

1 Introduction: History and memory in the Carolingian world

History and memory in the Carolingian world, the title of both this book and this chapter, is at once a reflection of the current interest in the ways by which various medieval societies constructed and understood their pasts and an acknowledgement of the degree to which memory has become a much-explored and much-theorised topic. The book's principal themes are the writing and reading of history in the early middle ages, with a primary focus on the remarkable manifestations of historical writing in the Frankish kingdoms in the eighth and ninth centuries. Within this framework I consider what is meant by history books, and the Franks' choice of historical texts, whether of Roman, Christian, 'barbarian' or Frankish history: where they appear and where, when and for whom they were made. Further questions concern the readership of these history books and how far the physical characteristics of the Carolingian manuscripts in which the texts survive reveal anything of what contemporaries may have thought about these texts and their wider cultural context.

Historians of western, middle-eastern and oriental history have looked at the way a common past could inform what Eggert and Patzold in 1994, and in relation to Saxony in the early middle ages, called 'Wir-Gefühl', that is, a sense of 'us-ness'.¹ It has become a commonplace that ideas about the past could define societies and that the present plays a crucial role in moulding understanding of the past.² The focus of the study of medieval historical writing in particular, moreover, has shifted in recent

¹ W. Eggert and B. Patzold, *Wir-Gefühl und Regnum Saxonum bei frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibern* (Berlin, 1984).

² I draw in part here on M. Innes, 'Introduction', in Y. Hen and M. Innes (eds.), *The uses of the past in the early middle ages* (Cambridge 2000), pp. 1–8, but I have in mind also the early Islamic historiographical tradition: see A. al-D. al-Duri, *The rise of historical writing among the Arabs*, ed. and trans. L. Conrad (Princeton, 1983); A. Noth, *The early Arabic historical tradition: a source critical study*, 2nd edn in collaboration with L. Conrad, trans. M. Bonner (Princeton, 1994); F. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic origins. The beginnings of Islamic historical writing*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 14 (Princeton, 1998); C. F. Robinson, *Islamic historiography* (Cambridge, 2003); B. Lewis, *History – remembered, recovered, invented* (Princeton, 1975). On government-sponsored histories and the work of the T'ang 'historiographical office' in the eighth and ninth centuries in China

years away from a preoccupation with sources of information and textual affiliation. Now historical narratives are studied both as constructed texts and bearers of memory which were targeted for particular audiences, and as an important element in the promotion of the political culture and identity of particular groups. Studies such as those assembled by Guenée, Magdalino, Scharer and Scheibelreiter, or Hen and Innes,³ to cite only four among the best and most recent, have focussed above all on perceptions and uses of the past.

All take the so-called 'linguistic turn' and post-modernism into account to a greater or lesser extent, but have resisted the reduction of historiography to literary history.⁴ Examination of authorial intention, of the audiences for history, and of manuscript traditions of the surviving texts to try to determine a text's meaning in context offer what Geary has described as 'escape routes' out of the 'prison house of language' and sterile notions of intertextuality.⁵ But too zealous a pursuit of the escape routes threatens to undermine the potential value of historical narratives as representations of a contemporary memory of reality, as accounts of events and people and attitudes, or as powerful combinations of both objective and subjective interpretations of the past, however difficult these may be for modern historians either to reconstruct or to distinguish.

It is in this respect that memory and the imperative to record what is remembered have been invoked as well. Here the work on both the mechanisms and the rituals of remembering in the middle ages by such scholars as Carruthers, Coleman, Geary, Geuenich, Oexle, Schmid and Treitler, quite apart from the contributions of the anthropologists, have greatly enlarged our understanding of the sheer capacity for remembering as well as the creative forms mnemonic devices could take in the middle ages.⁶

see W. G. Beasley and E. B. Pulleybank, *Historians of China and Japan* (Oxford, 1969); D. McMullen, *State and scholars in T'ang China* (Cambridge, 1988); and D. Twitchett, *The writing of official history under the T'ang* (Cambridge, 1992).

³ B. Guenée, *Le Métier de l'historien au moyen âge* (Paris, 1977); P. Magdalino (ed.), *The perception of the past in twelfth-century Europe* (London, 1992); A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (eds.), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 1994); and Hen and Innes (eds.), *The uses of the past*.

⁴ For a concise discussion of the 'linguistic turn' and its implications for the study of historical writing see W. Pohl, 'History in fragments: Montecassino's politics of memory', *EME* 10 (2001), pp. 343–74, especially pp. 343–54; and W. Pohl, *Werkstätte der Erinnerung: Montecassino und die Gestaltung der langobardischen Vergangenheit* (Vienna, 2001).

⁵ P. Geary, 'Frühmittelalterliche Historiographie. Zusammenfassung', in Scharer and Scheibelreiter, *Historiographie*, pp. 539–42.

⁶ M. Carruthers, *The book of memory. A study of memory in medieval culture* (Cambridge, 1990); J. Coleman, *Ancient and medieval memories. Studies in the reconstruction of the past* (Cambridge, 1992); P. Geary, *Phantoms of remembrance. Memory and oblivion at the end*

If historical narratives are statements about what people remember of the past as well as what they choose to forget, then the degree to which texts reflect collective memories needs to be further explored. Halbwachs's notion of the part shared memory plays in the self-definition of a social group has been wholeheartedly accepted by most historians and underpins Fentress and Wickham's rich account of what people in the past have done with respect to social memory.⁷ I myself have taken the notion of 'shared memory' in the chapters of this book as something established by communication, whether oral or written. I have considered how recalled past experience and shared images of the past are the kinds of memories that have particular importance for the constitution of social groups.⁸ I have also looked at the 'construction of the past', that is, the creation of accounts of past events that drew on memory but selected from it in distinctive ways that became accepted and thereafter shared by a group.⁹ Nevertheless, the notion of 'shared memory' can only really be useful if tested, first of all, against the articulated memories of a specific group. Secondly, we should confront the problematic issues and methodological difficulties it raises, not least how we might be able to document how, or even whether, such accounts were indeed disseminated, known and accepted. It is with these issues in particular that this introductory chapter is concerned.

Because we are bound to concentrate on the surviving written evidence for the memory-keeping and historical composition of any group in the past, it may be helpful to look at an extract from the royal Frankish annals, first written at the end of the eighth century, in order to identify some of the main questions and methodological difficulties to which I have alluded.

In the entry for the year 788 which recounts the downfall of Tassilo, duke of Bavaria, and the annexation of his realm by his cousin Charlemagne, the annalist tells us that Charlemagne called an assembly

of the first millennium (Princeton, 1994); and *idem*, 'Land, language and memory in Europe, 700–1100', *TRHS* sixth series 9 (1999), pp. 169–84; K. Schmid and J. Wollasch (eds.), *Memoria. Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 48 (Munich, 1984); D. Geuenich and O.-G. Oexle (eds.), *Memoria in der Gesellschaft des Mittelalters*, Veröffentlichungen des Max Planck Instituts für Geschichte 111 (Göttingen, 1994); and L. Treitler, 'Homer and Gregory. The transmission of epic poetry and plainchant', *The Musical Quarterly* 60 (1974), pp. 333–72. For discussions of the role of gender see E. van Houts (ed.), *Medieval memories: men, women and their past 700–1300* (London, 2001). See also M. Innes, 'Memory, orality and literacy in an early medieval society', *Past and Present* 158 (1998), pp. 3–36.

⁷ J. Fentress and C. Wickham, *Social memory* (Oxford, 1992); and see M. Halbwachs, *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris, 1925) and *La Mémoire collective* (Paris 1950).

⁸ See especially chapters 7 and 8. ⁹ See especially chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

at Ingelheim (near Mainz on the Rhine) and that Tassilo came there with his *fideles*.

Bavarian *fideles* began to say that since giving his son and other hostages and taking oaths, Tassilo, incited by his wife Liutperga, had not maintained his faith (to Charlemagne) inviolate but had been seen to betray it. And Tassilo could not deny this but confessed that since then he had sent messengers to the Avars, had urged the vassals of Charlemagne to join him and had plotted their deaths. He has also ordered his *homines* to make mental reservations when they were swearing oaths and to swear deceitfully. What is more he confessed to having said that even if he had ten sons he would rather lose every one of them than accept that the agreements should remain as they were and that he would be better dead than living thus. And after he had been convicted of all these things, the Franks and the Bavarians, Lombards and Saxons, and those from every province gathered at that assembly, remembering his earlier evil deeds and how he had even deserted the lord king Pippin on campaign – which is called *harisliz* in German – saw fit to condemn him to death.¹⁰ (My emphasis.)

My interest in this introductory chapter is not so much in the vivid picture of Tassilo's despair and hopeless defiance, nor how the narrative works as an account of the triumph of Charlemagne and of justice over the hapless Tassilo, for these have been fully explored by Matthias Becher and by Stuart Airlie.¹¹ What I wish to highlight are the implications of the phrase *remiscentes priorum malorum eius* about remembering Tassilo's evil deeds and an earlier desertion of Pippin.

The Royal Frankish annals is the only text to refer to this remembrance on the part of the assembly. The revised version of the Royal Frankish annals, produced in the early years of the ninth century omits this statement.¹² Other texts drawing on the Royal Frankish annals, but writing later into the ninth century, such as the annals of Fulda, also omitted it. Only the more nearly contemporary 'Lorsch annal' entry for 788 refers in a more general way to how the assembly recalled all the wicked deeds Tassilo had done.¹³

The allusion in the Royal Frankish annals is to the desertion from Pippin's army in 763. Both Airlie and Becher commented on the

¹⁰ *Annales regni francorum*, ed. F. Kurze, MGH SRG, VI (Hannover, 1895), p. 80; English translation P. D. King, *Charlemagne. Translated sources* (Kendal, 1987), p. 86.

¹¹ See S. Airlie, 'Narratives of triumph and rituals of submission: Charlemagne's mastering of Bavaria', *TRHS* sixth series 9 (1999), pp. 93–120; and M. Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft. Untersuchungen zum Herrscherethos Karls des Großen*, Vorträge und Forschungen Sonderband 39 (Sigmaringen, 1993).

¹² *Annales Einhardi*, ed. F. Kurze, MGH SRG, VI (Hannover, 1895), p. 81.

¹³ *Annales laureshamenses*, ed. G. Pertz, MGH SS, I (Hannover, 1826), pp. 22–39, at p. 33. See also the facsimile edition of ÖNB cod. 515: F. Unterkircher (ed.), *Das Wiener Fragment der Lorsch Annalen. Christus und die Samariterin. Katechese des Niceta von Remesiana. Codex Vindobonensis 515 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek Facsimile Ausgabe*, Codices Selecti 15 (Graz, 1967). See also below, pp. 104–10.

unlikely of either the Lombards or Saxons remembering something that had happened in 763, for neither people was even under Frankish rule, let alone part of the army. Neither Airlie nor Becher mentioned the possibility, however, that this memory was an allusion to something recorded in the annals themselves. Indeed, it is the annals which present the damning account of Tassilo's relations with his uncle Pippin III and Charlemagne, how he was given Bavaria to rule in 748, swore oaths of fidelity to Pippin III in 757, deserted the Frankish army in 763, renewed his oath of fidelity to Pippin's son Charlemagne in 781 and was forced to acknowledge his subordinate status in 787 with the handing over of hostages, including his own son.

The following questions emerge, therefore. In what sense was the memory described in the annals one that was part of collective memory? Who is included in the notion of 'collective memory'? Is the memory based on knowledge of the annals or a real memory among those at Ingelheim in 788 of disgraceful behaviour in 763? Does the allusion then support an early date for the composition of the annals? Is the 788 entry perhaps a witness to the expectation that this text would be in circulation and form the basis of subsequent knowledge? Is this why the Franks, Bavarians, Lombards and Saxons are credited with retrospective knowledge in this way? Was their knowledge formed by this particular piece of historical writing? The entry also underlines one of the fundamental difficulties in charting memory, namely that we are bound to do it from the evidence of surviving written texts and that these in their turn raise the problem of how we can determine the impact and influence of such an historical text. To suggest knowledge of the contents of a text is to make assumptions about the process of production, methods of circulation, speed of reception and the impact of the text itself, all of which must be tested. Thus we also need to consider the relevance of literacy to the extension and record of memory, and the degree to which literacy, and thus the recoverable indicators of memory, are the preserve of an elite.

It is easy to label literacy as the 'preserve of an elite' in the early middle ages but it is much harder to define it. It has, after all, become a commonplace, voiced by me as much as by everyone else, that the great majority of our sources are primarily those of the 'social elites' of early medieval Europe. These 'social elites' might be defined as the groups in society who had power or some measurable superiority in some sphere over other individuals or groups of people.¹⁴ But what we all actually mean by saying that should be challenged. I have also maintained, for example, that the local charter evidence from centres all over western Europe and dating

¹⁴ See R. Le Jan (ed.), *La Royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne (du début du IX^e siècle aux environs de 920)*, Centre d'Histoire de l'Europe du Nord-Ouest 17 (Lille, 1998).

from the period from the seventh to the tenth centuries is an indication of the exploitation of literate modes by landowners down a social hierarchy that may have included peasant farmers and small-scale landowners.¹⁵ Since 1989 a number of studies have explored the degree to which local lay communities used the written word for their legal transactions and played some role in their production or preservation in the early middle ages.¹⁶ Even so, how great a proportion of the ‘peasant’ population, estimated at 90 per cent of the total in this period, had any regular access or customary familiarity with the written word?

I stress the words ‘regular’ and ‘customary’, for we should also remember that this is a world in which even a freed slave is known by the word *cartularius*, that is, ‘charter man’.¹⁷ It is a world in which religions of the book, Christianity, Islam or Judaism, predominate. In the Carolingian empire, above all, there is an insistence from the second half of the eighth century onwards on the central role of texts for the consolidation and harmonization of the Christian religious faith and practice, for the transmission of knowledge, and for the exercise of justice and government. In the course of the ninth century, even a written musical notation is developed to provide a written supplement for the transmission of melodies for the liturgical chant, hitherto passed on by cantors.¹⁸ Certainly, the possession of the skills of writing may have been the preserve of the specially trained. Similarly, those who could read complex material, as distinct from those who could simply recognise the letters of the alphabet, may have formed an intellectual elite. This intellectual elite, owing to the limited opportunities for education, could also have been a social elite, though it is important to remember that Ebbo, archbishop

¹⁵ McKitterick, *Carolingians and the written word*, pp. 77–134, in relation to the evidence of the St Gallen material.

¹⁶ For discussions of Lorsch and Bavaria see M. Innes, *State and society in the early middle ages 400–1000* (Cambridge, 2000); and W. Brown, *Unjust seizure: conflict, interest and authority in an early medieval society* (Ithaca, 2001). For Italy see N. Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c. 568–774* (Cambridge, 2003). See also R. Schieffer, *Schriftkultur und Reichsverwaltung unter den Karolingern*, Abhandlungen der Nordrhein-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Opladen, 1996); and the studies emanating from the Utrecht University Centre for Medieval Studies *Pionier Project on medieval communications*: Marco Mostert (ed.), *New approaches to medieval communication*, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 1 (Turnhout, 1999); and K. Heidecker (ed.), *Charters and the use of the written word in medieval society*, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 5 (Turnhout, 2000). The new early medieval charter study project which younger scholars such as Warren Brown, Marios Costambeys, Adam Kostó and Matthew Innes are coordinating is likely to bring more valuable material to the fore.

¹⁷ A point stressed by J. L. Nelson, ‘Literacy in Carolingian government’, in McKitterick (ed.), *Uses of literacy*, pp. 258–96.

¹⁸ For the background see S. Rankin, ‘Carolingian music’, in R. McKitterick (ed.), *Carolingian culture: emulation and innovation* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 274–316.

of Rheims, among others, was of humble origin and thus the extent to which the acquisition and possession of literate skills may have enabled an individual to cross other social barriers.¹⁹

If so many men and women in Carolingian Europe had some kind of access to written culture, however restricted in scope, right the way down the social scale, and if literacy could offer a passport into an elite group, then of what value is the concept of an elite at all? Should we rather regard access to a written culture as defining an elite? Did the possession of literate skills make one eligible to be or to become a member of the elite in the Carolingian world? To focus exclusively on levels of literacy in any social or political group defined according to criteria which do not include the criterion of literacy, therefore, is to miss the point. We should focus instead on the extent to which the exploitation of written culture provided the means for contemporaries at the time to define themselves as an elite. What really matters, therefore, is what men and women in the Carolingian world hoped to achieve by exploiting the written word and why they chose that medium of communication.

A more productive approach might be to look at the problem of the elites and written culture in the Carolingian world from the opposite direction. I propose to consider the idea of elites in relation to written culture as a phenomenon reflected in and thus defined by their use of texts, and especially historical texts. In particular I should like to pursue the possibility for the Carolingian period that there was an elite, lent cohesion by their particular use of the written word to provide that elite with a recorded memory, and thus identity, that would transcend other political or social divisions. If we consider how the past was understood by the Franks in the Carolingian period, that is, in the period from the eighth to the tenth centuries, and how a group placed itself in relation to that past, we may be able to see how that group becomes defined as an elite with special characteristics, and how the written texts act as an enabling mechanism in the expression of an elite memory and identity. In other words, the study of history and memory in the Carolingian world is a study both of the texts in which an elite defines itself and of the extant Carolingian manuscripts which provide the indications of the Franks' understanding of the past.

The understanding of history and the past in the Frankish kingdom embraced Roman, Christian and 'Germanic' (Lombard, Anglo-Saxon, Gothic and Frankish) history. Records of its past included historical

¹⁹ On Ebbo see S. Airlie, 'Bonds of power and bonds of association in the court circle of Louis the Pious', in P. Godman and R. Collins (eds.), *Charlemagne's heir: new perspectives on the reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 191–204.

chronological syntheses and narratives, and records of other kinds.²⁰ From the work recorded elsewhere in this book as well as still in progress, it seems clear that there was a concerted effort to acquire and copy history books throughout the Carolingian realm from the late eighth century onwards. There is also the well-known phenomenon of the remarkable number of contemporary histories written in the late eighth and the ninth centuries.²¹ These two phenomena, that is, the copying of older history books and the writing of new history, are arguably related and interdependent. The possibility of a connection between the copying of older history, primarily in monastic scriptoria, and the composing of new history, incidentally also raises the issue of the distinctiveness of the role of the monastery itself in Carolingian record keeping and history writing, and the role monasteries may have played in the formation of Frankish perceptions of the past, but I shall have to leave detailed consideration of these to another occasion.

I have set out the evidence about the history books and history writing of the Carolingian world in the remaining chapters of this book. It is clear that, for the Franks, an understanding of the past worked at several levels and was manifested to them in a number of different textual contexts. What these Carolingian history books reveal is the interplay between memory, forms of historical record and the writing of history. It is this interplay which is an essential component of the process of defining an elite and a people. The books read and produced in Frankish centres indicate the formation of a sense of the past – biblical, Roman and Christian – to which the Franks collectively belonged and which they had inherited.

In their own history writing the Franks also show an impulse to forge an identity that explicitly placed the origin of the Franks in a far distant Roman and Trojan past. It is to the forging of this identity by means of the creation of a common memory in the form of a distinctive narrative that I now turn. There is only space to do so with specific reference to one example, the *Liber historiae francorum*, and the implications of one ninth-century copy of it now in Paris. With the *Liber historiae francorum* in this codex is the text of the *Annales regni francorum*. The association of complementary accounts of Frankish history and its implications will form the final section of this introductory chapter.

²⁰ For fuller discussion see below, chapters 7, 9 and 12.

²¹ See Innes and McKitterick, 'Writing of history'; and for the general context see A. Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian historiography in the fourth century A.D.', in A. Momigliano (ed.), *The conflict between paganism and Christianity in the fourth century* (London, 1962), pp. 79–99.

Frankish historical writing and the *Liber historiae francorum*

Although it provides evidence of the process of the reception of a complex cultural heritage, the interest in the Judaeo-Greco-Roman past needs to be used and developed in order to constitute evidence of the definition of an elite identity and the enhancement of historical memory. The *Liber historiae francorum* was one of the new Carolingian historical works produced in the eighth century and copied extensively in the ninth century. It constructs a specific past for a particular group of people. First of all, it provides them with a group memory and identity. Secondly, it places them, both culturally and historically, within the wider history of the Roman empire and Christian Roman Gaul. The *raison d'être* of this text, indeed, could be described as the definition of a people by means of its history. The *Liber historiae francorum* is customarily dated 727 due to its reference at the end to the sixth year of Theudebert (IV). From the outset the text insists that it is about both kings and the people of the Franks: let us present the beginnings of the kings of the Franks, the origins and deeds of the kings and those peoples (*Principium regum francorum eorumque origine vel gentium illarum ac gesta proferamus*).

The *Liber historiae francorum* is a short but remarkable history which has suffered unreasonable neglect. More crucially it has been underestimated as a piece of historical writing largely as a result of the way it is printed and presented in modern editions. Most of its earlier sections (apart from the first four chapters) are held to be so derivative from the sixth-century Gallo-Roman author Gregory of Tours as not to be worth mentioning. Attention has thus focussed more or less exclusively on the last eleven chapters, 43–53 (in which the *Liber historiae francorum* author writes a completely independent account of the seventh and early eighth centuries) without a consideration of how these chapters fit into the structure and message of the text as a whole.

Dependence on Gregory, however, is a misleading way in which to understand the *Liber historiae francorum* author's use of the earlier text. It would be far better to describe the process of composition as judicious selection, with some highly significant changes. Further, there are substantial additions. The changes and additions are most notable at the beginning of his work. Certainly the judicious use of Gregory is important, but more as a witness to Gregory's high status as a history book than as a symptom of derivative and impoverished history writers in the eighth century. The many small changes and larger insertions are even more significant, however. These, as we shall see, alter the emphasis in crucial ways which are entirely consistent with the opening chapters.

Above all, one needs to read the whole narrative as it is presented in the early manuscripts of the *Liber historiae francorum*. Although the whole text is undoubtedly printed in Krusch, even he diminished the impact of the text by presenting it visually as a text full of borrowings signalled in a much smaller typeface.²² As a result he confuses the purpose of the original manuscripts. In the manuscripts, the *Liber historiae francorum* demands to be read on its own terms, for no such distinction is made. It should not be seen in terms merely of what is borrowed or new, but as a complete text with very distinctive emphases of its own. The themes of war and kingship and the elaborate account of the marriages and role of queens, of treasure, of devotion to particular saints and particular churches in Paris, are all reiterated throughout the text.

The *Liber historiae francorum* rejected Gregory's emphasis at the beginning of the work and Gregory's picture of biblical Franks as the new chosen people, with its emphatically Judaeo-Christian chronology and framework.²³ Instead, he or she (and it may well be the latter) provides a spirited alternative view of the Franks and their origins.²⁴ Thus the Franks' superiority in relation to other barbarian groups (Alans, Huns, Burgundians) is stressed and illustrated with the story of their origins. The text begins with a statement about the origins of the Franks. It locates them to Troy and thereafter to the refuge a group of Trojans found north-west of the Black Sea. They thus have historical, rather than mythical, origins. These historical origins are rooted in a past linked with Rome because of the association with Trojan origins. The author contrives nevertheless to convey a sense of Frankish superiority even over the early Romans.²⁵ Thus Aeneas, who is provided with the significantly pejorative

²² *Liber historiae francorum*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM*, II (Hannover, 1888), pp. 241–328.

²³ For a useful context see M. de Jong (ed.), *The power of the word: the influence of the Bible on early medieval politics*, special issue, *EME* 7 (1998), pp. 261–357. Compare M. Garrison, 'The Franks as the new Israel? Education for an identity from Pippin to Charlemagne', in Hen and Innes (eds.), *The uses of the past*, pp. 114–61.

²⁴ R. Gerberding, *The rise of the Carolingians and the Liber historiae francorum* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 150–9, locates the author to Soissons but dismisses the notion that the text could have been produced at Notre-Dame, 'simply because it was a nunnery'! For an alternative view see J. L. Nelson, 'Gender and genre in women historians of the early middle ages', in Nelson, *The Frankish World 750–900* (London, 1996), pp. 183–97; and R. McKitterick, 'Frauen und Schriftlichkeit im Frühmittelalter', in H.-G. Goetz (ed.), *Weibliche Lebensgestaltung im frühen Mittelalter* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 1991), pp. 65–118, and revised English version 'Women and literacy in the early middle ages', in McKitterick, *Books, scribes and learning*, chapter 13, pp. 1–43.

²⁵ See M. Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic past' in Hen and Innes (eds.), *The uses of the past*, pp. 227–49; F. Graus, 'Troja und trojanische Herkunftssage im Mittelalter', in W. Erzgraber (ed.), *Kontinuität und Transformation der Antike im Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1989), pp. 25–43; I. N. Wood, 'Defining the Franks: Frankish origins in early medieval historiography', in S. Forde, L. Johnson and A. V.

epithet of tyrant (*tyrannus*), fled to Italy but other Trojan leaders, Priam and Antenor, fled to the Moaetian marshes on the Don river and built the city Sicambra. It is from this branch, by implication more worthy of praise, that the Franks' history proceeds. As late as the fourth century their descendants are still called Trojans and have become allies of Rome to drive the Alans out of the Moaetian marshes (c. 2). Valentinian, the Roman Christian emperor, gives them the name of Franks (because they were hard-hearted and bold) but he taxed them once their ten-year agreement had lapsed and they thereupon revolted, with the declaration of the wish to be free. The Franks then were defeated by the Romans and fled to the Germanies (note that the phrase reflects the designation of Roman provinces) and lived under Marcomir, son of Priam, and Sumo, son of Antenor.

It is a weird chronology to be sure, but the emphases are rather interesting; they provide an alternative Roman connection and one in which Franks, although often driven hard and sometimes behaving badly, succeed in maintaining their independence.

It is that very independence and identity which is consolidated in the following chapters, in a variety of ways and not always with consistent approbation. In the early stages of their history, for example, the Roman emperor had kept his side of the bargain, namely, to remit taxes to the Franks if they assisted him against the Alans. As already remarked, the Franks rebelled when asked to pay taxes after those ten years had elapsed. Further on in the narrative, it is not just Fredegund who is criticized (though the author clearly also appreciates her wiliness, especially the godmother trick played on Queen Audovera and the successful plan to deceive the enemy army with a precursor of Birnam wood coming to Dunsinane);²⁶ some of the activities of the Merovingian kings are also regretted.

A full analysis of the whole import of the narrative of the *Liber historiae francorum*, especially for the portrayal of Merovingian kingship, is not possible here. For the moment, and in the context of my theme, I wish to stress a few points only. These relate most closely to the cultural identity of the Franks. First of all, in chapter 4, there is a brief account of the raising up of Faramund, Marcomir's son, as a *rex crinitus*. On the death of Faramund the Franks raised up Chlodio, his son, also with long hair, and the author claims that from this time they began to have long-haired

Murray (eds.), *Concepts of national history in the middle ages* (Leeds, 1995), pp. 47–59; and compare J. Barlow, 'Gregory of Tours and the myth of the Trojan origin of the Franks', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1995), pp. 86–95.

²⁶ *Liber historiae francorum*, cc. 31 and 36, pp. 293 and 305; compare William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene 5.

kings. We should register the significance of this being insisted upon in 727 as if to reinforce the legitimacy of the Merovingian line at a time when their actual power was beginning to be overshadowed by that of the Carolingian mayors of the palace. Throughout the text, moreover, there is a consistent acceptance of the importance of the election to the kingship and maintenance of a line of succession, most usually from father to son. The structure of the history reinforces this, in that each chapter tends to start with the death of another king by way of introducing the next phase of the story.

Secondly, it is during the reign of Faramund that the author chooses to locate the introduction of laws, expounded by four prominent men, Wisowastus, Wisogastus, Arogastus and Salegastus, who lived in villas beyond the Rhine called Bethagm, Salechagm and Widechagm. These laws, although those of the Franks and expounded by four leading men, were by implication supported and acknowledged by the kings. The same claim for the introduction of laws to the Franks is of course also made in the prologue to the law of the Franks known as the *Pactus legis salicae* in some of its redactions (though not the earliest) and embroidered further in the *Lex salica karolina*.²⁷ This portion of the story is indicative first of all of the close connection between historical and legal texts in general. Secondly it uncovers at least a tantalizing possibility of a link, involving the Carolingian royal court, between the author of the *Liber historiae francorum*, or a copy of his/her text, and the redactor of the *Lex salica* prologue. The conventional understanding is that this prologue was added to the *Lex salica* at some stage in the sixth century, despite the fact that it does not appear in the earliest (A, B) redactions but only in *Lex salica* manuscript 'C6' (Paris, BnF lat. 18237 from western France, s.IX/2), and various copies of the D, E and K versions, the earliest of which are the three 'E' redactions attributed to the *leges* scriptorium associated with the court of Louis the Pious and usually dated to the first quarter of the ninth century.²⁸ Quite apart from the difficulties the manuscript evidence presents for our understanding of the relationship between the various redactions of the *Lex salica*, the earliest manuscripts of the *Liber historiae francorum* also survive only from the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Thus the precise relationship or direction of influence between the *Lex salica* prologue and the *Liber historiae francorum*'s suggestion about the origin of the laws is difficult to determine. It is certainly very possible that the history inspired the author of the prologue rather than the other

²⁷ *Pactus legis salicae* and *Lex salica*, ed. K. A. Eckhardt, *MGH Leges nat. germ.* IV, 1 (Hannover, 1962), p. 2, and IV, 2 (Hannover, 1969), pp. 4 and 5.

²⁸ R. McKitterick, 'Zur Herstellung von Kapitularien: die Arbeit des Leges-Skriptoriums', *MIÖG* 101 (1993), pp. 3–16.

way about. Had the story been known to Gregory or to pseudo-Fredegard, would they not have used it?

It is also notable that a geography still conceived within the framework of Roman imperial administration is maintained. The author is anxious to stress that King Chlodio, the first real long-haired king, was based in the Roman province of Germania, that the Romans were on the west of the Rhine as far south as the Loire, that the Goths occupied the region beyond the Loire and that the Burgundians were clustered around Lyon. Chlodio subsequently settled in the region between Cambrai and the Somme river. Chlodio was there succeeded by his son Merovech, from whom the Merovingian line took its name. In keeping with the geographical ideas incorporated into many early medieval histories, recently studied by Andrew Merrills, the *Liber historiae francorum* maintains a notable insistence on political geography throughout the work.²⁹

Finally, there is a signal prominence given to the role of the queens, especially Clothild (*Chrotildis*), wife of Clovis, first king of the Franks. Indeed, a veritable *gesta Clothildis* is inserted into the *Liber historiae francorum*. The *gesta* of Clothild occupy page after page in the manuscript copies. There are details of Clovis' courtship of Clothild, her marriage, her advice to rulers, the baptism of the king, the baptism of her children, her endowment of churches, her management of her sons and thus of the succession, and an insistence on pious devotion to the church and the special royal association with the churches of St Victor, St Geneviève and St Peter in Paris. Clothild also becomes a role model for subsequent queens in the narrative, with the marriage, sons, death and burial of queens faithfully recorded. The queen as a source of legitimacy for the royal line and the queen as fount of Christian piety are thus twin preoccupations of the author. This is cleverly reinforced (by dramatic repetition of phrasing as well as the actual content of the text) by Queen Clothild's unequivocal association with the baptism of the king, of the army, of his sisters and of the whole Frankish people.

The manuscript transmission: the example of Paris, BnF lat. 10911

The copying of a text is one important indicator of its reception as well as for the process of the dissemination of the particular representation of a group. Some indication of the dissemination of copies of the *Liber historiae francorum* in the early Carolingian empire can be gained from the manuscript transmission. These codices provide some hint, indeed,

²⁹ A. Merrills, *History and geography in late antiquity* (Cambridge, 2005).

that the Carolingians, if not actually promoting the text, certainly appear to have associated themselves with it and thus conceived their own history in direct relation to the story it contained. The extent to which the *Liber historiae francorum* provides an alternative, or even preferred, view of the Frankish past and of Frankish status to the ones presented in other contemporary Frankish histories needs to be addressed more fully than can be done here. I have remarked elsewhere, moreover, that so far insufficient attention has been paid to the Carolingian edition of Fredegar,³⁰ though Helmut Reimitz is now considering the implications of the Carolingian transmission of the six-book version of Gregory of Tours' *Historiae*.³¹

Out of thirty-two extant manuscripts of the *Liber historiae francorum*, fifteen date from the later eighth, the ninth or the early tenth centuries. All come from the westerly and Rhineland areas of the Carolingian empire. A number of these contain the *Liber historiae francorum* text only, though in at least two instances the manuscripts would appear to be incomplete. The five codices in which the *Liber historiae francorum* text is combined with other Frankish histories, such as the *Vita Karoli* or with the *Annales regni francorum* or other Frankish annals, in particular, merit further attention. They need, furthermore, to be set beside the manuscript transmission of Gregory of Tours on the one hand and of Fredegar on the other, quite apart from the massive documentation of the manuscript transmission of Einhard's *Vita Karoli*,³² and the dissemination of the *Annales regni francorum* in composite Frankish history books. The Lorsch

³⁰ See chapter 2 below and the preliminary study by R. Collins, *Fredegar, Authors of the Middle Ages and Religious Writers of the Latin West IV*, no. 13 (Aldershot, 1996), who is preparing a new edition of Fredegar's Chronicle.

³¹ Helmut Reimitz, 'Social networks and identities in Frankish historiography. New aspects of the textual history of Gregory of Tours' *Historiae*', in R. Corradini, M. Diesenberger, and H. Reimitz (eds.), *The construction of communities in the early middle ages: texts, resources and artefacts*, The Transformation of the Roman World 12 (Leiden, 2003), pp. 229–268 and plates 1–3; and H. Reimitz, 'Der Weg zum Königtum in historiographischen Kompendien der Karolingerzeit', in J. Jarnut and M. Becher (eds.), *Historiographie und Identität in den fränkischen Regna der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit* (forthcoming). I am very grateful to Helmut Reimitz for discussion of Paris, BnF lat. 10911, his kindness in letting me read his paper 'Der Weg zum Königtum' in advance of publication, and stimulating discussions on matters to do with Frankish historiography in general. Paris, BnF lat. 10911 is one of the three codices being prepared in a digital edition by R. Corradini, K. Giesriegl and H. Reimitz, *Drei fränkische Geschichtsbücher aus der Karolingerzeit: Paris Bibliothèque nationale lat. 10911, Vienna ÖNB lat. 473, St Petersburg, NLR lat. Fv.IV.4*. See also M. Heinzelmann and P. Bourgain, 'L'Œuvre de Grégoire de Tours: la diffusion des manuscrits', in N. Gauthier and H. Galinié (eds.), *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois. Actes du congrès international Tours, 2–5 novembre 1994*, 13e supplément à la Revue Archéologique du Centre de la France (Tours, 1997), pp. 273–317.

³² See the comprehensive study provided by M. Tischler, *Einhard's Vita Karoli. Studien zur Entstehung, Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 2 vols., MGH Schriften 48 (Hannover, 2001).

fragment of the *Liber historiae francorum* (Paris, BnF lat. 7906) combines it with sections from the *Aeneid* and Dares Phrygius and thus concentrates on the origin of the Franks and the wanderings of those who survived the Trojan war. This suggests that Virgil's *Aeneid* was also a history book for the Franks.³³

All these constitute important evidence for the exploitation of the written word, both to promote and to inculcate a particular sense of identity. I should like here to comment briefly, therefore, on only one of the examples of a composite Frankish history book, namely, Paris, BnF lat. 10911. It was written by a single scribe, possibly in Paris, in sloping early caroline minuscule and is probably to be dated to the first third or second quarter of the ninth century.³⁴ The consistency of the presentation of the text as well as the single hand responsible suggests that this is a very particular and deliberate design rather than a mere assemblage of related texts.

The manuscript reminds the reader forcefully of the historical context in which this history was written, for it enhances the message of the *Liber historiae francorum* as a history of Frankish kings, Frankish queens and *gens francorum* by using it to preface the *Annales regni francorum*.³⁵ The former text, after all, composed c. 727, was effectively written from the vantage point of the emergence and triumph of Charles Martel and at the point when Dagobert III, raised in the monastery of Chelles, is made king of the Franks in Neustria. To my mind this can with hindsight be seen as a premonition, if nothing more, of the rule of the Carolingian mayors of the palace and the short reign of the last Merovingian king of all. Childeric III was also taken from a monastery, and relegated to a monastery once more on his deposition in 751. Certainly the connection between the *Liber historiae francorum* and the triumph of the Carolingian mayors and kings is made in the early Carolingian period.³⁶ That Charles Martel is regarded as the real hero of the earlier part of the story in the eyes of the scribe at least is also indicated by the text's headings suddenly breaking out into red rustic capitals with Charles's triumph over the Saracens.

³³ R. A. Gerberding, 'Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale latin 7906: an unnoticed very early fragment of the "Liber historiae francorum"', *Traditio* 43 (1987), pp. 381–6. For further on the *Aeneid* see McKitterick, *Migration*.

³⁴ For some comments on this manuscript in relation to Einhard's text see Tischler, *Einhard's Vita Karoli*, pp. 1156–8. There, however, Tischler makes the palaeographically improbable suggestion that the manuscript is from Fleury and is to be dated to the late ninth century. He also does not consider what its relationship to Bern, Burgerbibliothek 599, definitely from Fleury, might be.

³⁵ On the *Annales regni francorum* see below, chapters 4, 5 and 6. Compare the independent comments of R. Collins, 'The "Reviser" revisited: another look at the alternative version of the *Annales regni francorum*', in A. C. Murray (ed.), *After Rome's fall: narrators and sources of early medieval history. Essays Presented to Walter Goffart* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 191–213.

³⁶ Gerberding, *The rise of the Carolingians*.

Incidentally, another Carolingian copy of the *Liber historiae francorum* in Paris, BnF lat. 5596 (s.IX, possibly from St Germain-des-Prés) reinforces the perception of the *Liber historiae francorum* as the pre-history of the Carolingian rulers by highlighting the names with enlarged initials and a line of red capitals or uncials. It treats the emergence of Pippin II and Charles Martel in the same way. In this codex the *Liber historiae francorum* is combined with the *Vita sancti Remigii*, which of course also gave prominence to the baptism of Clovis and the role of Clothild. It thus serves to reinforce the message in the *Liber historiae francorum*. Further, in the text of the latter, the naming of the Franks by the Emperor Valentinian, the names of the lawgivers in the reign of Faramund and the career of Clovis are highlighted, as is the emphasis on the ruler in each chapter. Notes, furthermore, have been inserted by a Carolingian reader anxious to get the lines of royal succession (and the names of the royal wives) straight. The manuscript thus contrives to place the history of the Franks as an extension of that of fifth-century Gaul by the simple expedient of visual markers and layout. It suggests that the perspective offered in BnF lat. 10911 was not an isolated one.

Krusch's edition obscures other significant elements of BnF lat. 10911's arrangement of the text. The *Liber historiae francorum* text is actually divided into chapters 1–51 and ends with the initial triumph of Charles Martel over Ragamfred and Chilperic. Krusch had created fifty-three chapters by dividing chapter 5 into two parts at *Ipse itaque Merovechus genuit filius nomine Childericum*. He also divided chapter 48 into two (= 49 and 50). The narrative is then augmented by a rearrangement of a selection of chapters from the Continuations to Fredegar's *Chronicle*, bringing the story to the death of Charles Martel. Thereafter in Paris, BnF lat. 10911, the *Annales regni francorum* continue the narrative with the first entry recording the death of Charles Martel.

The *Annales regni francorum* 741 restarts at chapter 1 on fol. 56r. This is also the beginning of a new quire, with a large DCCXLI written in red uncial and the first letter of *Carlus* written in red, as a consciously new text. At DCCL the text pauses. Six lines are left blank and so is the following verso, so that this decade-long period before the assumption of the kingship by the Carolingian family forms a short epoch in itself, recording the competition presented to Pippin by Carloman and Grifo and the emergence of Pippin alone. This section is thus also distinguished visually from the rest by isolating it in the manuscript. Entries for 751 and 752 are absent, and as far as this scribe is concerned they were missing, for space was left for them as well as chapter numbers notionally assigned; the next entry, for 753, is numbered c. 13 and thus cc. 11 and 12 are absent. The text then runs to c. 73 for 813 and the entries for 814

onwards are not numbered. This suggests that one exemplar may have offered the text either only as far as 814 or distinguished it in some way with special headings (as Vienna, ÖNB cod. 473 does).³⁷

This can be set out schematically as follows:

LHF I-LI

LHF LII = Fred. Cont. 10

LHF LIII = Fred. Cont. 11 (final section), 12, 13

LHF LIII = Fred. Cont. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

LHF LV = Fred. Cont. 20–24 (to 741)

ARF I-LXXXIII = *Annales regni francorum* 741–813 (that is Charles Martel, Pippin and Charlemagne)

ARF 814–829 (Louis the Pious)

The scribe distinguished between the sections by use of different scripts and the structure of the book. Not only do the *Annales regni francorum* start on a new quire but the sections taken from the Continuations of Fredegar's *Chronicle* and conflated into a differently structured narrative are distinguished by means of capitals and elaborate headings. For chapters 52–4 there are headings in rustic capitals or half uncial, and summaries of the chapters. The famous and problematic calculation of years from the Continuations to Fredegar's *Chronicle*, chapter 16, starts a new quire (fol. 49r). Originally this quire may have contained three and a half empty folios (fols. 52v, 53–55v) which were only filled in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century with a letter purporting to be from Alexander the Great to Aristotle.³⁸ The *Annales regni francorum* section, therefore, which starts in the following quire, may originally have proceeded after a substantial gap in the manuscript. Although the sewing of the binding now makes it difficult to be certain, it is possible, however, that the quire containing most of the reorganized sections from the Continuations of Fredegar's *Chronicle* in fact originally ended on fol. 52v, forming a quire of four leaves. The twelfth-century scribe may then have used the final blank leaf of the original quire and added three single leaves to accommodate the rest of his own text. Whatever the case, it is clear that the Carolingian scribe distinguished codicologically between the *Liber historiae francorum* and added sections from the Continuations of Fredegar's *Chronicle* on the one hand, and the *Annales regni francorum* text on the other. Yet he also preserved the sense of continuity by maintaining the same generous margins and spacious layout throughout the manuscript. Further, the *Annales regni francorum* replicates the structure of the *Liber*

³⁷ See below, pp. 122 and 215.

³⁸ For Bibliography and context see the entry for Alexander in the *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I (Stuttgart, 1999), col. 356.

historiae francorum with its emphasis, in the first words of the initial series of chapters, on the ruler or else the main protagonist in each chapter.

1. **Carlus** maior domus defunctus
2. Quando **Carlomannus et Pippinus**
3. Tunc **Carlomannus et Pippinus**
4. Iterum **Carlomannus et Pippinus**
5. Tunc **Carlomannus** confessus est **Pippino germano suo**
6. Tunc **Carlomannus** Romam perrexit
7. **Grifo** fugivit in Saxoniam
8. **Grifo** de Saxonia . . . pervenit
9. **Burghardus . . . Fulradus**
10. **Pippinus** secundum morem francorum electus est ad regem

The addition of the *Annales regni francorum* and compression of text from the Continuations of Fredegar to this manuscript also contrives, by this clever juxtapositioning, to present the *Liber historiae francorum* from the Carolingian perspective. It belittles the succession of Merovingian kings, Chilperic, Chlothar, Theoderic son of Dagobert, mentioned in c. 53 and makes no reference to the last Merovingian king Childeric III at all.

The manuscript presentation thus makes the whole story of the origin, kingship, cleverness of queens, law making and Christianity of the Franks into a prelude to the triumph of the Carolingian house, where these themes are taken up and elaborated. It is entirely consistent, for example, that it should be only in this copy of the *Annales regni francorum* that the deaths of Queen Hildegard and Queen Bertha are noted under 783. The compilation suggests that the *Liber historiae francorum* was in fact rather greater an inspiration for the royal Frankish annalist than has hitherto been imagined.

In effect, therefore, BnF lat. 10911 presents a Carolingian history book which sets the rise and triumph of the Carolingian rulers Charles Martel, Pippin III and Charlemagne in the context of the early emergence of the Franks from a specifically Trojan, Roman and at least geographically germanic past. But it is the Franks who emerge triumphant once they occupy Gaul. The *Liber historiae francorum*, and especially this Carolingian packaging of it, thus serves as a statement of confidence in the process of Frankish identity. It records, moreover, in its emphases and omissions as well as in the adjustments and additions to Gregory's text, the kind of reception, selection and rejection of aspects of the Frankish past which were both a part of that process of a formation of identity and a reflection of it. The *Liber historiae francorum* is an uncompromising statement of the group identity of the Franks and constructs a specific past that places them, both culturally and historically, within the wider history of the Roman empire and Christian Frankish Gaul. The combination of

the *Liber historiae francorum* with the triumphalist *Annales regni francorum* presents, in effect, a strong definition of an elite to contemporaries in the Carolingian world, and to posterity.

So far so good, but we then have to consider the problem of the manuscripts themselves. Who might have read them? How effective was the dissemination of the texts they contained and who was responsible? Thus this codex containing the *Liber historiae francorum* and the *Annales regni francorum* needs to be set within the context of the transmission of the latter and all the uncertainties and puzzles that arise in consequence.

The major problem with the *Annales regni francorum* 741–829 is that not one of the surviving manuscripts can be regarded as the original. What we have are copies from the time of Charlemagne's grandsons. Although there are a number of ninth-century copies, none survives from the late eighth century and the earliest copy, Paris, BnF lat. 10911 discussed above, dates from c. 830. The *Annales regni francorum* purportedly survive in five versions, known as A, B, C, D and E, defined by their late nineteenth-century editor Kurze according to the groups of manuscripts with related portions of the texts (A up to 788, B up to 813, C and D up to 829 but with particular variants: thus D is distinguished from C (and A and B) because it includes the notes about the conspiracies of 785 and 792 against Charlemagne led by Hardrad and Pippin the Hunchback respectively. The revised version of the *Annales regni francorum*, that is, the 'E' or 5th redaction, was once known as the *Annales Einhardi*. It actually only revises the text from 741–801. Kurze thought the E version from 802 to 829 was dependent on D. All the (many) manuscripts of E were thought by Kurze to go back to one archetype, 'Ex', in which the Annals were linked with the *Vita Karoli* of Einhard.

The oldest of these manuscripts, Vienna, ÖNB lat. 510, is unfortunately late tenth century so the problem of the E recension in terms of its original dissemination is even worse than for all the other versions. Kurze tried to work out how the text was constructed, and thought in precisely these terms, of construction rather than composition. For him it was more a copying process and only towards the end of his discussion does he introduce the idea of the 'original' and authorship. His stemma is a clear visual presentation of the hypotheses and intermediaries he proposed in order to take account of the sequence of apparent borrowing, repetitions, errors in common and the like.³⁹

³⁹ *Annales regni francorum*, pp. V–XIX; and the fuller study F. Kurze, 'Ueber die karolingischen Reichsannalen von 741–829 und ihre Uebersarbeitung. 1: Die handschriftliche Ueberlieferung', *Neues Archiv* 19 (1894), pp. 295–339; and 'Zur Ueberlieferung der karolingischen Reichsannalen und ihrer Uebersarbeitung', *Neues Archiv* 28 (1903), pp. 619–69.

The various recensions Kurze proposed in their turn have led to hypotheses about the sequence of composition. Kurze interpreted the dates at which particular recensions stopped as an indication of original batches of annals – one to 788, another taking the story to 813, later continued to 829. The manuscripts themselves certainly reflect texts truncated in this way, but whether this is as part of a larger design in the compilation of historical miscellanies, or due to the original circulation of the text in a number of recensions to which other sections were gradually added, is difficult to determine. Further, the *Annales regni francorum* are regarded as ‘official’ court-based history. The problem with this of course is how can we work out how or whether the court might determine either content or distribution.

The attraction of Kurze’s theoretical framework for the composition of the *Annales regni francorum*, of course, is that it envisages a major effort to record the early rise to prominence of Pippin and Charlemagne, and then a further reflection on Charlemagne’s reign at the end of it, around the time that his heir Louis the Pious was crowned. The degree to which the manuscripts may be able to throw light on the original conception, process of composition and dissemination of the annals nevertheless seems to me to be very limited. Despite, or because of this, it has prompted a great deal of speculation. It is important, however, to be clear about the basis on which we are speculating. An analysis based on the printed text alone, without taking the manuscripts into account, is simply inadequate. The manuscript dissemination may nevertheless be able to illuminate the perception of the Frankish past subsequently, in the reigns of Louis the Pious and his sons Lothar, Louis the German and Charles the Bald, as well as the subsequent circulation of Frankish history in the later ninth century and the course of the tenth century.⁴⁰

What this leaves unresolved is the status of the text either as historical record, or as a statement of a particular memory of the Frankish past. If the manuscript witnesses are regarded as reflections of particular preferences in memory and the selection of what was wanted from the past to hand on to posterity, then each manuscript has a great deal to disclose. Any effort at total reconciliation of accounts and perspectives will probably be fruitless, nor is it necessarily advantageous. What the Frankish annals manuscripts point to above all is a number of alternative histories and alternative memories of the Frankish past. The early history of the Franks and Carolingians is remarkably widely circulated, in many permutations and combinations, including the *Annales mettenses priores*,⁴¹

⁴⁰ See below, pp. 101–13.

⁴¹ See Y. Hen, ‘The Annals of Metz and the Merovingian past’, in Hen and Innes (eds.), *The uses of the past*, pp. 175–90.

the Annals of Fulda,⁴² the *Chronicon laurissense breve*, the Continuations of Fredegar, the *Annales regni francorum*, and the dozens of so-called minor annals that remain to be analysed.⁴³ Such a rich dissemination is crucial for our assessment of the formation of an historical memory of the origin of the Franks and the rise and triumph of the Carolingian family.

A further questions remains: If the *Annales regni francorum* is court-based, official history, is there any discernible role played by the court in the dissemination of this particular rendering of the Frankish past? Of all the manuscripts surveyed by Kurze and discussed by everyone else since, only two, St Petersburg Saltykov-Schedrin Library F.v.IV.4 and Vienna, ÖNB cod. 473, have any links with a Carolingian court (both, as it happens, with that of Charles the Bald) and both are part of composite presentation manuscripts.⁴⁴

There is, however, one early fragment of the *Annales regni francorum*, not known to Kurze, and apparently ignored by, or unknown to, every subsequent commentator. This is Cologne fragment Sankt Maria in Kapitol AII/18, dated s.IX 1/3 and containing the E text entry for the year 824 but with some variants.⁴⁵ It is a single leaf, desperately frail and thin, with the script made very difficult to decipher as a consequence. It witnesses to a court-associated copy of the revised text of the Frankish annals and may well be the archetype of E1–E8 whose existence was supposed by

⁴² It is too often forgotten that the Annals of Fulda start in 714 with the career of Charles Martel and present in their entirety an interestingly different perspective on the career of the early Carolingian rulers: ed. F. Kurze, *Annales fuldenses sive annales regni francorum orientalis*, MGH SRG VII (Hannover, 1891).

⁴³ These fill G. Pertz (ed.), MGH SS, I and II (Hannover, 1826 and 1829) with others in MGH SS, XV (Hannover, 1887); and see R. McKitterick, *The Frankish kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987* (London, 1983), pp. 3–5. J. Davis made a start on an analysis of thirty-nine of these ‘minor annals’ in ‘Conceptions of kingship under Charlemagne’ (unpublished M.Litt. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1999), pp. 173–83.

⁴⁴ For an account of the contents of St Petersburg F.v.IV.4, see Tischler, *Einharts Vita Karoli*, pp. 1163–76, and see note 31 above. For the Vienna codex see H. Reimitz, ‘Ein karolingisches Geschichtsbuch aus Saint-Amand und der Codex Vindobonensis palat. 473’, in C. Egger and H. Weigl (eds.), *Text-Schrift-Codex. Quellenkundliche Arbeiten aus dem Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, MIOG Ergänzungsband (Vienna and Munich, 2000), pp. 34–90, and below, chapter 5.

⁴⁵ This fragment was first signalled by B. Bischoff, ‘Die Hofbibliothek Ludwig dem Frommen’, in J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (eds.), *Medieval learning and literature. Essays presented to Richard William Hunt* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 3–22, and in English translation (by M. Gorman), in B. Bischoff, *Manuscripts and libraries in the age of Charlemagne*, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology 1 (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 76–92, at p. 90, there with the old signature of Capsula 34.I. It was also discussed by L. Kolarova, ‘The transmission and dissemination of Carolingian annals’ (unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1995). I am most grateful to Dr Joachim Oepen of the Historisches Archiv des Erzbistums Köln for his kindness in sending me information and photographs of this remarkable fragment. See also p. 130 below.

Kurze. It raises the possibility, therefore, of the royal court being directly associated with the dissemination of at least one version of the Frankish past.

I have suggested in this introductory chapter that Frankish history books, containing both new and old texts, reflect a particular exploitation of the potential of written culture in the Carolingian world. They supplied an arsenal of past precedent and knowledge and a statement about present identity. They imply a potential audience for these texts and provide the means for their dissemination. Taken together the texts and extant manuscripts constitute the self-defining action of an elite and the use of history texts to shape shared memory. In these Frankish historical texts we see the use of the written word to persuade contemporaries and posterity of the importance and status of the Franks. But in shaping memory, the Franks drew on a host of written versions and records of the past. The annals I have discussed are simply the most prominent among many variant compilations disseminated throughout the Frankish world. Fortunately we do not have to rely solely on these narratives for an understanding of their relation to reality, for there is a host of documentary, legal and epistolary material with which to compare them. Nevertheless, the great variety of reception and dissemination of history texts mirrored in the ninth-century manuscripts is an unequivocal indicator of the sheer extent of the network of a shared memory of Frankish history in the early middle ages. It is to the documentation of this shared memory and history in its extraordinary variety in the Carolingian world that the following chapters are devoted.

In the next chapter, on Carolingian history books, I take up the issue of determining the purpose and subsequent audience for early medieval historical texts on the basis of the evidence provided by surviving manuscripts and their dissemination, and develop therefore a major theme this introduction has also addressed. The manuscripts enable modern historians to assess the status of the text and to place them in an appropriate historical context. This chapter discusses the manuscript tradition of the *Liber pontificalis*, Einhard's *Vita Karoli*, the *Annales fuldenses* and Fredegar's Chronicle. It assesses the implications of the survival and record of copies in the early middle ages of Roman and early Christian historiography. Finally, it discusses the implications of three major historical miscellanies or history books, one in St Omer, one in Lucca and the third the so-called 'Verona miscellany', which is now divided into four volumes, two each in Berlin and St Petersburg. Here the agenda of the compiler is crucial for determining the purpose of the collection as a whole and suggesting its possible audience. I argue that all historical

writing can be transformed to serve a particular author's or compiler's specific purpose in relation to whatever audience or audiences the author or compiler may have had in mind.

In the third chapter, I turn to the question of the particular audience initially envisaged for a particular text in relation to Paul the Deacon's *Historia langobardorum* (History of the Lombards). The conquest of Lombardy in 774 is universally recognized, both by contemporaries and by modern historians, to have been one of the most momentous events in Charlemagne's reign. Yet the process by which Charlemagne consolidated his rule in the Lombard kingdom of Italy, and the cultural and religious consequences of 774 for both Franks and Lombards, are far less easy to determine. In this chapter I argue that it is in the context of Paul the Deacon's political involvement both before and after the Frankish conquest that all his writings, and especially the *Historia langobardorum*, should be seen. I look at both the content of the *Historia langobardorum* and the manuscript tradition and transmission of the work. I suggest that Paul's history might be better understood as a very skilful piece of image-making about the Lombards' past and identity on behalf of the Lombards for the Franks, either in Francia itself or for the Franks and Lombards at the court of Pippin of Italy. The History was designed to serve a particular function, namely, to instruct the Franks about the Lombard past and provide some measure of legitimization of Carolingian rule. What can be put together about its reception suggests that it was successful. In short, the *Historia langobardorum* is a very active contribution to the shaping of Frankish and Lombard relations and the understanding of kingship in the aftermath of 774.

The next three chapters form a group. They continue the discussion of the shaping of perceptions of kingship already touched on in chapter 3 but concentrate in particular on the forging of Frankish identity. In chapter 4, 'The Carolingians on their past', I argue that the *Annales regni francorum* forge a Frankish identity by constant reiteration and triumphal narrative. The ruler and the Franks are the achievers and together create the great realm. Consolidated within an historical and Christian framework, this is the message passed on to their contemporaries and to posterity. The insistence on precise chronology according to the year of the Incarnation is a deliberate device to enhance a very determined expression of the Franks' identity and cultural affiliations. I am concerned with the construction of a past by the Franks, its coherence and consistency, and the degree to which such a construction constitutes the formation of the collective memory of the newly formed Frankish people under Carolingian rule. I focus on the *Annales regni francorum* as one highly influential historical narrative that constructed so powerful an image of Frankish society and

its events, and evoked such a convincing sense of identity, that it is their version of the Frankish past that has been remembered, and believed, ever since.

Chapter 5, 'Politics and history' serves as a companion piece to the preceding chapter, for it takes up the issue of the dissemination of the *Annales regni francorum* within the Carolingian empire in the ninth century. It also takes up one of the challenges I offered in chapter 2 concerning historical compilations. It begins as a study of a single manuscript but it implicates all other Carolingian codices containing historical texts. It focusses in particular on a royal history book, Vienna, ÖNB cod. 473, probably written in 869. It included the Frankish annals with other historical texts (such as the *Liber pontificalis*, the *Liber historiae francorum* and *Vita Karoli* of Einhard) to create an extraordinarily significant and important book. Such a collection exposes the necessity to explore the implications of the dissemination of Carolingian historiography in terms not only of the specific political impetus for the initial production of each text but also of their subsequent impact and use.

In chapter 6, 'Kingship and the writing of history', I examine the creation of a particular image of royal and Frankish power. I test the hypothesis that the writing of history in the Frankish world was not simply a matter of an observer recording, or even selecting judiciously, disingenuously or with deliberate intent to mislead, from events as they happened. I make the case for the need to register the formation of an historical sensitivity by means of the other texts which a particular author of an historiographical work might have encountered, as well as the formation of a collective memory, understanding and interpretation of what had happened. My particular focus is the account in the royal Frankish annals of the usurpation of the Merovingian throne by the Carolingian mayor of the palace Pippin III. I argue that the claim that the Pope had sanctioned the deposition of the last Merovingian king in 751 is a piece of creative mythmaking on the part of the annalist for political and ideological reasons. This claim had an astonishing resonance in political thinking and ideas about the French constitution thereafter. I suggest, therefore, that the pope's first involvement in the political affairs of the Frankish kingdom was not until 753/4 and that Pippin's apologists created a very particular understanding of the making and early years of Carolingian royal power that has misled historians and political theorists ever since.

The following two chapters then take up the wider themes of social memory and history and the different manifestations of their expression that can be observed in surviving Carolingian documents. Both in chapters 7 and 8, therefore, I discuss cartularies and *Libri memoriales*, where there is a conjunction of an historical sense of the past, attachment to

geographical place, commemoration, record and writing. *Libri memoriales*, first written in the Carolingian period, survive from Brescia, Durham, Passau, Pfäfers, Reichenau, Remiremont, Salzburg, St Gallen and Winchester. I examine the continental books in particular, notably the *Liber memorialis* of Remiremont and the *Liber vitae* of Salzburg. These types of book constitute written forms other than historical narrative in which the past was remembered and commemorated in the early middle ages, and have much to tell us about cultural attitudes in the early middle ages. The *Libri vitae* and the cartularies augment oral modes and memory as a form of communication in the early middle ages. They also function as a symbol on many different social and spiritual levels. They illustrate, moreover, the role of writing as a form of communication over time, and it is this which is absolutely crucial to our understanding of the uses and implications of literacy in the early middle ages as a whole. The *Liber vitae* of Salzburg, first compiled in 784, is a remarkable example of the use of writing in commemoration and the recording of social memory in the early middle ages. I argue that this book reflects not only more general cultural assumptions in early medieval Bavaria in the years surrounding Charlemagne's annexation of Tassilo's duchy of Bavaria, but also specific political affiliations and social communities within Bavaria at the end of the eighth century. The *Liber vitae* of Salzburg certainly anchored the Salzburg community within its locality and immediate institutional memory. That memory itself, however, was not separated from a wider political realm represented both by Bavarian dukes and the Carolingian king, and by the links forged between the religious houses and sees of west Francia and Bavaria. It witnesses to the different strands of influence and affiliation in Agilolfing and Carolingian Bavaria.

The prayers for the dead, the *Libri vitae* and the cartularies which formed the subject of the two preceding chapters provide an ostensibly immediate conjunction between past and present time, in that the dead are remembered in terms of the commemoration of their anniversaries in the present. Yet such texts also convey a very particular sense of the historical past in which chronology has a crucial role to play. In thinking about the writing of history and the keeping of historical records of many different kinds, we also need to think about the historical mindedness of the Franks and the formation of historical sensitivity by means of reading texts. How did an author's historical 'training' and reading influence the presentation and perception of the events, issues and personalities he records? What are the implications of the presence of histories and what was made available by copying in the ninth and tenth centuries?

In the remaining chapters of the book I turn to the question of historical knowledge and the role of texts. As a case study in chapter 9, I draw

in particular on the evidence, insofar as I have been able to reconstruct it from surviving manuscripts from this period, of what was read and used at the monasteries of Lorsch and St Amand in the ninth and tenth centuries. In chapter 10 I explore a particular aspect of the ‘longer past’ of the Franks, namely the history of the church. I aim to demonstrate that the relationship of the Carolingian Franks to the books in their libraries was not simply that of scholars to a repository of learning. The books in Frankish monastic and cathedral libraries, as part of a past which the Franks had assimilated to themselves, as discussed in chapters 7, 8 and 9, formed part of the Frankish sense of identity. In other words the Franks were not only a textual community in relation to the Bible, as has long been recognised; they were also a textual community in terms of their intellectual and textual inheritance. I use the phrase ‘textual community’ as defined by Brian Stock in his book: ‘What was essential for a textual community was not a written version of a text, though that was sometimes present, but an individual who having mastered it, then utilized it for reforming a group’s thought and action’.⁴⁶ In the case of the Franks in the Carolingian period, I am concerned both with the ruler’s advocacy of particular texts but also of the Frankish scholars who mastered a precise set of texts. I explore the formation and ramifications of the very distinctive understanding of books and of the Franks’ place in history within the Carolingian world and the Carolingian church. I investigate in particular the wider implications of Jerome-Gennadius’ *De viris illustribus*, Eusebius-Rufinus’ *Historia ecclesiastica* and Cassiodorus-Epiphanius’ *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita* within Carolingian Europe. These three works played a key role in creating a context for the Franks’ understanding not only of the history of the church, but also of the circumstances of the composition and dissemination of Scripture and the work of the fathers of the early church.

There are striking instances from the Carolingian period of the way in which the distinctive stress on texts, authors, authority and sacred places in the ecclesiastical histories, Jerome-Gennadius’ *De viris illustribus* and a number of related texts could be drawn on by readers, scribes and artists. In a companion piece to the preceding chapter, I focus in chapter 11, ‘Christianity as history’, on two examples in order to explore the way in which the written tradition of the church appears to have shaped perceptions and attitudes. I suggest how the particular image of the church and the Christian faith, presented by the historical tradition outlined in chapter 10 and disseminated so zealously by the Franks, manifests

⁴⁶ B. Stock, *The implications of literacy. Written language and models of interpretation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries* (Princeton, 1983), pp. 89–92.

itself in the Carolingian period. My two examples are Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare cod. CLXV, a collection of canon law, and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 22053, the famous miscellany in a codex known as the *Wessobrunner Gebet* manuscript. Both demonstrate how images were deployed to reinforce the importance of sacred places, relics, authors and books in Christian history. They also serve to underline the importance of codicological context for our own understanding of any one text and its significance for its intended audience. They thereby add to our own knowledge of the intellectual resources of particular groups in the Carolingian world, quite apart from enlarging our understanding of the reception of late antique Christian texts in early medieval Europe.

The concluding chapter, 'History and its audiences in the Carolingian world', develops the principal theme of the preceding eleven chapters in focusing on contemporary memory and the writing of history in the eighth and ninth centuries. It takes the events of 817 and the contemporary accounts of them as a case study. It discusses how the Frankish writers constructed their past in the early middle ages and how their sense of an immediate history related to the construction of a longer past. In order to pull together the issues discussed in the preceding chapters, I look again at some of the material already considered but here from the perspective of their potential audiences. I address the following questions. What contributed to the Franks' sense of place in historical time? What did they use to construct their past? How did their own immediate history relate to this longer past? I argue that the Franks' sense of the past was a composite one. It had overlapping sequences. These comprised different local and institutional senses of identity which were expressed in terms of their own community's foundations, property, associations, dead members, benefactors and others. They were remembered, moreover, with some association with a particular place. Simultaneously there was an understanding of the chronological progression of Jewish and Christian history; of being heirs of both imperial and Christian Rome; and of their own sense of achievement as Franks, expanding ever eastwards and imposing their own composite culture on others. A sense of the past was deeply integrated into the sense of identity of the audiences for history the Carolingian world. How distinctive this Frankish sense and exposition of the past is among their contemporaries, notably in the Byzantine, Islamic and Anglo-Saxon regions, forms the subject of my concluding paragraphs.