are already made king, Paul the Deacon refers to Pippin of Italy as the ‘younger Pippin’ ([...] *minor Pippinus* [...]).¹¹⁵ The namesake brothers were distinguished by means of age instead of legitimacy in the *Liber*.

Later written sources, however, tend to be much more clear and represent Himiltrud as a concubine. The *Annales Mosellani* refers to Pippin as Charlemagne’s firstborn son, but also the son of a concubine ([...] *regis primogenitus filius nomine Pippinus, ex concubina eius Himiltrude natus* [...]).¹¹⁶ Likewise, the *Annales Laureshamenses* refers to Pippin as the son of a concubine ([...] *Pippinus filius regis, ex concubina Himiltrude nomine genitus* [...]).¹¹⁷ Interestingly enough, the *Annales Laureshamenses* contrast the status of Pippin as a son born to a concubine against the legal status of Charlemagne’s offspring by Hildegard ([...] *qui ex legitima matrona geniti sunt* [...]).¹¹⁸

¹¹³ *Liber*, p. 265.

¹¹⁴ *Liber*, p. 265.

¹¹⁵ *Liber*, p. 265.

¹¹⁶ *AM*, s.a. 791, p. 498.

¹¹⁷ *AL*, s.a. 792, p. 35.

¹¹⁸ *AL*, s.a. 792, p. 35.

Moreover, the *Annales Laureshamenses* compare Pippin with Abimelech, a comparison that is perhaps more telling when dealing with his role in the insurgence against his father. This is especially important because Abimelech, as the son of a concubine, is contrasted with his seventy brothers born to his father Gideon by all his wives.¹¹⁹ More implications of the typology between Pippin and Abimelech will be treated later in this study. For now it suffices to say that there is a clear difference with regard to the legal status in the Bible between Abimelech and his brothers. The comparison between Pippin and Abimelech in the *Annales Laureshamenses* can therefore be easily understood. The exception is the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*, that depicts Pippin simply as Charlemagne's oldest son ([...] *filio suo maiore, nomine Pippino* [...]).¹²⁰ This is curious for it indicates that in the court-circle at the time Pippin was not regarded illegitimate, or at least this could not be stated within the parameters of the court. Einhart, however, another court figure, states that Pippin had indeed been the son of a concubine (*Erat ei filius nomine Pippinus ex concubina editus* [...]).¹²¹ But of all the later written sources that discuss the birth of Pippin, the account of Notker the Stammerer is probably most interesting.

At first sight, Notker's account follows the common representation of Pippin; he was born to a concubine. Particularly interesting is the part in which Notker claims that Pippin had received his royal name from his mother ([...] *filio per concubinam progenito, nomine gloriosissimi Pippini a matre oiminaliter insignito* [...]).¹²² That Notker problematises the very name 'Pippin' is interesting to say the least. Nothing indicates that Himiltrud had actually been involved in the name-giving of her son. The story however is no-less fascinating as it testifies that there was a problem with an illegitimate son bearing a name usually reserved for a legitimate heir. Seen from this perspective, the account of Notker marks an important point in Carolingian historiography. For it was apparently no longer allowed for illegitimate sons to bear names that came with the expectation of kingship. This is especially important in the field of the research with regard to the name-giving in the Carolingian era. As pointed out earlier, many modern-day scholars conclude on the very basis of Pippin's name that he had once been a groomed heir of Charlemagne. Notker apparently struggled with this very problem when writing his *Gesta Karoli*: how could an illegitimate son of Charlemagne bear the 'most glorious name of Pippin'? He went for a simple but nonetheless

¹¹⁹ Judges 8:30-31. 'Habuitque septuaginta filios qui egressi sunt de femore eius eo quod plures haberet uxores. Concubina autem illius quam habebat in Sychem genuit ei filium nomine Abimelech.'

¹²⁰ *AqdE*, s.a. 792, p. 91.

¹²¹ *VCi*, c. 20, p. 25.

¹²² *Notker*, liber II c. 12 p. 71.

interesting answer when he explained that the very concubine of Charlemagne was responsible for the name Pippin had been given. Whether mothers of Carolingian princes really had a hand in the naming of their sons must be discussed somewhere else.

In short, the sources tend to contradict each other with regard to the nature of the relationship of Pippin's parents and, as a result of this, the texts offer different perspectives on the legal status of Pippin. Yet it seems quite clear that at some point in history, that is, in the years between *c.* 768 and spring 770, the relationship between Charlemagne and Himiltrud was acknowledged by at least some contemporaries to be a lawful marriage. That their relationship may have begun as a concubinage but was eventually turned into a marriage remains a distinct possibility. This certainly was the case later with Charlemagne's son Louis the Pious and his future wife Irmingard.¹²³ In this context it must be acknowledged that Louis the Pious was already living in a period when the concept of marriage became increasingly clear and restricted to monogamy. By 794, Louis the Pious had children by at least two different women, only one of them, Irmingard, would eventually become his wife while the offspring by the other woman was said to have been born to a concubine. That this was still possible to do in the mid-790s serves as an indicator of how fluid the marital concept must have been in the late 760s when Charlemagne was living with Himiltrud. The suggestion by Pohl that the marriage was regarded as dynastic at the time seems to be a very reasonable one. All the sources do seem to fit in with such a hypothesis.

But even though Pippin was born a legitimate son, some of the authors of the later texts felt the need to claim that he had been born to a concubine. Yet, these are usually annals written at someplace else than the court, probably not even connected to the court. The most famous court-related annals, the *Annales regni francorum* and the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*, left the claim of Pippin being born to a concubine out. In the former Pippin is simply Charlemagne's son, in the latter Pippin is simply Charlemagne's oldest son. That this claim was left out had probably everything to do with the possible problems that could, perhaps even would, arise when such a claim was made. Only after Pippin's and Charlemagne's death, Einhart, writing a court-related biography about Charlemagne, felt it was safe to do so. He was followed by others.

The different textual representations of Pippin's birth - and therefore, those of his legal status and with it the nature of the relationship of his parents - can be explained and understood in their respective social logic. The authors discussed here, writing sometime between 15 to over a 100 years after Pippin's birth, constructed an image of Pippin that did not need to fit with reality. To

¹²³ M. Hartmann, 'Concubina vel regina? Zu einigen Ehefrauen und Konkubinen der karolingischen Könige', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 63/2 (2007), pp. 545-567, p. 563.

look at the ways they represented Pippin allows us, however, to see how Pippin was represented in a particular social circle within the Carolingian realm at a specific place at a specific time.

In short, there is a clear change of representation visible in the sources. Pope Stephen III thought of the relationship between Charlemagne and Himiltrud as a dynastic marriage in 770. In 784, Pippin was believed to be a son of Charlemagne born before lawful marriage. Whether the text refers to the marriage of Charlemagne and Himiltrud or that of Charlemagne and Hildegard remains uncertain. However, Charlemagne had engendered Pippin before he was married, or so Angilram, the commissioner of the *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*, argued. The real change of representation came after Pippin had participated in the insurgence against his father. After this, he is said to be a son of a concubine. Paul the Deacon - or Angilram? - had never dared to go this far in 784. It is therefore very likely that the sudden and radical change of Pippin's status had something to do with blackening his person after the insurgence. The *Annales Laureshamenses* even drew a parallel between Pippin and Abimelech, the infamous out-of-wedlock born son of Gideon. It is not impossible that there had already been voices that argued Pippin had been borne to a concubine, but that these were contained by Charlemagne, who himself may have stood up for his oldest son. Only after Pippin had fallen from grace, these critical voices were allowed to be put forward. Whatever the truth, it is clear that the representation of Pippin's legitimacy, and with it the marriage of his parents, changed over time. The plot of 792 had something - I claim no more - to do with that.

2.2 Pippin and his brothers

The very first time Pippin surfaces in history is in the *Vita Hadriani*. This passage refers to the 'most noble sons' ([...] *nobilissimos filios* [...]) of Charlemagne.¹²⁴ As Charlemagne had only two sons at this time, namely Pippin and Charles, the firstborn son to Charlemagne and Hildegard, Pippin must be among them. A daughter, Adelheid, was born when Hildegard was with Charlemagne in the Italian Peninsula. Therefore, we can be fairly certain that Pippin is among the 'most noble sons' spoken of. According to the text, when Charlemagne on his campaign to conquer the Lombard kingdom in 773 and 774 had laid siege to Pavia, he sent for his wife, Hildegard, and his sons to join him there. Then, while the army remained at Pavia to continue the siege, Charlemagne and his family went to Rome. Because the royal family went to Rome, it is all the

¹²⁴ *Vita Hadriani*, c. 34, p. 496.

more likely that the author of the *Vita Hadriani* was well-informed about Charlemagne's entourage at the time.

The terminology used to refer to the boys is particularly interesting. As pointed out above, the passage refers to the 'most noble sons' of Charlemagne. This terminology was used in later texts as well, to which I will return later, and seems to have been some sort of unofficial title for both Pippin and Charles. But it was not until 799, and in a charter, not a narrative source, that all politically active sons of Charlemagne are referred to as most noble son. Yet, around 778, only Pippin and Charles were Charlemagne's 'most noble sons'. So although Pippin and Charles remain inconspicuous figures in the text, they were regarded as equals. Whether this is in accordance with the public opinion or just the voice of one man, namely the author, remains unclear. As the text was mostly read in the Italian Peninsula and Francia, as has been pointed out by Rosamond McKitterick, the author is unlikely to have made implausible claims about the status of both sons.¹²⁵

The author was stressing here the legitimacy of all of Charlemagne's children and the marriage to Hildegard. It is indeed no less interesting to see how the papacy, now represented by Pope Hadrian I, acknowledged Charlemagne's marriage with Hildegard while the former pope, Stephen III, had stressed the legitimacy of the marriage between Charlemagne and Himiltrud. Whoever the wife of Charlemagne was, was apparently of little importance. Whether it was Himiltrud or Hildegard, the sons of Charlemagne were 'most noble'. Who their mother was didn't matter. The connection to Charlemagne, not his wives, was the most important factor here. By their blood band with Charlemagne, and this alone, Pippin and Charles were regarded as equal and there was no discussion needed about their legitimacy. Sons of Charlemagne did matter.

The *Annales regni francorum* also contains a reference to Pippin who, however, again, as in the *Vita Hadriani*, remains nameless. The entry of 777 makes clear that 'a multitude of Saxons' had sworn allegiance to Charlemagne and his sons.¹²⁶ Although again not called by name, we can be fairly certain that Pippin was among the sons referred to as only he and Charles were certainly born by then. Pippin of Italy was born that very year so there is no way of knowing for certain whether he too was referred to. What is particularly interesting about this passage is that the oath to Charlemagne is also mentioned in the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* but the reference to the sons of Charlemagne is omitted. This omission may very well have been the result of a conscious process of leaving out parts that could be harmful to Charlemagne or his heirs when the text was written.

¹²⁵ R. McKitterick, *Perceptions of the past in the early middle ages* (Notre Dame, 2006), p. 47.

¹²⁶ *ARF*, s.a. 777, p. 48; Scholz, *Carolingian Chronicles*, p. 56.

This may be one of the little shreds of evidence that, as suspected by Hammer, a *damnatio memoriae* of Pippin in Carolingian historiography has occurred.¹²⁷ Moreover, this reference to Pippin could serve as an important one for contextualising his place in the *Vita Hadriani*, as this text was written around 778. For it confirms that Pippin was apparently widely acknowledged as a son of Charlemagne who had a bright political future as of 777.

The entry of 780 of the *Annales Laureshamenses* points out that Pippin was left behind in Worms with his younger half-brother Charles when their father left for Rome ([...] *abiit in Italia, et dereliquit filios suos in Wormacia, Pippinum et Carlum*).¹²⁸ Charlemagne took the other two, Carloman and Louis, with him in order to be crowned and the former even to be renamed by Pope Hadrian I. Like the reference in the *Liber pontificalis*, Pippin and Charles are apparently equals as they both are referred to as Charlemagne's sons ([...] *filios suos* [...]). The epithet of 'most noble', as in the *Vita Hadriani*, is absent here. Yet, it is clear that Pippin and Charles are sons of Charlemagne and there is no sign of any discrimination between them. Indeed, the text merely states that Charlemagne left Pippin and Charles - note the order - at Worms. It may very well have been the case their stay in Francia was some sort of introduction for these two sons of Charlemagne as kings of the heartlands of Francia while the other two, younger born sons were coronated as kings of the newly conquered regions of Aquitaine and the Italian Peninsula.¹²⁹ This is indeed what could be read in the entry for 781 in the *Annales sancti Amandi*, which reads 'King Charles divided his dominions [*regna*] between his sons and journeyed to Rome'.¹³⁰ If this was indeed the order in which the events took place, than Charlemagne had already divided his kingdom between his sons before he set out to Rome, as Peter Classen has suggested years ago.¹³¹

But whatever the chronology of the events, for the author of the *Annales Laureshamenses*, Pippin and Charles were simply Charlemagne's sons. Arguably, the order by which they are mentioned was to serve as a reminder for the audience as to who the eldest son was. If this order is the result of a conscious choice, it is clear that age instead of legitimacy was the reason to list the sons of Charlemagne in a way that could be accepted by the intended audience. The oldest son was special - if not now, he had been when he was born and had, in a way, reassured the continuation of

¹²⁷ Hammer, "Pipinus rex", pp. 261-262.

¹²⁸ *AL*, s.a. 780, p. 31.

¹²⁹ Classen, 'Die Thronfolge', p. 212.

¹³⁰ *AsA*, s.a. 780, p. 12. 'Carlus rex divisit sua regna inter filios suos, et perrexit ad Romam.'; King, *Charlemagne*, p. 153.

¹³¹ Classen, 'Die Thronfolge', p. 212.

the Carolingian dynasty. Of course, at this time, the concept of primogeniture was not common but one can argue that it was already very clearly visible in the *Ordinatio imperii* of Louis the Pious. Just as the author of the *Liber pontificalis* had represented Pippin and Charles as equals, so did the author of this part of the *Annales Laureshamenses* represent Pippin and Charles as equals when their father left them at Worms. The opinion in the *Annales Laureshamenses* would come to change, however, and by 792 the same text would clearly distinguish between the status of Pippin and that of his brothers. For now, in 780, Pippin was simply a son of Charlemagne.

From these sources, it seems that Pippin was treated equally with his younger half-brother Charles. Both are referred to as the sons of Charlemagne, with the *Vita Hadriani* adding that they were his ‘most noble’ sons. The reference to Pippin in the *Annales regni francorum* seems to indicate that Pippin was at least at some point in history regarded as an heir of Charlemagne by no other than Charlemagne himself. The *Annales Laureshamenses* seem to confirm this. As for the *Vita Hadriani*, although written beyond the Alps, the text implies that Pippin was regarded there as a son of Charlemagne who counted too with regard to royal succession, no more or no less than his half-brother Charles did. Even the entry of the *Annales sancti Amandi* - only discussed here because Classen made a point of the text and therefore not thoroughly introduced - although a text with its own problems, clearly points out that in 780 Charlemagne had made plans for Pippin to succeed him someday instead of only the offspring by Hildegard.

That Pippin was certainly still running for future kingship in 784 can be deduced from the *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*. Although the text may very well criticise Pippin to some extent, it points out that Pippin needed to be criticised and to be demoted - if it was really the intention of Paul the Deacon to demote him on the order of Angilram. The aggressive tone of the text should not be overestimated. Yes, Paul the Deacon did compare the degree of legitimacy - or so it seems - of Charlemagne’s sons, but he did not discriminate by means of legitimacy. For he refers to Pippin of Italy as the younger ([...] *minor* [...]) Pippin instead of the legitimate Pippin.¹³² If the lines between illegitimacy and legitimacy were clearcut, he could certainly have made a distinction on the basis of legal status. However, this is not the case. The fact, however, that he does demote Pippin to some extent, can also be read as a piece of evidence that Pippin was counted as an heir to the throne, albeit an unwanted one in the circles Paul the Deacon wrote his *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus* for. For the *liber* of Paul the Deacon does seem to favour the offspring of Charlemagne and Hildegard over his other offspring. But this, as pointed out above, can easily be explained by Hildegard being

¹³² *Liber*, p. 265.

buried in Metz. As Stuart Airlie has argued, Pippin's status is questioned in the text by Paul the Deacon. This, however, does not necessarily reflect the voice of Charlemagne but perhaps only that of Angilram who requested the *Liber*. Angilram was no friend of Pippin and his role in compiling the *Codex Carolinus* and the *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus* is telling, the former passing over Pippin in silence, the latter pointing out that he was born to someone less than a worthy wife. Both texts, all associated with Angilram, clearly treat Pippin with a certain degree of contempt, is telling.

Pippin remains anonymous in other texts. Take, for instance, the entry of the *Annales regni francorum* for the year 785. The text refers to the 'sons and daughters' ([...] *filiis et filiabus* [...]) who travelled with Fastrada to Charlemagne.¹³³ We can be fairly certain that Pippin was among the sons referred to. In the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*, the 'sons and daughters' are replaced with the more indefinite 'children' ([...] *liberis* [...]).¹³⁴ But the entry for 787 has things turned around. The *Annales regni francorum* refers to the sons ([...] *filiis* [...]) of Charlemagne to whom Tassilo had to keep an oath.¹³⁵ Yet, the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* refers to the 'sons and daughters' ([...] *filiosque ac filias* [...]) of Charlemagne.¹³⁶ In contrast to the entry of 785, the Reviser does not turn the definite 'sons and daughters' into the indefinite 'children'. An explanation of why the Reviser so clearly reworked the entry of 785 is that then Pippin and Charles were the only sons with Charlemagne, making it obvious to insiders who the sons were. The indefinite 'children' would be helpful to argue in favour of such a case. We know from his biographer that Louis the Pious did actually visit his father in 785.¹³⁷ Moreover, a letter written by Charlemagne to Fastrada dated after 7 September 791 refers only to the 'darling daughters' ([...] *dulcissimae filae* [...]) who were with Fastrada at the time.¹³⁸ Nelson has suggested that Pippin and Charles at that moment were accompanying Charlemagne on his campaign as 'they were of an age to do so'.¹³⁹ It seems, therefore, that Pippin was part of his father's entourage until the insurgence in 792. Although Pippin remains an inconspicuous figure in the texts, his presence can be deduced from most texts

¹³³ *ARF*, s.a. 785, p. 68. '[...] uxorem suam domnam Fastradanem reginam una cum filiis et filiabus suis ad se venire iussit.'; Scholz, *Carolingian Chronicles*, p. 62.

¹³⁴ *AqdE*, s.a. 785, p. 69. '[...] adductis ad se uxore ac liberis [...]

¹³⁵ *ARF*, s.a. 787, pp. 76, 78; Scholz, *Carolingian Chronicles*, p. 65.

¹³⁶ *AqdE*, s.a. 787, p. 77.

¹³⁷ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. E. Tremp, MGH *SRG* 64 (Hanover, 1995), c. 4, p. 294; Nelson, 'Pater optimus?', p. 274.

¹³⁸ MGH *Epp.* 4, no. 20, pp. 528-529, p. 528.

¹³⁹ Nelson, 'Pater optimus?', p. 276.

only in plural mentions, such as ‘sons’ (*fili*) or ‘children’ (*liberi*). Moreover, a *damnatio memoriae* may be visible in the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*, due to the increasing indefinite and vague terms about who was with Charlemagne at certain times and the omitting of Pippin as a politically important boy in 777, but this needs more research before such a term may be used.

Such a *damnatio memoriae* is not at all visible in the *libri memoriales* of the time. If we take a closer look at the different *libri memoriales*, most of them written in the period during the marriage of Charlemagne and Fastrada, it becomes clear that Pippin certainly remained a son to be reckoned with. Pippin is listed as the first son of Charlemagne in the *Liber confraternitatum vetustior* of Salzburg, written in early 784. His majority is clear from the order of the list, which runs from Charlemagne through Pippin, Charles, and Louis the Pious to Pippin of Italy, who is listed as the last son either because he had received his name as the last of Charlemagne’s sons or because the author simply erred.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, there are the *laudes* of Soissons, composed sometime between 788 and 792. In these *laudes*, Pippin is mentioned in the same breath as Charles. They are referred to as ‘the most noble sons’ (*nobilissimis filiis* [...]) of Charlemagne.¹⁴¹ And the reference to Pippin as ‘King Pippin’ (*Pipinus rex*) in the so-called *Prague Sacramentary* has puzzled modern scholars.

The exact context of the production of the entry in the *Liber confraternitatum vetustior* remains unclear. It is unlikely to have been written in the course of some sort of political meeting. There is no evidence to assume that Charlemagne visited Salzburg in 784. Nevertheless, with or without Charlemagne’s consent, Pippin was included in the *Liber confraternitatum vetustior*. This indicates that the author, and this was probably someone closely connected to bishop Virgil of Salzburg, clearly thought Pippin deserved to be mentioned as the oldest son of Charlemagne. For the episcopal court, Pippin was clearly an integral part of the royal family given that he was included in this particular entry as well as listed as the oldest son of Charlemagne. The order by which the sons of Charlemagne are listed leaves no space for discussion: Pippin was the firstborn son of Charlemagne.¹⁴² In contrast to the area of Metz, where Angilram seems to have launched a

¹⁴⁰ S. Herzberg-Fränkell, ‘Ueber das älteste Verbrüderungsbuch von St. Peter in Salzburg’, *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesamtausgabe der Quellenschriften deutscher Geschichten des Mittelalters* 12 (1887), pp. 53-110, p. 66, fn. 2.

¹⁴¹ *VCi*, p. 47.

¹⁴² Herzberg-Fränkell, ‘Ueber das älteste Verbrüderungsbuch’, p. 66, fn. 2.

campaign against the legitimacy of Pippin, his political opponents still had to go a long way in Salzburg in 784 before Pippin would be demoted.¹⁴³

The same goes for the so-called *laudes* of Soissons. The *laudes* were composed sometime between 788 and 792, possibly 791. Particularly interesting about it is that Pippin and Charles are both referred to as the ‘most noble sons’ (*nobilissimi filii*) of Charlemagne.¹⁴⁴ Both are apparently equals as they are named together. This is different with their younger brothers, Pippin of Italy and Louis the Pious, who are recorded individually as kings of their own realms. They seem to have had some sort of individual saint attached to them as Saint Maurice is invoked for Pippin of Italy while Saint Martin is invoked for Louis the Pious. These individually attached saints are missing for Pippin and Charles although there are saints invoked to help them. It is clear from this text that both Pippin and Charles were not yet kings at this particular moment. Of course, Charles did hold the duchy (*ducatus*) of Neustria in either 789 or 790, but he was not crowned king until Christmas Day 800.

What is most striking about the reference of Pippin and Charles is that they once more are referred to as the ‘most noble sons’ again. This is the second time that this term is used in regard to Pippin, the first being in the *Vita Hadriani*. It seems that this honour was Pippin’s and Charles’ prerogative, because it is never used for the other sons of Charlemagne. After the plot of 792, the title seems to have stuck to Charles, who is also called ‘most noble son’ in the *Annales regni Francorum* as well as in the *Annales Mettenses priores*.¹⁴⁵ Interestingly enough, the epithet bound to Charles in the *Annales regni francorum* is that the Reviser omitted it. This might indicate that Charles himself fell victim to some sort of *damnatio memoriae* after Louis the Pious had succeeded his father. For now, it suffices to point out that Pippin and Charles were Charlemagne’s initial most noble sons, whatever the precise meaning of it. Overtime, perhaps closely related to the Charlemagne’s plans of his succession, did the meaning of this title change: please note that all sons of Charlemagne by Hildegard are referred to as ‘most noble’ in the aforementioned charter of 799. We can therefore be quite sure that Pippin and Charles were regarded equals by the author of the *laudes*.

The *nota historica* in the *Prague Sacramentary* is a unique text in which Pippin is even referred to as king. As pointed out, the entry was written sometime after 29 September 791 but

¹⁴³ S. Airlie, ‘Earthly and heavenly networks in a world in flux: Carolingian family identities and the Prague Sacramentary’.

¹⁴⁴ *VCI*, p. 47.

¹⁴⁵ *ARF*, s.a. 794, p. 94; *AMP*, s.a. 794, p. 80.

before the plot of Pippin in the autumn of 792. In this *nota* Pippin is included as a royal family member together with his father, Fastrada, his younger brothers, Pippin and Louis, as well as Charles, who is listed after Pippin again, as he is in the text of the *Liber confraternitatum vetustior* of Salzburg and the *laudes* of Soissons. Especially striking is the adjective, apparently applied to Pippin: king (*rex*). McKitterick has argued that there are some problems for the use of the word ‘king’ (*rex*) in relation to Pippin. First, Pipinus is followed by a dot, what strongly suggests that *rex* was actually applied to the next name, Karalus. This brings forward another problem, one of word order. It would be very unusual to write *rex Karalus* instead of *Karalus rex*, the normal word order although this construction is not unheard of. This is why it would make sense that the text actually reads *Pipinus rex* were it not for a dot that separates these words. McKitterick presents a solution for this problem, suggesting that the scribe may have inserted *rex* after he had written Karalus.¹⁴⁶ She seems to have overlooked that the first *Pipinus rex*, referring to Pippin of Italy, there is also a dot between *Pipinus* and *rex*. However, all titles, whether king, queen (*regina*) or bishop (*episcopus*) are written behind the names they belong to, making it highly unlikely that *rex* refers to Charles. Moreover, Charles was crowned king as late as Christmas Day in the year 800. This would mean that the manuscript was still used after 800 and somebody was allegedly keeping it up to date, while not erasing Pippin. Charles was never crowned king or dubbed king, not even during the short time he allegedly ruled a realm beyond the Seine in either 789 or 790. So the adjective ‘king’ to Charles would raise just as much questions as it does if it refers to Pippin. I will therefore presume that the title of *rex* does indeed refer to Pippin in this curious *nota historica*.

But much more important than the speculation about whether Pippin was referred to as king or not, is the certainty that Pippin was still a worthy member of the royal Carolingian family between September 791 and autumn 792 and regarded as integral part of that family. McKitterick has pointed out that Pippin must have been part of some kind of political meeting or public appearance between autumn 791 and autumn 792.¹⁴⁷ However, the very presence of the royal family does not necessarily mean that they had been in the presence of the *Prague Sacramentary* as names do not prerequisite physical presence.¹⁴⁸

The order of the this entry is as follows: Charlemagne, Fastrada, Pippin of Italy, Louis the Pious, and Rotrud are followed by Bishop Adalung of Regensburg. These are all included in the first entry. The second entry, which is more a change of ink than of hands, starts off with Atto,

¹⁴⁶ McKitterick, ‘Prague Sacramentary’, p. 420.

¹⁴⁷ McKitterick, ‘Prague Sacramentary’, p. 421.

¹⁴⁸ Airlie, ‘Earthly and heavenly networks’, p. 5.

bishop of Freising, followed by Pippin, Charles, Arn, bishop of Salzburg, Waltrih, bishop of Passau, Alim, bishop of Säben, and Oldalhart, bishop of Neuburg.¹⁴⁹ Hammer has pointed out that the order of both bishops as well as the members of the Carolingian dynasty is highly problematic.¹⁵⁰ For the order is neither by importance, nor seniority. But whatever the reasons for the author to list the names in this particular way, it is striking that Pippin and Charles are, in a way, represented as rulers by themselves as they are cut loose from their younger (half-)brothers who were still not of age. It seems therefore that their apparent independence had something to do with their majority. Pippin was now about twenty-two while Charles had reached twenty whereas Pippin of Italy and Louis the Pious were probably fourteen and thirteen years of age, respectively. Pippin and Charles were certainly older than fifteen, an age at which princes usually were regarded as adults.

If their majority is the reason why Pippin and Charles are cut loose from the Charlemagne, Fastrada and the younger offspring of Charlemagne, the *nota historica* just discussed can serve as an argument in the theory that both Pippin and Charles were regarded as capable to be responsible for their own respective households and had an entourage of their own. By now, they had reached the age at which Charlemagne was crowned king at Noyon in 768. Probably this came with certain expectations and responsibilities. This *nota* may then have served in one way or another to introduce Pippin and Charles in Bavaria as independent rulers under the overlordship of their father. This is certainly true for Charles, who had been given a duchy beyond the Seine to rule only to return it to his father within a year in either 789 or 790. No such experiment is known to have been undertaken by Charlemagne in the case of Pippin although it is certainly possible that Pippin once enjoyed the same kind of overlordship. In this way historian may be able to understand the epithet *rex* that is uniquely applied to Pippin in this *nota historica*. Perhaps Pippin had indeed been crowned king of Bavaria but refused to give it up again to his father, unlike the obedience of Charles a year earlier in Neustria, who did return his *regnum*. Was disobedience of Pippin the ‘most foul plot’ against Charlemagne?

Hammer has argued that, with Bavaria now fully integrated into the Frankish realm, Pippin had renounced his share in the Carolingian patrimony of the Frankish heartlands. In return, Pippin would only claim what had once been the duchy of Bavaria.¹⁵¹ Hammer refers to the intriguing passage in the *Miracula sancti Goaris* to support his theory. According to Wandalbert of Prüm in

¹⁴⁹ C. Hammer, ‘The social landscape’, pp. 41-80, p. 49.

¹⁵⁰ Hammer, ‘Social landscape’, p. 52-53.

¹⁵¹ C. Hammer, ‘Charles the Younger, Alcuin and the Frankish succession’, *English Historical Review* 127/524 (2012), pp. 1-23, p. 5-6.

this book, Pippin and Charles, during the summer of 790, while accompanying their father when he sailed up and down the Rhine and Main, came to stop by St Goar. We are told that Charlemagne led the fleet and was followed by his sons Charles and Pippin, in that order, who had their own ships. Charlemagne went ashore near the monastery of St. Goar, and was followed by Charles. Then Pippin, who thought he had followed his father went ashore, set foot on land and went into the church where he met his brother, whom he had not expected there. There, they came to speak of their longstanding intense rivalry and inimical feelings towards each other and it so happened that, with the help of St. Goar, they left all the bitterness behind them. From that point onwards, they joined each other in fraternal harmony and this was celebrated with a festive meal.¹⁵²

If the story about this fraternal reconciliation refers to a real historical event it does indeed fit in with the historical circumstances of the year 790. Perhaps they had not even talked it through with their father. For both sons were still awaiting some of the share of the Carolingian patrimony. For Charles, like Pippin, was still unmarried - inasmuch as the sources tell us - and although he had enjoyed the rule of the duchy of Neustria a year earlier, he had to return it to his father the same year. Perhaps it was at this time that Charles attempted to marry a daughter of Offa, king of Mercia, on the other side of the Channel.¹⁵³ So while Charles made a grab for status and independence, Pippin sat still. Charlemagne, who was certainly unhappy with Charles handling on his own, forced him to give back the duchy. The brothers may now have felt the need to support each other's claims. They made a pact, or so Hammer suggested. Pippin would support Charles' claim to the Frankish heartlands while Charles would support Pippin's claim to Bavaria.

Whatever the case, the representation of Pippin in this text is tantalising when compared to the other texts that speak about Pippin. Apparently Wandalbert did not worry about the then views on Pippin. Instead, he presents an unprecedented account about the way in which Pippin and Charles spoke out their minds and overcame their personal enmities. From then onwards, the text suggests, things were going better between the two of them as they were reconciled by St. Goar. This raises the question why Wandalbert felt it necessary to write this down in his miracle book while he could have passed it over. It is possible that Wandalbert had come to learn of this anecdote through one of the elder monks at Prüm Abbey, who may have learned of this story from Pippin himself when he was incarcerated at the monastery of Prüm between 792 and his death in 811. Thus, Pippin was not necessarily depicted as evil itself after the participation in the plot against his

¹⁵² *Miracula*, c. 11, pp. 55-58.

¹⁵³ Hammer, 'Charles the Younger', p. 9.

father. On the contrary, with a little help from a saint, he, and with him the royal family, were able to restore friendly relations with each other. Yet, the representation of the clash of Pippin and Charles in this account can be understood better when taking into account the time frame when this text was written. For during the late 830s, appealing to fraternal love was essential due to the conflicts the empire had seen in 830 and 833-834. With the aging of Louis the Pious - over sixty in 839 - the succession of three of his sons was approaching. And as they already had had their problems due to the right to success, opting for patience towards each other was necessary to do.

This might not be such a strange theory after all. One has to keep in mind that most of the *libri memoriales* which commemorate Pippin come from Bavaria. Pippin, on the other hand, seems to be absent in the *libri memoriales* from other parts of the realm. It is likely therefore that he enjoyed a particular degree of popularity in Bavaria. Regardless of his relative popularity there, the reference of him being king in the *Prague Sacramentary* being the apex of it, he seems to have been regarded as a rightful heir to the Carolingian patrimony before his involvement in the plot of 792. For Pippin features in most sources his brothers also appear in. Sometimes Pippin goes unmentioned though and, a single time, in the *Annales regni francorum*, he is effectively erased from the history books. But there is no change of attitude towards Pippin visible after the renaming and baptising of Carloman by Pope Hadrian I in 781, with the possible exception of the reference to him in the *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*. This exception, however, proves the rule.

2.3 The insurgence of 792

As the oldest son of Charlemagne, Pippin's involvement in the plot against his father was all the more shocking to Carolingian society. His participation would be remembered for years to come. Even when Notker wrote his *Gesta Karoli* about ninety-five years after the plot, he recalled very lively stories of Pippin's role in the insurgence. Although Notker has written perhaps the most lively account of the plot, the sources disagree on fundamental issues such as the time and place of the plot, as well as its causes. Moreover, they even disagree about what actually happened.

We can be fairly sure, however, that the insurgence unfolded in 792, somewhere in Bavaria where Charlemagne was staying for a prolonged time. Basically all sources agree on this.¹⁵⁴ The texts disagree about all other aspects. The *Annales Mosellani* claim it happened in the autumn ([...] *tempore autumni* [...]) while the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* claim that it happened in the

¹⁵⁴ *AM*, s.a. 791, p. 498; *AL*, s.a. 792, p. 35; *AqdE*, s.a. 792, pp. 91-93; *VCi*, c. 20, p. 25-26; *Gesta*, 2, c. 12, pp. 71-72.

summer ([...] *aestatem* [...]).¹⁵⁵ Even Einhart, who usually follows the account of the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*, disagreed with one of his main sources for writing his text as he claims that the insurgence occurred while Charlemagne was wintering in Bavaria.¹⁵⁶ But the account of Einhart can be read in a different way. He may have meant that the plot, which Einhart doesn't date to a specific year at all, happened while Charlemagne was campaigning against the Avars during his prolonged stay in Bavaria, when he wintered there for three consecutive years. Seen from this perspective, only two sources do date the insurgence precisely, namely to the summer and autumn. I prefer to read the *Annales Mosellani* as the more authoritative source here, as it was probably the earlier written source. It seems fair to say that the plot occurred sometime in September.

The insurgence was staged in Regensburg. This is clear in the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* but also from the *Annales Laurehamenses* and especially the *Annales Mosellani*, which recall that Charlemagne, after returning from Pannonia the year before, resided the whole year in Regensburg ([...] *in ipsa civitate Reganesburg resedit per totum anni spacium* [...]).¹⁵⁷ Yet, Notker claims that Charlemagne had nearly been captured on his way back from fighting the Slavs (*Nam de Sclavis ad Reginam regressus, a filio [...] pene captus et, quantum in eo fuit, est morti dampnatus.*), which he surely must have confused with the Avars.¹⁵⁸ Notker may have written the story in a slightly more dramatic fashion, as he does more often in his account. But this shouldn't be a reason to disbelieve Notker. Charlemagne may have at some point in 792 left with his soldiers on an army drill. It may have been that Pippin, according to Einhart, 'feigned sickness' ([...] *aegritudine simulata* [...]) to stay at Regensburg to prepare his *coup* while his father was away with the army.¹⁵⁹ But whatever the truth, all sources agree that the insurgence was located in Bavaria.

As to why Pippin allegedly plotted against his father, the texts which present a reason for the insurgence agree that the cruelty (*crudelitas*) of Fastrada had been the 'cause and origin' ([...] *Fastradae reginae crudelitas causa et origo extitisse creditur.*), as Einhart has put it.¹⁶⁰ He probably borrowed this from the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*, in which the same cause is put forward, albeit in a slightly different wording.¹⁶¹ But Einhart's text is to be given more attention as he

¹⁵⁵ *AM*, s.a. 791, p. 498; *AqdE*, s.a. 792, p. 91.

¹⁵⁶ *VCi*, c. 20, p. 25. '[...] cum pater bello contra Hunos suscepto in Baioaria hiemaret [...]'

¹⁵⁷ *AM*, s.a. 791, p. 498.

¹⁵⁸ *Gesta*, 2, c. 12, p. 71.

¹⁵⁹ *VCi*, c. 20, p. 25.

¹⁶⁰ *VCi*, c. 20, p. 26.

¹⁶¹ *AqdE*, s.a. 792, p. 91.

explains that the cruelty of Fastrada had been merely the cause of something that led to the insurrection. For he explains that Charlemagne ‘had consented to the cruelty of his wife and seemed to have gone far beyond his usual kindness and gentleness’.¹⁶² It was not so much Fastrada as it was Charlemagne Pippin had his quarrel with. However, Einhart would not, of course, criticise his protagonist openly. In blaming Fastrada, moreover, Einhart’s narrative would fit in with the literary tradition of blaming stepmothers for all the bad things.¹⁶³ It should be noted, however, that only later texts, accuse her of having a bad influence on Charlemagne. For the more contemporary texts, the *Annales Mosellani* as well as the *Annales Laureshamenses*, know nothing of her cruelty. Those texts simply state that the main reason of the plot was Pippin’s wish to rule in his father’s place.¹⁶⁴ As McKitterick has put it ‘Pippin the Hunchback’s revolt bears all the signs of a resentful son’s quarrel with his father, at least as it is presented in the Revised version of the *Annales regni francorum* and by Einhard’.¹⁶⁵

These different representations with regard to the *where*, *when*, and *why* show that the insurrection was much discussed. Moreover, there is also discussion about what actually happened. This is especially clear when looking at the terms used to describe the events. The *Annales Mosellani* call it a ‘crime’ (*scelus*) as well as a ‘deceit’ (*fraus*).¹⁶⁶ The *Annales Laureshamenses* refer to it as a ‘most foul plot’ (*consilium pessimum*) and again as a ‘abominable plot’ (*consilio nefando*).¹⁶⁷ The later account of the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* refer to it as a ‘sworn association’ (*coniuratio*) as well as a ‘conspiracy’ (*conspiraverant*) of certain aristocrats. The text also states that it was ‘high treason’ (*reus maiestas*) and a ‘crime’ (*scelus*).¹⁶⁸ Einhart uses the same words.¹⁶⁹ What to make of all this? The first general observation is that something bad had happened. Due to the variety of words, it is difficult to see what was really going on in Regensburg in the autumn of 792. This matters because not only the words differ but also their implications.

¹⁶² *VCi*, c. 20, p. 26. ‘[...] quia uxoris crudelitati consentiens a suae naturae benignitate ac solita mansuetudine inmaniter exorbitasse videbatur.’; *Ganz*, p. 33.

¹⁶³ B. Kasten, ‘*Noverca venefica*. Zum bösen Ruf der Stiefmütter in der gallischen und fränkischen Gesellschaft’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 35 (2001), pp. 145-181.

¹⁶⁴ *AM*, s.a. 791, p. 498; *AL*, s.a. 792, p. 35.

¹⁶⁵ McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, p. 268.

¹⁶⁶ *AM*, s.a. 791, p. 498.

¹⁶⁷ *AL*, s.a. 792, p. 35.

¹⁶⁸ *AqdE*, s.a. 792, pp. 91, 93.

¹⁶⁹ *VCi*, c. 20, pp. 25-26.

There were different punishments for these different crimes as has been pointed out by McKitterick.¹⁷⁰ A ‘deceit’ was less harshly punished than ‘high treason’. It seems, therefore, that the authors in an attempt to blacken Pippin represented the insurgence deliberately in various ways. In doing so, they were certain to blacken Pippin’s reputation and were able to accuse him of all possible evil. Attention to these differences has also been attracted by Karl Brunner.¹⁷¹

But was the scheme really initiated by Pippin himself? And if so, who were with him in what was arguably a high treason? We learn from the *Annales Mosellani* that those involved in the conspiracy were ‘a very large number of the most noble Franks, younger men and older’. ([...] *plures ex nobilissimis iuvenibus seu senioribus Francorum* [...]).¹⁷² These aristocrats, however, had allied themselves with Pippin, who is represented as the instigator of the plot in this text. This account shows resemblances with the *Annales Laureshamenses* wherein Pippin is also said to have been the instigator of the plot. For we are informed about ‘those who were with him’, that is, with Pippin ([...] *eorum qui cum ipso erant* [...]) and then again about ‘those who were his accomplices’ ([...] *eos qui consentanei eius erant* [...]).¹⁷³ The story from these two accounts is clear: aristocrats had joined Pippin instead of otherwise. However, there are other voices. The *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*, for instance, states that Pippin conspired with ‘some Franks’ ([...] *et quibusdam Francis* [...]) and called the instigators later the ‘authors of the conspiracy’ ([...] *auctores vero coniurationis* [...]).¹⁷⁴ The plural is essential here. It was not just Pippin who had plotted against Charlemagne; it was Pippin with some Franks, who were defined by Einhart in the *Vita Caroli imperatoris* as ‘certain leading Franks’ ([...] *cum quibusdam e primoribus Francorum* [...]) and later to the ‘conspirators’ ([...] *coniuratorum* [...]).¹⁷⁵ According to these two later written accounts, Pippin did not instigate the scheme by himself.

As is clear by now, quite a lot of stories surround the insurgence of 792. All sources do agree that Pippin was involved one way or another. That he was not alone is clear from the account of the *Annales Mosellani* and most later written texts. The account of Einhart deserves particular attention. For the courtier of both Charlemagne and Louis the Pious implies that the insurgence against Charlemagne was in fact begun by others than Pippin. As Einhart points out, Pippin had been won

¹⁷⁰ McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past*, pp. 71-73.

¹⁷¹ K. Brunner, *Oppositionelle Gruppen im Karolingerreich* (Cologne, 1979), pp. 14-39.

¹⁷² *AM*, s.a. 791, p. 498.

¹⁷³ *AL*, s.a. 792, p. 35.

¹⁷⁴ *AqdE*, s.a. 792, pp. 91, 93.

¹⁷⁵ *VCi*, c. 20, p. 25.

over by the leading and anonymous aristocrats with the ‘false promise of a kingdom’ ([...] *qui eum vana regni promissione inlexerant* [...]).¹⁷⁶ As Hammer has pointed out, ‘Einhard seek - desperately - to preserve the king’s reputation and the honor of the Carolingian family: better a fool than a knave!’.¹⁷⁷ Whether Pippin had actually been a victim of power hungry aristocrats is impossible to reconstruct but it is clear that Pippin was supported widely throughout the Frankish realm by many aristocrats. Einhart also explains that the disloyalty of these aristocrats had been instigated by the cruelty of Fastrada. As already pointed out earlier, Nelson has suggested that this cruelty was denying Pippin the spoils of war in 791 after a successful campaign had been undertaken against the Avars. Charlemagne consented to Fastrada's wishes and was therefore led astray, what in turn had caused aristocrats and Pippin to conspire against him.¹⁷⁸

There is another feature in Einhart's narrative that has caused much debate. For Einhart calls Pippin ‘hunchbacked’ (*gibbus*). Due to this defamation Pippin has been nicknamed ‘the Hunchback’ by later historians to this date. What does seem to have escaped most scholars is that already in ancient Greece and later in the Roman Empire the adjective ‘hunchbacked’ was used to mock.¹⁷⁹ Einhart, probably aware of this literary tradition, used it to mock Pippin instead of presenting his readers with a real physical description of Pippin.¹⁸⁰ Einhart compensated this physical shortcoming of Pippin quickly by claiming that Pippin was in fact good looking.¹⁸¹ The physical description of Pippin in Einhart’s *Vita Caroli imperatoris* should therefore be regarded as a literary trick to mock Pippin instead of presenting a truthful account of his appearance. It may also be that Einhart wrote down what he had heard from other courtiers. For Einhart, it should be remembered, had never seen the fallen prince himself. However, no text written before Einhart’s *Vita Caroli imperatoris* states that Pippin had been deformed.

Years later, Notker elaborated the claim made by Einhart, adding that Pippin was also a dwarf (*nanus*).¹⁸² Within a century after his revolt, the representation of Pippin’s physical appearance changed from what seems to have been a young and healthy man to a hunchbacked

¹⁷⁶ *VCi*, c. 20, p. 25.

¹⁷⁷ Hammer, “‘Pipinus rex’”, p. 236.

¹⁷⁸ *VCi*, c. 20, p. 26

¹⁷⁹ C. Bruun, “‘Der Buckelige’ als Spottname in der griechisch-römischen Antike und im Mittelalter”, *Classica et mediaevalia: Revue danoise de philologie et d’histoire* 49 (1998), pp. 95-117, p. 97-101.

¹⁸⁰ Bruun, “‘Der Buckelige’”, p. 116.

¹⁸¹ *VCi*, c. 20, p. 25. ‘[...] facie quidem pulcher, sed gibbo deformis.’

¹⁸² *Gesta*, 2, c. 12, p. 72.

dwarf. If Pippin had indeed been physically imperfect, this was of no concern to his contemporaries. For only Einhart, writing about thirty years after the plot of 792, and Notker, writing over ninety years after 792, make such claims. As pointed out, this was probably just another way to blacken Pippin's reputation instead of giving a truthful account of Pippin's appearance. Notker, moreover, points out that 'all deformed people tend to be more irritable than those who are properly proportioned' ([...] *ut omnes debiles animosiores sanis esse consueverunt* [...]).¹⁸³ This is the only time Pippin's character is described in the sources. Of course, the reason to portray him as irritable comes forth from Notker's conviction that deformed men tend to be easily annoyed. Indeed, Notker answers certain question as laid before him by certain messengers of Charlemagne 'wrathfully' (*Tunc ille stomachando* [...] *inquit* [...]).¹⁸⁴

From to the *Chronicon Laurissense breve* we get some insight in the relationship between Charlemagne and Pippin. For although the *Chronicon* leaves no doubt that Pippin was the instigator of the scheme, this text does preserve some of his prestige during the process in which he was judged.¹⁸⁵ It points out, like the *Annales Laureshamenses* that Pippin was spared by Charlemagne and then sent to a monastery, whereas the *Annales Laureshamenses* simply states that this was because Charlemagne didn't want to execute Pippin ([...] *quia noluit rex, ut occideretur* [...]), the *Chronicon* uses a particularly interesting word: *pietas*. For the *Chronicon* claims that 'because the wise king was moved by *pietas*, he ordered Pippin to be tonsured and sent him to a monastery' ([...] *qua sententia rex pietate permotus Pippinum tonsorari iubet et in monasterium mitti* [...]).¹⁸⁶ This story in the *Chronicon* seems to have been borrowed from the *Annales Laureshamenses*.

The *Annales Laureshamenses* present a typology between Pippin and the biblical Abimelech, son of Gideon. The passage is as follows:

'And there came to light this year a most wicked plot which Pippin, the king's son by a concubine named Himiltrud, - - - ['set in motion'?] against the life of the king and of his sons by a lawfully wedded wife, for they intended to kill the king and those sons and Pippin sought to reign in the king's place, like Abimelech in the days of the *judices* of Israel, who

¹⁸³ *Gesta*, 2, c. 12, p. 73; *Ganz*, p. 102.

¹⁸⁴ *Gesta*, 2, c. 12, p. 73.

¹⁸⁵ *Chronicon*, IV, 24, p. 33. '[...] inventum est consilium pessimum, quod Pippinus filius regis ex concubina inierat [...]'

¹⁸⁶ *Chronicon*, IV, 24, pp. 33-34.

slew his brothers, seventy men, upon one stone and reigned in the place of his father Gideon, but with wickedness and not for long'.¹⁸⁷

Allegedly, Pippin, like Abimelech, sought to rule by killing his father and his brothers. The resemblance with the deeds of Abimelech is telling, with the exception that Abimelech did not kill his father Gideon, who embodies Charlemagne in this passage. Gideon, also called Jerubbaal, had died 'in good old age' instead of being murdered by Abimelech.¹⁸⁸ Aside from this little inconsistency between the stories of the two events, the passage does seem to be fitting indeed, but is it really?

To get to the core of the reasons why Pippin may have been compared to a biblical antagonist, I have to say something about a well known at the Carolingian court, where members of the inner circle of the king bestowed biblical or classical nicknames to each other, depending on what one was specialised in. For instance, Einhart, said to be a skilled artisan, received the nickname of Bezaleël, the chief artisan of the Tabernacle and the one in charge of building the Ark of the Covenant. Angilbert, arguably a son in law of Charlemagne, was compared to Homer, being a poet himself. This playful but also serious habit was apparently introduced by Alcuin, who himself was nicknamed Flaccus, and other intellectuals at Charlemagne's court in the 780's and 790's.¹⁸⁹ And while this may explain the typology between Pippin and a biblical figure, it fails to explain why Charlemagne was compared to Gideon, for Charlemagne was never referred to as Gideon at the Frankish court.¹⁹⁰ He was David. So why Abimelech? Or rather, why not Absalom, the rebellious son of David?

¹⁸⁷ King, pp. 139-140. *AL*, s.a. 792, p. 35. 'Et in ipso anno inventum est consilium pessimum, quod Pippinus filius regis, ex concubina Himiltrude nomine genitus, contra regis vitam seu filiorum eius qui ex legitima matrona geniti sunt [inierat], quia voluerunt regem et ipsos occidere, et ipse pro eo quasi Abimelech in diebus iudicum Israel regnare, qui occidit fratres suos septuaginta viros supra petram unam, et regnavit pro Gedeone patre suo, cum malitia tamen et non diu. Sed Carolus rex, cum cognovisset consilium Pippini et eorum qui cum ipso erant, coadunavit conventum Francorum et aliorum fidelium suorum ad Reganesburge, ibique universus christianus populus qui cum rege aderat, iudicaverunt et ipsum Pippinum et eos qui consentanei eius erant in ipso consilio nefando, ut simul hereditate et vita privarentur; et ita de aliquis adimpletum est. Nam de Pippino filio, qui noluit rex ut occideretur, iudicaverunt Franci, ut ad servitium Dei inclinare debuisset; quod et ita factum est, et misit iam clericum in monasterio.'

¹⁸⁸ Judges 8:32. I use the KJ translation.

¹⁸⁹ M. de Jong, 'Charlemagne and the church', in: J. Story (ed.), *Charlemagne: Empire and society* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 103-135, p. 112; M. Garrison, 'The social world of Alcuin: nicknames at York and at the Carolingian court', in: L.A.J.R. Houwen and A.A. MacDonald (eds.), *Alcuin of York. Scholar at the Carolingian court* (Groningen, 1998), pp. 59-79.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. J. Nelson, 'Charlemagne: the man', pp. 33-4.

There are a few resemblances between Pippin and Abimelech. Abimelech was born to a concubine.¹⁹¹ This is contrasted to the sons born to Gideon by his wives in the biblical passage immediately before it. This clearcut line is also visible in the *Annales Laureshamenes* between Pippin - born to a concubine - and his brothers - born to a lawfully wedded wife. Their lesser status from birth didn't stop both princes from trying to seize power. Indeed, this is what Abimelech allegedly did.

‘And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother’s brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother’s father, saying: ‘Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem. Whether is better for you? Either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you? Or that one reign over you? Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh’.¹⁹²

Pippin had three brothers, two of them already given a kingdom - Louis, later nicknamed ‘the Pious’, ruled over Aquitaine and another Pippin ruled over the Lombard kingdom. Sharing kingship is something Abimelech - like Pippin - wanted to end, as is clear from the cited passage. Seen from this perspective, a typology between them makes sense.

But it may have been the case that the author was deliberately representing Pippin as Abimelech, turning the former - Pippin - consciously into the latter - Abimelech. If so, the author *had* to state that Pippin was born to a concubine and was out to kill his brothers. Both are questionable claims. The claim of illegitimacy is nowhere mentioned before the insurgence. Moreover, this is the only text that claims Pippin intended to eliminate his brothers. It would seem then that Pippin was indeed intentionally turned into Abimelech. This, I suggest, was done because Abimelech has no saving graces and is represented, to put it frankly, as a greedy bastard.

This brings me to the next question: why did the author not choose to represent Pippin as Absalom, the rebellious son of David? Perhaps part of the answer lies in the very birth of Absalom, who was born to David and a lawfully wedded wife, who was a princess.¹⁹³ With regard to killing siblings, Absalom murdered his oldest brother Ammon after the latter had raped the sister of the

¹⁹¹ Judges 8:31

¹⁹² Judges 9:1-2

¹⁹³ 2 Samuel 3:2

former.¹⁹⁴ After this murder, Absalom fled to the court of his maternal grandfather.¹⁹⁵ Absalom would return to David's court but got involved in another quarrel that led to an outright rebellion against his father. Yet, before the armies of David and Absalom clashed, David commended his men to 'deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom'.¹⁹⁶ But Absalom was killed by one of David's chief commanders what resulted into David crying out 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, o Absalom, my son, my son'.¹⁹⁷ Clearly, David never wanted Absalom to be killed. For the aging king urged his commanders to deal gently with Absalom, even forbidding them to do as much as to touch him.¹⁹⁸

There are some similarities between the two biblical princes. Both killed at least one sibling, but Abimelech did so due to his greed while Absalom did so out of revenge. Both went to their maternal kin for support when they were plotting against their father or their father's offspring. But there are also clear differences. Abimelech was born to a concubine while Absalom was born to a lawfully wedded wife. And while Abimelech quickly succeeded in seizing power after his father's death, Absalom had a long way to go and only got to challenge his father's power. Last but not least, Abimelech's father was never a king whereas Absalom's father was. It seems to me that a typology between Pippin and Absalom would fit the story better. Especially when the last part of the entry of the *Annales Laureshamenses* is scrutinised for it reads that the insurgents were punished 'but as regards Pippin, since the king did not wish him to be put to death, the Franks judged that he must be subjected to God's service. And this decision was carried out; the king sent him, now a cleric, into a monastery'.¹⁹⁹

There are more similarities between Pippin and Absalom than between Pippin and Abimelech. But if the author had chosen to represent Pippin as Absalom, he could never demonise Pippin to the extent he could do it when comparing him to Abimelech. And 'un-personing' appears to have been what the author aimed to do and in this he succeeded. The author could only do so by presenting the story of the insurgence against Charlemagne in a questionable way. For as already pointed out, the

¹⁹⁴ 2 Samuel 13:29

¹⁹⁵ 2 Samuel 13:38

¹⁹⁶ 2 Samuel 18:5

¹⁹⁷ 2 Samuel 18:33

¹⁹⁸ 2 Samuel 18:12

¹⁹⁹ *King*, p. 140.

claims made by the author are questionable and do fit the typology with Abimelech remarkably well. He deliberately turned Pippin into Abimelech because he has no saving grace. A comparison with Absalom was out of the question as Absalom was strong, handsome, and very charismatic. Pippin, whose honour was thoughtfully deconstructed in this text, could not be given such characteristics. Abimelech, however, was just a greedy bastard and this fitted Pippin better than being a worthy prince according to the author of the *Annales Laureshamenses*.

Yet, the author could not remain silent about the affection of Charlemagne for his son. That Charlemagne intervened by means of a veto that broke the consensus of the Franks, suggests that Pippin retained some of his prestige. For Charlemagne, more than anybody, seems to have lived up his nickname, David, perhaps even commanding his men to deal gently for his sake with the young man, Pippin. The account of the *Annales Laureshamenses* may therefore be more about Charlemagne than Pippin. This seems certainly to be the case in the *Chronicon Laurissense breve*, wherein peace is preserved at all cost and Charlemagne acts with mercy although he has been betrayed vilely. Such an assumption is in accordance with the message the *Chronicon* presents throughout its text as pointed out by Kaschke and elaborated earlier in this study. It was about reconciliation. By demonising Pippin, the mercy of Charlemagne becomes all the more spectacular.

In general, the texts tend to represent Pippin as the instigator of the plot. But there are other voices from the past that claim otherwise. Most notable is the account of Einhart. He claims that Pippin had been a victim of power-mad aristocrats. Perhaps as a result of this saving-grace, Einhart represented Pippin as a hunchback, on which Notker built his account that Pippin was a hunchbacked dwarf and of irritable character. Aside from Einhart's work, other texts unanimously agree that Pippin had been the initiator of the plot. Some authors used the plot in their narrative to the advantage of Charlemagne, who is represented in the texts of the *Annales Laureshamenses* and the *Chronicon Laurissense breve* as a merciful king, closely resembling his biblical mirror king David. Moreover, by adding the plot of 792 in their account and the results that came from participation in it, 'it at least presented an opportunity to illustrate the royal wrath that was in store for those who resisted or opposed Carolingian authority'.²⁰⁰ It seems that contemporary texts, such as the *Annales Mosellani* and the *Annales Laureshamenses* were mostly concerned with pointing out the incursion of royal wrath. Fifteen years later, the author of the *Chronicon* was concerned with preserving peace within the Carolingian realm, using the settlement by Charlemagne of the uprising to illustrate how a ruler should deal mercifully with their rebellious family member. When Pippin

²⁰⁰ Goosmann, *Memorable crises*, p. 63.

and Charlemagne had passed away, Einhart explained that Charlemagne's blood was not to blame: rebellions were the result of stepmothers and power-mad aristocrats. Thus the insurgence of Pippin was used by different authors in different ways. It teaches us that there was no such thing as an active anti-Pippin campaign, but rather how these authors were intent on pointing out the legitimacy of Carolingian rule as well as how Carolingian rule could be preserved.

Epilogue

Studying the representations of Pippin has produced some interesting results. It sheds light on the life of the fallen Carolingian prince and the observations can be quite surprising. This study has particularly contributed to our understanding of the representations of three aspects of Pippin's life - his birth, his life at the court and relationship with his brothers, and the insurgence of 792. It has pointed out that the representations of Pippin changed over time and may provide a starting point for further research with regard to Pippin. Especially with regard to the discussion of Pippin's representation in the sources as well as him featuring in the sources, this masterthesis has provided several answers.

With regard to his birth, the representations of Pippin quickly changed and he was already a son with an ambiguous status by 784, at least within the circles of Angilram. That Pippin was born to a concubine, a dubious claim, came only after he had participated in the plot against his father. Even so, the court-related *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* remembers Pippin as the oldest son of Charlemagne instead of a son born to a concubine. It seems that the idea that Pippin was born to a concubine was not Charlemagne's. In a charter dating from 797, five years after the plot, either Charlemagne or his notary remembered Pippin as 'our son' ([...] *Pippinus filius noster* [...]).²⁰¹ Apparently Charlemagne retained some esteem for his son while others clearly did not. In general the sources depict Pippin in the years 770 to 792 as an integral part of the royal family. According to these texts, the two oldest sons of Charlemagne shared the same treatment. He was certainly still regarded as an integral part of the royal family as of 791, as the *laudes* of Soissons and the *Prague Sacramentary* point out. As of the plot of 792, the sources differ whether he had been a pawn of power-mad aristocrats or whether he had aimed to make a bid of power for himself. But it is clear that Pippin was removed from succession after this. Filial disobedience was intolerable to Charlemagne. After this, Pippin was left to the mercilessness of the authors of the texts studied here.

It should be noted, however, that four texts discussed here, i.e. the *Liber de episcopis Mettensibus*, the *Codex Carolinus*, the *Annales Mosellani*, and the *Annales Laureshamenses* may have been heavily influenced by the opinion of one man, Angilram. His involvement in the *Liber de*

²⁰¹ E. Mühlbacher (ed.), *Die Urkunden der Karolinger, I: Urkundens Pippins, Karlmanns und Karl der Großen*, MGH *Diplomata karolorum* (Hanover, 1906), no. 181, p. 244.

episcopis Mettensibus is clear as well as his suspected involvement in compiling the *Codex Carolinus*. The *Annales Mosellani* was perhaps written, as pointed out above, in Gorze Abbey, near Metz, where Angilram held the episcopal seat. So the text was certainly composed in close proximity to Angilram although it nowhere refers to him by name. As for the *Annales Laureshamenses*, the text contains a reference to Angilram which is particularly interesting. The reference to his death adds that Angilram was of ‘noble memory’ ([...] *bone memorie* [...]).²⁰² Such a token of affection is striking. It is even rarely used for deceased royalty. I have only seen it in the *Annales Petaviani* when referring to the death of Carloman in 771 and in the *Annales regni francorum* when referring to the death of Bertrada in 783.²⁰³ The author of the *Annales Laureshamenses* clearly held Angilram in high esteem. Such a perspective on Angilram may be telling about the origins of the text and it indicates that the text was written by someone who belonged to Angilram’s party. Seen from this perspective, it is unsurprising that exactly these four texts, all written within the sphere of influence of Angilram, demote and blacken Pippin. The full implications of this hypothesis must be discussed elsewhere. For now it suffices to point out that the texts which contain a critical tone towards Pippin might be connected with each other through Angilram. If so, we do not deal with multiple opinions, but rather with one. It would be interesting in this context to analyse Angilram’s background in greater detail. What family did he come from and what were his close connections? What light would this shed on Pippin and his mother Himiltrud? Such an analysis, however, falls outside the scope of this study.

But whereas Pippin may have been blackened by Angilram himself and his supporters, Pippin seems to have enjoyed particular popularity in Bavaria. This is clear from the many sources, especially the *libri memoriales*, which originate from there. The *Liber vetustior* of Salzburg as well as the *Prague Sacramentary*, as well as the *laudes* of Soissons, included in a psalter that originates from Mondsee, acknowledge Pippin to be the oldest son of Charlemagne. Later, in the *Liber confraternitatum* of Sankt Gall, Pippin is remembered again as an integral part of the royal family even though he was long dead by then. That Pippin bears the epithet *rex* twice in these sources is particularly interesting. The hypothesis of Hammer that Pippin may have been the short-lived king of Bavaria sounds as a likely scenario. Certainly Pippin was relatively popular in Bavaria. His absence in West-Frankish confraternity books, such as the famous one of Remiremont, indicates that his popularity - if it could be called so - was much less in the parts of Francia which lay on the

²⁰² *AL*, s.a. 791, p. 34.

²⁰³ *Annales Petaviani*, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS I ((Hanover, 1826), pp. 7-18, s.a. 771, p. 15; *ARF*, s.a. 783, p. 66.

western of the Rhine. Different parties, interlinked through their families, had their own favourite heir to the throne. Apparently Pippin was the favourite of the Bavarians.

With regard to the *damnatio memoriae*, as suspected by Hammer, there are certainly indications that Pippin was carefully omitted in the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*, which can be regarded as a revised edition - to use a modern word - of the *Annales regni francorum*. Evidence is scarce though. Shreds of evidence are visible in a few instances, such as in the reworking of the *Annales regni francorum* into the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*. Most telling from this text is that the representation of Charles changes as well, if not more clearly than that of Pippin. As Charles was demoted from a 'most noble son' to a 'son' of Charlemagne. Such a demotion is especially interesting as it may have implications as to how we are to understand the text. For the demotion of Charles is likely to have happened after he had died in 811, probably even after Charlemagne had died in 814. A closer scrutiny of the difference between the two texts with regard to the representation of Pippin and Charles may therefore substantially contribute to the debate as to when the *Annales regni francorum* was revised and turned into the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi*. Indeed, perhaps the text was revised at the order of Louis the Pious to present him as the sole ruler whose legitimacy could not be contested. Further research on the aspect of *damnatio memoriae* in the *Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi* is a strict necessity before anything more can be said about this.

Even so, Pippin never vanished from history. He was used by later authors as the Carolingian villain of his time and after. This is most visible in the *Vita Caroli imperatoris* of Einhart. In this text Pippin was torn away from Charlemagne's inner circle as Pippin was omitted in the list of children of Charlemagne by Einhart. In doing so Einhart cut Pippin loose from the Carolingian family and placed him among those who had conspired against Charlemagne. Pippin was no longer an integral part of the royal family, something that was still the case sometime around 815 when the entry of the Carolingian family in the *Liber confraternitatum* of Sankt Gall was written. Shortly after this, in 817, Bernard of Italy, a nephew of Louis the Pious, rebelled against his uncle who had him tortured in response. Bernard of Italy died as a result of this. It would seem, then, that the revolt of Bernard of Italy had some sort of effect on the representation of Pippin. For Einhart acted pragmatically and removed Pippin from the Carolingian family. However, the stories of the rebellions of Pippin and Bernard of Italy resemble an earlier Carolingian rebellion in the 740's and 750's. Back in those days it had been Grifo, a half-brother of Pippin the Short and uncle of Charlemagne, who fought for his hereditary rights which appear to have been taken away from

him by Pippin the Short and his brother Carloman.²⁰⁴ Airlie has claimed that the support for Grifo among the Frankish nobles can be used to argue in favour of the legitimacy of Grifo in itself.²⁰⁵ This could also be applied to the insurgence of Pippin. We know from the sources that he was backed by many aristocrats, both young and older ones. These men must have believed in the Pippin's cause. They believed they had a chance to overcome Charlemagne, whether by dialogue or brutal force. And the fact that they chose Pippin to lead them instead of a non-Carolingian pretender is telling.

In all, this study has contributed to our understanding about the representations of Pippin in Carolingian historiography. Scrutinising the sources brings forward some particularly interesting observations. There was no consensus in the Frankish realm about Pippin's right to rule. Rather, we see how Angilram and his party, in favouring the offspring of Charlemagne and Hildegard, demoted Pippin. So these texts seem to have had a connection to Angilram himself or at least Metz, where Angilram sat as bishop as well as the city being a necropolis of Carolingians. In Bavaria, however, Pippin was regarded as a rightful heir to the throne. Perhaps he was even the most popular heir as the epithet *rex*, attributed twice to him - in the *Prague Sacramentary* and the *Liber confraternitatum* of St Gall - in this region, suggests. This rosy prospect came to an end after Pippin participated in the insurgence against his father. That this event marks the end of his career and rather than the renaming of his younger half-brother Carloman into Pippin in 781 is clear from this study. With regard to the sources, it is striking to see the contrast of how Pippin was remembered in the court circles - as Charlemagne's son. It seems, moreover, that Pippin was remembered as an integral part of the royal family until his nephew, Bernard of Italy, allegedly revolted against Louis the Pious in 817. After this, Pippin too fell definitely from grace and was omitted from the list of Charlemagne's children in Einhart's *Vita Caroli imperatoris*. This may as well imply that Pippin had been a rightful heir to the throne, who rebelled with a cause as did Bernard of Italy. But this was now too dangerous to admit. Instead, Pippin had to be represented as the villain *par excellence* now. As pointed out, he was used by different authors at different times to different ends. Pippin seems to have featured mostly in stories written to enhance Carolingian legitimacy. That this had to be done at the cost of the legitimacy of Pippin, did not matter to them.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Goosmann, *Memorable crises*

²⁰⁵ S. Airlie, 'Towards a Carolingian aristocracy', in: M. Becher and J. Jarnut (eds.), *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751. Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung* (Münster, 2004), pp. 109-127.

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