

Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles

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and Renaissance Chronicles

Edited by

Juliana Dresvina and Nicholas Sparks

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P U B L I S H I N G

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|---|
| ASC | <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> |
| ASE | <i>Anglo-Saxon England</i> |
| BAV | Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana |
| BL | British Library |
| BM | Bibliothèque Municipale |
| BN | Bibliothèque Nationale de France |
| CCCC | Corpus Christi College Cambridge |
| CCCM | Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievals |
| CUL | Cambridge University Library |
| CUP | Cambridge University Press |
| EETS ss | Early English Text Society, supplementary series |
| EH | Orderic Vitalis, <i>The Ecclesiastical History</i> , ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, Oxford Medieval Texts, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969–80) |
| EMC | <i>Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle</i> , ed. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010) |
| GND | <i>The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni</i> , ed. and trans. Elisabeth van Houts, OMT, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992–95) |
| GRA | William of Malmesbury, <i>Gesta regum Anglorum: the History of the English Kings</i> , ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, OMT, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998–99) |
| HE | Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum</i> |
| MGH | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i> |
| SS | Scriptores |
| SSRG | Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum |
| OMT | Oxford Medieval Texts |
| OUP | Oxford University Press |
| Plummer | <i>Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel with Supplementary Extracts from the Others</i> , ed. Charles Plummer, 2 vols (OUP, 1892–9) |
| PMLA | Publications of the Modern Language Association |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| RHF | <i>Recueil des historiens des gaules et de la France</i>), eds Martin Bouquet et al. (Paris, 24 vols., 1738-1904) |
| RS | Rolls Series |
| SGGK | <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> |
| s.a. | <i>sub anno</i> |
| SMR | <i>Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor</i> |
| UP | University Press |
| Whitelock | <i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Revised Translation</i> , eds Dorothy Whitelock, with David C. Douglas and Susie I. Tucker (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961; rev. 1965) |
| WoBT | <i>The Wife of Bath's Tale</i> |

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INTRODUCTION

NICHOLAS SPARKS AND JULIANA DRESVINA

The nucleus of this volume is formed from a series of papers delivered at the second biennial Cambridge International Chronicles Symposium, held at Cambridge in 2010. The aim of the conference was to explore a perceived gap within chronicle literature; for its focus was ‘Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles’. From there we bring the best and most important contributions, add illustrations, discussion of the literature, plus material from other authors. So this group of papers, as it stands, goes far beyond the conference proceedings. For it has been a delight, in editing this volume, to overstep our initial bounds, and – to cite a Gospel paraphrase by a twelfth-century chronicler Gervase of Canterbury – to broaden our phylacteries and to enlarge the fringes of our original collection.¹

As a result, this volume ranges across the relations of authority and gender. The diversity of materials reflects the broad aim the conference; the papers delivered on that occasion, printed here for the first time, will inevitably stimulate further discussion of the new issues and approaches they present – also at future conferences (which have now become a joint Oxford and Cambridge enterprise) and more widely. So we offer this collection, at an early stage, of what is on the way to becoming a fruitful and highly productive field for the international group of researchers who work on chronicles.

The purpose of this volume is not only in bringing together so many diverse points of view focused on the main themes but also in providing new scholarship on which future work will depend. We have here a truly cosmopolitan gathering of scholars, all of them making use of various tools and methods to generate a high-level of conversation, full of important new insights which will assuredly surely cater to the interests of readers from different backgrounds and fields of enquiry. Their essays are the more rigorous, the more useful, and the more relevant to wider

¹ Matthew 23:5; *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, 2 vols, ed. William Stubbs, RS 73 (London, 1879-80), I, pp. 87-8.

audiences than those undertaken in more conventional, narrowly defined contexts.

Moreover, the formation of the collection itself has naturally brought about unrecognized and often surprising links between authors and studies, and consequently the scope of the volume increased, to the benefit of each paper individually and to the project as a whole. A major gain to come from the collection is the ways in which it helps the reader connect, theoretically and critically, different objects and methods, where no connection could easily be made before.

This is the first book of its kind – the first to assemble and to organize a group of studies to focus on the relations of authority and gender in the context of chronicles.² Naturally a volume like this will receive some impress not only of the different approaches taken by the authors, but also of the broad chronological and geographical spread of its materials, and will thus serve as a record, as well as a medium, of the current state of the field of chronicle studies. Accordingly, it will be more useful and interesting to readers who seek to extend their own enquiries to include the various disciplines whose development has contributed to the growth of the field.³ Therefore another gain to come from it is in the grouping of papers which are novel in substance, fresh in approach, and, for the most part, interdisciplinary in nature.

Such a collection does well therefore to reflect upon the background of its development. The interplay between authority and gender underlying this volume became a concern of modern historiography with the rise of

² Earlier thematic volumes, dealing with an interplay of gender and another important concept in the Middle Ages, are *Class & Gender in Early English Literature: Intersections*, eds Britton J. Harwood and Gillan R. Overing, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1994); *Religion and Gender*, ed. Ursula King (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995); *Negotiating Community and Difference in medieval Europe: gender, power, patronage, and the authority of religion in Latin Christendom*, eds Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

³ Other titles of interest, dealing with various aspects of the interplay between authority and gender in the Middle Ages: in early development of the Christian doctrine: Virginia Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995); Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority and the New Prophecy* (CUP, 1996); in medieval ecclesiastical history: Megan McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender, and Authority in an Age of Reform, 1000–1122* (CUP, 2010); in mysticism: David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1996), Grace M. Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (CUP, 1995); in literature: Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (OUP, 2005).

feminism in the second half of the twentieth century. Feminist scholars argued that women's writings and their contents cannot be separated from issues of power, usually in male hands.⁴ This view holds particularly true for medieval and renaissance material, including writings of an identity-forming nature such as chronicles and chronicle-like works. Given the initial feminist perspective, even today, whenever gender is mentioned, it is often read as female. To change this bias, we have attempted to strike a balance between contributions focused on male and female concerns or authors and on the way authority is represented in their texts. There are papers too that prioritise the theme of authority, exploring the multiple ways it is applied and reflected in the historical writings of the period. Accordingly, then, apart from their general relevance to the conference theme, these essays have a certain unity in that most of them are concerned with exploring one or both of the volume's major themes.

Of course there is some cutting across chronological and thematic lines but this we hope will facilitate comparison between different authors and topics. For example, the collection opens with an essay by Jinty Nelson, whose discussion of women in Carolingian sources derives from her keynote address given at CICS 2010. The scarcity of the evidence and the fact that the majority of women mentioned in her texts happen to be of noble status are reflected in the histories of their counterparts across the Channel, as demonstrated by Ben Snook, who looks at pre-800 data on women in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Ryan Lavelle's article discusses the same source, focusing rather on acts of defiance of political authority in early medieval England. Time, space and authority are brought together in the contributions by Leonie Hicks, utilising monastic material, and Juliana Dresvina, examining the ways in which romance, chronicle and epic cross one another in a seemingly secular poem. Authorial strategies are further explored in a cluster of essays. Margaretha Nordquist questions the perception of truth in male-authored and male-driven rhymed chronicles while Greg Fedorenko discusses the reasons behind the choices both of sources and form in two thirteenth-century French prose chronicles. French connections are elaborated in Cristian Bratu's overview of authorial strategies of male and female authors, and Graeme Dunphy looks at similarities and differences of women-chroniclers between the early Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Ritual as the reflection of gendered authority, its performance and staging, is the focus of another cluster of essays. Olga Karaskova uncovers an attempt of Mary of Burgundy to cast

⁴ See, for instance, Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (Chicago UP, 2002), pp. 1-6.

herself as a male ruler, a *dux*, rather than a female consort, whereas Noa Turel offers a case-study of Mary's enforcing her authority through the pageant accompanying the baptism of her son Philip in Bruges in 1478. Judith Collard examines another important sacred rite, coronation, in connection with the Anglo-Norman representation of the last legitimate Anglo-Saxon king. Sarah Lambert draws on similar images of Queen Melisende to explore her status in comparison to the male members of her family, and, finally, Ellie Woodacre picks up the subject of consorts, this time looking at the husbands of female rulers.

This volume, like so many medieval chronicles themselves, is a truly collective affair. We would like to thank those scholars (over a hundred of them!) who acted as reviewers for the initial tranche of nearly thirty submissions: every paper submitted had at least three readers; most had five. Their feedback sparked further discussions in the process of revision, and these discussions promise to continue long after this book is in print. We like to think of it as a medieval author would have, realising, in Julian of Norwich's words,⁵ that his or her work is never properly finished. Particular thanks are due to the members of our advisory board, who took pains to read promptly and to comment on submissions in their fields of expertise and on subsequent revised submissions. All errors meanwhile remain the responsibility of the editors, who are aware that, once a book is released into the world, it is bound to have a life of its own, open to reading and misreading.

Lege feliciter, as the Venerable Bede would say.

⁵ Long Text, chapter 86: Julian of Norwich, *Showing of Love: Extant Texts and Translation*, eds Sister Anna Maria Reynolds, C.P. and Julia Bolton Holloway (Firenze: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001), pp. 488-9, 625, or eadem, *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, eds Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2006), p. 379).

HUSSIES, MATRONS, AND OTHERS IN CAROLINGIAN CHRONICLES*

JINTY NELSON

My thanks to the organisers of the 2010 Cambridge International Chronicles conference are far from merely conventional. They have not just given us the opportunity but positively incited us to do something which I passionately believe to be the key to historical understanding, namely, to make connexions, or as E. M. Forster put it in the epigraph to *Howard's End*, "Only connect". And they have already incited us in their call for papers to connect not only authority and gender, but, in an insightfully inciting list of possible topics for discussion – to name but five paired items – kingship and queenship, ecclesiastical and secular authorities, *auctores* and *auctoritas*, and female voices, male scribes, and authority and authorship. That's more than enough incitement to respond to in one paper.

Then I must thank Philippe Buc for having suggested the pairing hussies and matrons.¹ Buc noticed that Liutprand of Cremona in what at a stretch could be called a chronicle, which he entitled *Antapodosis*, *Revenge*, in the first place, on King Berengar of Italy and his wife Willa for their misprising of Liutprand himself) represented Italian royal women as hussies (most conspicuously Queen Willa, a second Jezebel (III:1) who made it possible for her mother and namesake *not* to be described as "the worst woman ever born", IV:11) and German/Ottonian royal women as matrons, whose virtue contrasted dramatically with the hussies' misconduct. Buc diagnosed in Liutprand's work an authorial strategy for "the systematic destruction of the dynastic legitimacy of potential

* I should like to thank the editors for help and advice, and for allowing the text of this paper to preserve something of the colloquial style in which it was delivered.

¹ P. Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons: Liutprand of Cremona on Dynastic Legitimacy', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1995), 207-25, esp. 214-25 (quotations below come from 224, 225, citing Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, ed. P. Chiesa, *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera Omnia*, CCCM 156 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998)).

contenders for the Italian throne” – contenders against Otto I – in order to legitimise Otto’s claims to rule in Italy (Buc doesn’t quite clarify *in whose eyes* legitimacy was to be gained, that is, what audience Liutprand wrote for). Buc’s terms hussies and matrons are well-chosen in so far as they add the bite of generational to gender prejudice: a hussy is a bad girl, sexually available, whereas a matron is a woman mature as well as good, and chaste married or, better, widowed. But the word “hussy”, though it certainly is pejorative, does not quite convey the sense of Liutprand’s words *scortum* and *meretrix*, which unequivocally mean “whore”, *scortum* being particularly interesting here: a neuter noun to which Liutprand, like classical writers, attached a feminine adjective (*scortum romana*), and whose original meaning was skin or hide, whence Festus’ Lexicon-definition: “whores are called *scorta* because they are thrashed like hides (*quia ut pelliculae subiguntur*)”.² An ultra-pejorative sense was required since Liutprand’s very precise aim was to undermine power-claims transmitted through women of Carolingian royal blood. Paradoxically, from the point of view of dynastic descent, it did not matter which men had in fact been the sleeping-partners of these women; but, morally and legally, a woman’s fornication destroyed her status as a vessel for rulership claims, and it destroyed, at the same time, her husband’s masculine authority – unmanned him. Liutprand reminds you as he reminded audiences at the courts of Otto I of Germany and of Abd al-Rahman at Cordoba,³ of what precisely makes women good to think with.

Duly mindful, in moving back to the Carolingians, you encounter not only whores and matrons, but others. The long ninth century, as distinct from the tenth, was more specifically an age of new chronicles – if we take the term generously: a few works were produced by that name, witness the chronicles of Ado of Vienne and Regino of Prüm; other authors wrote histories in the classic form, organised in books and chapters (Paul the

² Festus, *Lexicon*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, *Sexti Pompei Festi, De verborum significatu quae supersunt cum Pauli Epitome* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), pp. 330-1.

³ For key insights into the intended audiences and context of Liutprand’s work, see Karl Leyser, ‘Liudprand of Cremona: Preacher and Homilist’, in D. Wood and K. Walsh, eds, *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 43-60, repr. in Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries*, ed. Timothy Reuter (London: Hambledon, 1994), 111-24, esp. 113, 121-4, and Leyser, ‘Ends and Means in Liudprand of Cremona’, in J. D. Howard-Johnson, ed., *Byzantium and the West, c. 850 – c. 1200: Proceedings of the XVIII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), 119-43, repr. *Communications and Power*, pp. 125-42.

Deacon, Freculf, Nithard, Erchempert). Sometimes new annals and imperial biographies were copied in the same manuscripts as old histories.⁴ The most interesting development, though, in terms of contemporary historiography, is that annals were proliferating, and annalistic authors took to writing at greater length: writing more, that is, than the doings, mainly military, of kings and male elites, and extending to occasional snippets about women, usually high-born but sometimes humble. In what follows, I draw my evidence partly from works badged as chronicles, partly from annals that were bursting their genre-buttons and becoming more chronicle-like, with quite lengthy sections of narrative, and connections between sections. Annalists becoming more authorial self-consciously assumed more writerly authority over their works, as, again, Philippe Buc has pointed out.⁵

Old historical works were copied in the long ninth century: manuscript evidence suggests that audiences multiplied.⁶ Women too, especially queens and great ladies, had sometimes played parts as patrons of historical production and diffusion and perhaps – though this is more speculative – in reception, as readers or hearers.⁷ Women too, however infrequently compared with powerful men, but in some cases making up in narrative weight what they lacked in volume of text assigned them, had also been represented as historical agents. If you have ever read Gregory's *Histories*, you won't have forgotten Brunhild or Fredegund; if you've read Book IV of Fredegar's *Chronicle* and its Continuations, and the *Liber*

⁴ Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (CUP, 1989), pp. 236-41; eadem, 'The audience for Carolingian historiography', in A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter, eds, *Historiographie im Frühmittelalter* (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1994), pp. 96-114; and eadem, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (CUP, 2004), esp. chs. 1 and 6; H. Reimitz, 'The art of Truth: Historiography and Identity in the Frankish World', in *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, eds R. Corradini, R. Meens, C. Pössel and P. Shaw, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* 12 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), pp. 87-103, esp. 93-102.

⁵ Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual* (Princeton UP, 2001), pp. 51-87; cf. my review in *Speculum*, 78 (2003), 847-51, esp. 848-9.

⁶ McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World*, pp. 13-22; Reimitz, 'The art of truth', pp. 96-100.

⁷ Nelson, 'Gender and genre in women historians of the earlier Middle Ages', repr. eadem, *The Frankish World* (London: Humbledon Press, 1996), pp. 183-97, and also 'Gendering Courts in the Early Medieval West', in *Gender in the Early Medieval World*, eds L. Brubaker and J. M. Smith (CUP, 2004), pp. 185-97; and I. Wood, 'Genealogy defined by women: the case of the Pippinids', in *Gender in the Early Medieval World*, pp. 234-57.

historiae Francorum, you will have registered the activities of the queens-regent Nanthild and Balthild, and Plectrude and Alpais, the successive wives of the mayor of the palace Pippin. Then recall that in the long ninth century as well, some readers, especially if they frequented courts, had access to these works, and this cast of characters.

In what follows, I intend to explore connections between authority and gender by looking at kingship and queenship, ecclesiastical and secular authorities, *auctores* and *auctoritates*. First I will look at some annals written in the lifetime of Charlemagne (748–814) (my ninth century is *long*) – and consider the ways in which authors depicted queens, and relations between the king and a series of queens (Text 1 of the Appendix); from that going on to surmise the contexts in which such authors worked and the audiences for whom they wrote, and also how a woman who was not a queen could find a place in a chronicle-like passage (Text 2), and what might have determined the authorial stance.⁸ Moving to the mid-ninth century, I discuss some instances where various women, some royal, some of obscurer origin, some matrons, some hussies, attracted annalistic mention in the *Annals of Fulda* and the *Annals of St-Bertin*, successor-texts to the *Annales regni Francorum* which acquired chronicle-characteristics (Texts 3, 4 and 5). Then, at the turn of the ninth to tenth century, the *Chronicle* of Regino of Prüm offers a perspective on the noblewoman Engeltrude which can be compared with that of the *Annals of St-Bertin* (Texts 6 and 7). Finally, drawing on some recent historiography and recalling that medieval manuscripts were produced for the consumption of specific groups, I will try to set these narrators and their women-subjects, and also their intended audiences, mostly men, in historical context.

To begin with chronicles and sets of annals from the early Carolingian decades: the moments when royal women appear are interesting precisely because they are exceptional. Take the case of Bertrada, Charlemagne's mother. The First Continuator of Fredegar's *Chronicle*, writing contemporaneously, mentions her by name in reporting her and her husband Pippin's royal consecrations by bishops in 751.⁹ The author of the

⁸ The texts are given in the Appendix, below, with bibliographical details.

⁹ Continuator of the *Chronicle* of Fredegar c. 33, *Quellen zur Geschichte des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts* (Freiherr vom Stein Gedächtnisausgabe, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* 4a), eds and German trans. H. Wolfram, A. Kusternig and H. Haupt (Darmstadt, 1982), pp. 298-9, English trans. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with Its Continuations* (London: Nelson, 1960), p. 102. For the First Continuator, Count Childebrand, King Pippin's uncle, who took up the narrative from 640 and

Annales regni Francorum, writing probably c. 790, ignores Bertrada in the entries for 751 and for 754, when other evidence shows that the queen was consecrated again, along with her husband by Pope Stephen II at the monastery of St-Denis,¹⁰ but under 755 (*recte* 754), after reporting the successful campaign of Pippin and his army to Italy “helping St Peter”, then offers the surprising information that “the monk Carloman, who was ill, remained at the city of Vienne together with Queen Bertrada, and languished for many days, and then died in peace”.¹¹ This “monk” was Pippin’s elder brother, who had voluntarily retired to a monastery near Rome in 747 leaving his sons in the care of Pippin, and presumably the queen as well, and then unexpectedly returned to Francia in 754 to try to dissuade Pippin from invading Italy. The double-surprise in this information – for which there is no other source – lies in the unavoidable inferences: one, that Bertrada as well as Carloman had been travelling with the army when Carloman fell ill, and two, that the queen had been deputed to stay with her brother-in-law. A historical novelist would have a field-day; but even a historian, versed in the intra-familial conflicts of medieval royalty and the structural tensions these denote, would expect relations between a queen with two sons and her brother-in-law and his two sons to be fraught to breaking-point.¹² Perhaps Bertrada was skilled in terminal

continued as far as 751 see Roger Collins, *Fredegar*, Authors of the Middle Ages. Historical and Religious Writers of the Latin West IV, no. 13 (Aldershot, Variorum, 1996), pp. 112-7. For Bertrada, see M. McCormick, ‘Pippin III, the Embassy of Caliph al Mansur, and the Mediterranean World’, in M. Becher and J. Jarnut, eds, *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751* (Münster: Scriptorium, 2004), pp. 221-41, at 222-3, Nelson, ‘Bertrada’, in Becher and Jarnut, *Dynastiewechsel*, pp. 93-109, at 103, and eadem, ‘Family structures and gendered power’, in G. Calvi, ed., *Women Rulers in Europe*, European University Institute Working Paper HEC No. 2008/2 (Florence: European University Institute, 2008), 27-44, at 37, 41-2; and M. Stratmann, *Die Königin im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009), pp. 95-8.

¹⁰ Codex Carolinus ep. 11 (Stephen II to Pippin, March/April 757), ed. W. Gundlach, MGH Epistolae III (repr. Munich, 1978), p. 505.

¹¹ *Annales regni Francorum s.a. 755, recte 754*, ed. F. Kurze, MGH SSRG (Hannover: Hahn, 1895), p. 12.

¹² For the tensions endemic in royal families, the fundamental work is Pauline Stafford’s: see her *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, 2nd edn (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), and her collected papers, *Gender, Family and the Legitimation of Power* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), esp. chs. III, passim, and X, 10-15; see also Nelson, ‘Charlemagne – *pater optimus*’, in P. Godman, J. Jarnut and P. Johanek, eds, *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung* (Stuttgart: Akademie Verlag, 2002), pp. 269-81.

care. The two sons of Carloman, wherever they were, disappear entirely from the sources after 754. The *Annales regni Francorum* have nothing more to say about Bertrada until their report under 768 that she was with her husband on what proved to be his last campaign. By now, Pippin, after negotiations in which Bertrada may well have taken part, had arranged the marriages of both his surviving sons to noble Frankish women.¹³ But the Second Continuator of Fredegar's *Chronicle* mentions her thrice in his account of 767: she crossed the Loire with Pippin and his army, she was left with a strong garrison at Bourges, his headquarters in Aquitaine, and the king returned to join her after the campaigning season ended, and they spent Christmas together *venerabiliter*. In the next chapter, covering 768, the chronicler reports that after Pippin and the army resumed their efforts in Aquitaine, Bertrada travelled down the Loire to Champtoceaux, some thirty-five kilometers upstream from Nantes, where Pippin rejoined her in time for Easter, and there they received envoys from the Caliph bearing gifts.¹⁴ Then, while Pippin returned to war, he left Bertrada with the royal household (*cum familia*) at Saintes, and returned there, *ubi Bertrada regina resedebat, cum magno triumpho et victoria*. ("... [Saintes] where Queen Bertrada was residing, with great triumph and victory"). In a final entry (the chronicle ends here), the Second Continuator depicts Bertrada as well as her sons at Pippin's deathbed at St-Denis in 768. Michael McCormick is surely right to infer that the Second Continuator of Fredegar had a special interest in Bertrada in the last two years of Pippin's reign because he was witnessing her influence then, and perhaps intending to present his work to her, but it seems to me likely as well that Bertrada during these years actually became more influential than before as Pippin came to rely increasingly on her authority at court and in what contemporaries a generation later articulated as specifically queenly responsibility for the *ornamentum regale* – equipment for representing power – and as the demographics of the royal family opened out new prospects of competing courts and cliques.¹⁵

¹³ Codex Carolinus ep. 45 (summer 770), 561. I infer that these two women, Himiltrude and Gerberga, became queens in 768, though no source entitles either of them thus, and no consecration is recorded for either.

¹⁴ McCormick, 'Pippin III', Becher and Jarnut eds, *Dynastiewechsel*, 222-3, 240, esp. noting the interest in Bertrada of the Second Continuator, Childebrand's son Nibelung, who took the narrative down to 768.

¹⁵ *De ordine palatii* c. 22, eds T. Gross and R. Schieffer, MGH Fontes iuris germanici antiquae (Hannover: Hahn, 1980), l. 360, p. 72, and cf. c. 13, l. 229, p. 56, c. 27, l. 442, p. 80; family structures: see Nelson, 'Charlemagne – *pater optimus?*'.

After Pippin's death and the joint-succession of her sons Charles and Carloman (768-771), the queen rated only two more mentions in the *Annales regni Francorum*, one in 770, when she "met Carloman at Selz and then went to Italy via Bavaria in the cause of peace, and achieved what she went for"; the other in 783, when her death is recorded.¹⁶ In both entries, she is named as Berta, no longer Bertrada, suggesting either a change of authorship, or the currency among those close to her of a pet-name during her dowager years. Other annals yield a little more information on the queen's journey: according to the entry for 770 in the so-called *Annales Petaviani* (from the name of Alexandre Petau, the owner of one of the manuscripts ('B')), perhaps written up by someone at Carloman's court until that king's death on 4 December 771 (the birth of his son Pippin is recorded under 770) and continued by the same or another writer down to 799, but perhaps with the annals entered contemporaneously between 771 and 779: *domna Berta fuit in Italia propter filiam Desiderii regis, et redditae sunt civitates plurimae sancti Petri* ("the lady Berta was in Italy on account of King Desiderius's daughter, and a number of St Peter's cities were restored");¹⁷ the *Annales mosellani* under 770 (probably written up in the Metz region around the turn of the eighth/ninth century but using slightly earlier material) say: "Bertrada brought Desiderius's daughter back to Francia".¹⁸ From these references, a narrative can be constructed which places Bertrada at the centre of a web of diplomacy, co-ordinating and personally conducting a policy of rapprochement with the Lombard king Desiderius, and at the same time with Pope Stephen III (who exacted from Desiderius the return of some disputed cities).¹⁹ If this is right, though Bertrada seems to have

¹⁶ *Annales regni Francorum*, so-called revised version, s.a. 770, ed. Kurze, 31, trans. P. D. King, *Charlemagne. Translated Sources* (Lambrigg, 1987), p. 109, and s.a. 783, ed. Kurze, pp.64-5, trans. King, pp. 82, 117.

¹⁷ K. F. Werner, 'Das Geburtsdatum Karls des Grossen', *Francia*, 1 (1973), 115-57, at 137-45; idem, 'La date de naissance de Charlemagne', repr. in Werner, *Structures politiques du monde franc* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979), ch. VII, esp. pp. 132-6, on MS 'B', Paris, BN lat. 4995, fols. 2-3, noting that this is the only MS to give details of Carolingian family events, esp. births, between 747 and 770.

¹⁸ *Annales mosellani* s.a. 770, ed. J.M. Lappenberg, MGH SS XVI (Hannover: Hahn, 1859), p. 496; see for comment, W. Levison and H. Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter II* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau's Nachfolger, 1953), pp. 187-9.

¹⁹ Nelson, 'Making a difference in eighth-century politics: the daughters of Desiderius', repr. eadem, *Courts, Elites and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), ch. X, p. 180; Stratmann, *Königin*, pp. 97-8.

done no more than slow, not halt, the worsening of relations between Charlemagne and his brother, in the short run her intervention “in the cause of peace” was notably successful. She helped arrange the repudiation of Wife number 1, and a new, diplomatically-significant marriage for her elder son.²⁰ The silence of the *Annales regni Francorum*, by contrast, on the Lombard alliance, seems to represent an airbrushing-out and, where the daughter of Desiderius was concerned, an updating amounting to a *damnatio memoriae* dictated by the rapidly-evolving situation after the death of Charlemagne’s brother (4 Dec 771), the repudiation of Wife number 2 and rapid remarriage to Wife number 3 at the turn of 771-2, and the conquest of the Lombard kingdom in 773-4. No source records the name of Desiderius’ daughter. Einhard, writing Charlemagne’s *Vita* in (probably) the later 820s, says categorically that the king married Desiderius’s daughter at his mother’s urging, and that his divorce from this woman was “the one issue on which trouble ever arose with his mother”.²¹ From 772, Bertrada was a queen *emerita*, so to speak, while Hildegard, Charlemagne’s third wife, was the queen in post. Bertrada grew old, according to Einhard, *in magno apud eum* [i.e. *filium suum*] *honore* (“in great honour with her son”).²² In the sense that there is not a shred of strictly contemporary evidence for her life between 772 and her death on 12 July 783, the right word for her situation may be “eclipsed”. But then since annals represent a far larger proportion of available evidence in the earlier part of Charlemagne’s reign than afterwards, absence of evidence may not signify.

For all save one of the wives of Charlemagne – I hasten to add that they were not contemporaneous, but serial – there is annalistic evidence, but it is thin and extremely patchy. No annal mentions any of Charlemagne’s mistresses, by the way. Einhard’s arrangement of his material leads the reader to think that Charlemagne took mistresses only after the last wife had died; but Einhard does not actually say this, and readers are wise to keep open minds. The earliest wife to be mentioned in the *Annales regni Francorum* was in fact the third, Hildegard: under 774 (in one of the two versions of these annals), the king’s wife, unnamed, is said to have been present with her husband in Italy, and under 780 and 781 (in both versions, but her name is given only in one, suggesting the author’s closeness to the court at that point), that she went to Italy again

²⁰ Hartmann, *Königin*, pp. 97-8, 205-6, convincingly reconstructs this sequence from fragmentary evidence.

²¹ Einhard, *Vita Karoli* c. 18, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SSRG (Hannover: Hahn, 1911), pp. 22-3.

²² *Ibid.*, 23.

with the king and two of his sons whom Pope Hadrian baptised, then anointed and crowned kings; and by mentioning a baby girl baptised by the archbishop of Milan, the authors of both versions imply that Hildegard gave birth in Italy.²³ Her death-notice is the only other mention of her in these annals (she is named in both versions): 30 April 783.²⁴

The fourth wife, Fastrada, presents a significantly different story: under 783, the *Annales regni Francorum* (both versions) report her marriage to Charlemagne (which occurred within perhaps six months of the previous wife's death).²⁵ In 785, one version of the annals reports that Charlemagne, after campaigning in Saxony, came to the fortress of Eresburg "and summoned his wife the lady Fastrada to him, along with his sons and daughters" (the other version does not name her, and puts the same sequence of events rather less emphatically); and under 787, in one version, she is described as waiting at Worms with the sons and daughters (i.e. stepsons and stepdaughters) as well as the older of her own two girls and the whole court (*omnis comitatus*) to welcome Charlemagne back from another visit to Italy (she had not accompanied him there), and this is followed by an account of a great assembly at Worms, evidently carefully planned, presumably by Fastrada. The other version of the annals gives this an interesting tweak: the king "came to his wife the lady queen Fastrada at the city of Worms and there they rejoiced with each other and were happy and praised God's mercy". No mention here of the children!²⁶ The *Annales regni Francorum* refer to Fastrada only once more, under 792 (apart from a relatively full obit-notice under 794), when one version, reporting (as the other version does not) the conspiracy of his (eldest) son Pippin and "certain Franks" against the king, attributes it to grievances against "the cruelty of the queen Fastrada, which they said they could no longer bear".²⁷ By a curious coincidence, the single mention in any annals of Wife number 1 appears belatedly, and in a highly circumspect indirect

²³ *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 774, ed. Kurze, p. 40, trans. King, p. 77; s.a. 780, 781, ed. Kurze, pp. 56, 57, trans. King, pp. 80, 81, 115.

²⁴ See above, n. 16.

²⁵ See F. Staab, 'Die Königin Fastrada', in R. Berndt, ed., *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794. Kristallisationspunkt von karolingischer Kultur*, 2 vols (Mainz: Verlag des Gesellschaft für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1997), I, pp. 183-217, and Nelson, 'The Siting of the Council at Francfort. Some reflexions on family and politics', in Berndt, ed., *Konzil*, I, 149-65; and Stratmann, *Königin*, pp. 101-3, 212, 220-1.

²⁶ See Appendix below. Unusually, s.a. 787 the two versions of the *Annales* differ quite considerably.

²⁷ *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 792, 794, ed. Kurze, pp. 91, 94, 95, trans. King, pp. 124, 89, 126.

allusion, in the contemporaneous Lorsch Annals for 792, where she is strongly implicated in the revolt of Pippin – her own son.²⁸ Wife number 5, Liutgard, has been demoted in recent historiography, but I propose to keep her on the list not least because the *Annales regni Francorum* (both versions) formally note the death of “the lady Liutgard, his [the king’s] wife (*domna Liutgarda coniunx*)”.²⁹ She made no other impact whatsoever in these or any other annals. But that fact in light of the foregoing evidence ought not to be considered significant. Alcuin’s letters depict her performing what may be considered queenly tasks (distributing treasure, and taking her step-daughters to the Carolingian shrine of Nivelles).³⁰ Wife 1, as noted, does not register in the *Annales regni Francorum*, and is only indirectly mentioned in another set of annals; and the same points are true of Wife 2, the unnamed Lombard.

What needs to be stressed is that if we are looking for much information on queens, or on any other women, in the Frankish annalistic evidence from Charlemagne’s reign (768–814), we shall be disappointed, but for two cases: Hildegard – and I am going to register serious qualifications there – and Fastrada.³¹ Hildegard is remarkable, not for the amount of information we are given (her marriage is unmentioned in these sources, as are the births of all her children, save indirectly that of the baby girl born in Italy), but for the fact that the only two items, the death-notice apart, show her going with or to join her husband in Italy, both times, as

²⁸ *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a. 792, ed. Pertz, MGH SS I, 35; see Nelson, ‘Opposition to Charlemagne’, the 2008 Annual Lecture, German Historical Institute (London, 2009), pp. 5-34, at pp. 11-12.

²⁹ *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 800, ed. Kurze, pp. 110-1, trans. King, pp. 92, 130.

³⁰ Alcuin, Epp. 50, 96, 102, 150, 190, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. IV (Berlin, 1895), 93-4, 140, 149, 246, 317. I am not entirely persuaded by the arguments of M. Richter, ‘Karl der Große und seine Ehefrauen’, in F.-R. Erkens ed., *Karl der Große und das Erbe der Kulturen* (Berlin, 2001), pp. 7-24, at p. 23, or M. Hartmann, ‘*Concubina vel regina?* – Zu einigen Ehefrauen und Konkubinen der Karolingischen Könige’, *Deutsches Archiv*, 63 (2007), 545-67, at 559-60. I intend to deal with the question of Liutgard’s status elsewhere.

³¹ In the case of just one of Charlemagne’s daughters, Rotrud, her betrothal and its breaking-off, and, much later, her death, are noted: *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 786, 788, 810 (only here is she named), ed. Kurze, pp. 75, 83, 131, trans. King, pp. 120, 122, 102. Rotrud’s betrothal and death are, again quite exceptionally, mentioned in other annals: pp. King, 134, 166. Liutberga, wife of Duke Tassilo and daughter of King Desiderius, is mentioned s.a. 788, ed. Kurze, pp. 80-2, trans. King, pp. 86-7, 121: see Nelson, ‘Making a difference’, ch. X, pp. 184-6. For the baptism of Hildegard’s daughter Gisela, see above, p. 13.

we know from other sources, heavily pregnant, and both times in winter. That she travelled regularly with Charlemagne is a distinctive feature of this marriage which has been highlighted only recently by a clever historian piecing together annalistic and other scraps.³² From the anonymous *Life* of Louis the Pious, we know she gave birth to Louis and his twin brother in Aquitaine, where she had accompanied her husband on the first stage of a campaign destined to end, after a lengthy detour in Spain, at Roncesvaux in the Pyrenees on 15 August, but childbirth on 16 April kept Hildegard out of that debacle.³³ Set those in the context of nine children in eleven years, and you realise that, given Charlemagne's frequent travels on campaign, she must have done a lot of fellow-travelling. She had what I can only call a heroic maternal track record. In later centuries Hildegard was revered as a saint.³⁴ The remainder of what we know of her from non-annalistic evidence rather predictably concerns her maternity and her piety. I am surprised that no nineteenth-century historian said of her, as Reinhold Pauli said in 1853 of the mother of King Alfred of Wessex, Osburh, about whom next to nothing is known, "Her death was quiet, as her life had been: she had lived as the mother of her children and not as a queen".³⁵

Remarkable in noisier ways is Fastrada. Here again the annals' hints are borne out by other evidence.³⁶ When Charlemagne went to war, Fastrada kept the home-fires burning, holding a court together, keeping the palace (wherever located) in good order. She participated in rather a lot of Carolingian ruling, which was about keeping a watchful eye on the children, girls as well as boys, so far as that was possible, giving judgement, and distributing patronage: all activities that naturally stir up envy and resentment, and mean that you can rather easily become a scapegoat *in your own lifetime* for your husband's miscalculations or sheer absence from the scene, but especially once you are conveniently dead. That, I'm afraid, was Fastrada's fate. Where authority and gender are concerned, these annals turn out to suggest more than they actually show – but the suggestive, read alongside other evidence, has indicated that in this area any argument from silence is weak.

³² Stratmann, *Königin*, p. 100.

³³ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris* cc. 2-3, ed. E. Tremp, MGH SSRG 64 (Hannover: Hahn, 1995), pp. 286, 288.

³⁴ Hartmann, *Königin*, p. 215.

³⁵ Reinhold Pauli, *The Life of Alfred the Great*, trans. B. Thorpe (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1853), pp. 52-3. These words were of course written before Queen Victoria's track-record, 1840–61, as wife and mother, could be fully appraised.

³⁶ See Nelson, 'The siting of the Council', as cited above, n. 25.

I have one last point to make about *early* Carolingian annals. It is a response to an idea recently proposed by Rosamond McKitterick: it would be impossible to discuss this subject without mentioning her, since our themes are among those on which she has made huge contributions of her own.³⁷ In her recent book on Charlemagne she offered the following suggestion:

a scenario that has not to my knowledge been considered... is that of the queen being responsible for the production of the royal annals or overseeing their production... The responsibility of women to carry the memory of their family's history has been documented elsewhere in the middle ages. It may also, therefore, have been part of the Carolingian queen's role...³⁸

Rosamond challenges all-comers "to prove that this scenario is false". Well, given the gaps and silences in an early medievalist's evidence, proving anything false (or for that matter true) is usually quite hard. But what the evidence for the queens in the *Annales regni Francorum* seems to me to suggest is great unevenness in the visibility of these women and of their treatment.³⁹ Given that court chaplains produced the annals, the unique yet brief and very relative prominence of Fastrada therein could be explained, not by any quasi-institutionalised arrangement but by her closeness, probably rooted in a kin-tie, to the chaplain Riculf, who was consecrated archbishop of Mainz on 4 March 787, during Charlemagne's absence, and in 794 was to organise Fastrada's funeral at St Alban's Mainz: perhaps the aftermath of the 785 revolt nurtured counter-assertions of East Frankish loyalism with Fastrada's powerful East Frankish family at the forefront.⁴⁰ It's hard, in any event, to see how the hypothesis of queenly authorship (using that word in the broadest sense) helps account for the content of these annals in so far as that concerns queens or related topics: the proffered scenario, if it were to have any such analytic

³⁷ McKitterick, 'Political ideology in Carolingian historiography', in *The Uses of the Past in the early Middle Ages*, eds Y. Hen and M. Innes (CUP, 2000), 162-74; eadem, *History and Memory*, pp. 28-59, 120-32, and passim.

³⁸ McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (CUP, 2009), p. 48.

³⁹ A point made in a broader context by Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, 1-3, and *Gender*, ch. X, passim, taking cues from M. Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 65, 94-7, 130-67.

⁴⁰ For the connexion between Fastrada and Riculf, see Staab, 'Die Königin Fastrada', 186-7; see also Nelson, 'Siting', 158-9.

implications, should suggest specific emphases on queens and their children, natal families, and special relationships. What other women did in other medieval times and places to “carry family memory” (which often consisted of the memory of their natal families) is not strictly relevant to annals that are gentile before they are dynastic, and does not in any case seem to have any bearing on the material included in the *Annales regni Francorum*. To my way of thinking, the tempo of style-change in these annals, in 799 or 814, for instance, had more to do with changing personnel in the palace, and perhaps hypothetical changing relations with court-connected ecclesiastical institutions (not only St-Denis), than with queenly careers which sheer lack of evidence makes very difficult to reconstruct.⁴¹ Here, in short, as with any new proposal about women’s agency in the past, the burden of proof lies squarely on the proposer.

I will shift the focus from queens in the *Annales regni Francorum* and give an instance of a woman mentioned in a set of local annals: a contemporary record seemingly atypical only because its context – an attempted marriage-alliance that went wrong – was of a kind so very seldom recorded. I will point first, though, to another text from Charlemagne’s reign which implies that such attempts occurred quite often, but that along with potential for amity, they carried risks of enmity. In making a division of the realm between his sons in 806 (for future implementation), Charlemagne himself asserted the value of such intermarriage:

If women, as customarily happens, are sought in marriage between regions and realms (*partes et regna*), they must not be denied to those who ask, but it must be lawful for them to be given and received mutually and elites of different peoples (*populi*) to be allied between themselves through such marriage-ties.⁴²

The case in point is recorded, uniquely, in annals very probably produced at the monastery of Murbach in Alsace, borrowing material from a set of annals from Lorsch in East Francia (Lorsch’s patron was St Nazarius, hence the modern title of *Annales Nazariani*), and the manuscript suggests entries for the 780s recorded more or less contemporaneously.⁴³ The entry under 785 says:

⁴¹ Staab, ‘Die Königin Fastrada’, 188-99, goes as far as possible in reconstructing Fastrada’s itinerary from charter evidence.

⁴² Capitulary no. 45, c. 12, ed. A. Boretius, MGH Capitularia regum Francorum I (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), p. 129.

⁴³ K. Brunner, *Oppositionelle Gruppen im Karolingerreich* (Vienna, 1979), pp. 93, 113-4; idem, ‘Auf den Spuren verlorener Traditionen’, *Peritia*, 2 (1983), 1-22; H. Hummer, *Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe. Alsace and the Frankish*

a Thuringian noble had betrothed his daughter to a Frank... according to the law of the Franks. [The king] sent the Thuringian an envoy to say that he must hand over the Frank's bride at the time appointed. But the Thuringian treated the king's order with contempt: not only did he refuse to promise to hand her over but he gathered together almost all his Thuringian neighbours and they wanted to defend themselves from the king of the Franks.

Such particular grievances, although never recorded in the *Annales regni Francorum*, are very likely to have been among the causes of the rebellion of 785 “in regions and realms”. Charlemagne’s marriage to the East Frank Fastrada had been in part an attempt to head off those regional resentments before they flared into revolt. The critical moment in the Thuringian story can be identified as the shift, in the final sentence I have just quoted, from a personal or familial cause to a gentile one (although neither the bride nor the father is named), in which Thuringian men as such identified with the injured father. Charlemagne too felt injured, as guardian of the rights and interests of his men: “mightily angered”, he sent in *satellites* who “in wise and trusty fashion (*fiducialiter*) devastated [the rebel Thuringians’] estates and properties”.⁴⁴ Reactions were contingent on particular interests: the author of the contemporary Lorsch Annals attributed the 785 revolt to the East Franks, which need not mean that the author of the *Annales Nazariani* was wrong, but rather that some Franks and some Thuringians were right, from their own local and group perspectives. Behind and beyond those, more basic imperatives determined responses: in the Thuringians’ case, the need to prove themselves men defending their own women, in the case of some East Franks, their own customary law, both being fundamentals of masculinity, against the aggressive lordship of the alpha-male Charlemagne. The Thuringian bride and her father, like the Frankish groom, were nameless in these annals: but no names were necessary, for they were also types, ideal or the reverse, depending on the eye of the beholder.

I now move into the mid-ninth century, to consider the *Annals of Fulda* (*Annales Fuldenses*), produced, in part, at the monastery of Fulda and at some points showing Fulda contacts, and the *Annals of St-Bertin* (*Annales Bertiniani*), so called not because they were produced at the monastery of St-Bertin but because an early manuscript was made there.⁴⁵ These annals

Realm, 600 – 1000 (CUP, 2005), pp. 113-5; McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 66-89; Nelson, ‘Opposition’, 13.

⁴⁴ *Annales Nazariani*, s.a. 786, ed. Pertz, MGH SS I, 41.

⁴⁵ For details of these annals’ production, authors, and likely audiences, see the translators’ respective introductions in the volumes cited in the Appendix below.

can be strongly contrasted, in as much as one set was in part monastic, the other the work of secular clergy. These annals can be compared, because they were, from c. 830 onwards, continuations of the *Annales regni Francorum* and both sets show intermittent court connexions. My hypothesis of authorial practice here in the decades from the 830s to the 880s is that annalists collected material and fitted it into patterns where juxtaposition allowed readers to make connexions and see new meanings. Annals pushing at genre-bounds show such patterns, as well as being longer, and containing more varied material, including information on women other than hussies, matrons, or queens. The *Annals of Fulda* were very probably being produced at Mainz “from the 840s onwards”.⁴⁶ The 847 entry on the prophetess Thiota (or Theoda) points to a Mainz connexion:⁴⁷

At this time a certain woman from Alemannia called Thiota, a false prophetess, came to Mainz; she had disturbed the diocese of Bishop Salomo [I of Constance] not a little with her prophecies. For she said that she knew a definite date for the ending of the world, and other things known only to God, as if they had been divinely revealed to her; she predicted that the world would see its last day that same year. As a result, many of the common people of both sexes were struck by fear; they came to her with gifts and commended themselves to her prayers. Still worse, men in holy orders, ignoring the teaching of the Church, followed her as a teacher sent from heaven. She was brought into the presence of the bishops at St Alban’s [Mainz]. After she had been carefully questioned about her claims, she admitted that a certain priest had coached her in them and that she had made them in hope of gain. For this she was publicly flogged by the judgement of the synod and ignominiously stripped of the ministry of preaching which she had unreasonably taken up and presumed to claim against the custom of the church (*mos ecclesiasticum*); thus shamed, she finally put an end to her prophesying.⁴⁸

The remarkable thing to note about this story is that it is told at all, leaving readers to muse on the unreasonableness of this woman’s preaching against custom, with the implicit possible corollaries that custom *might* be overridden by truth, and that a woman’s preaching *might have*

⁴⁶ T. Reuter, *The Annals of Fulda*, Introduction, p. 8.

⁴⁷ Appendix, Text 3.

⁴⁸ See Nelson, ‘Women and the Word’, *Studies in Church History*, 27 (1990), 53-78, at 73-4. Compare the interpretation of stories of possession by an evil spirit, flood, and plague, in *Annals of Fulda*, s.a. 858, 875, and 878, briefly discussed in M. Costambeys, M. Innes and S. MacLean, *The Carolingian World* (CUP, 2011), pp. 231-2.

been reasonable. If you are stripped of a ministry, must you not have been invested with one? This story has been read in terms of straight ecclesiastical “condemnation” of “women’s public roles”, illustrating women’s “waning influence” in the Church.⁴⁹ Obviously there is heavy-handed authority here, and some misogyny; but a more complicated reading would be that this woman was believed by some to have been authorised, and that this raised dangerously competing conceptions of order. There are juxtapositions on either side of this: the 848 annal tells of the condemnation of Gottschalk the Saxon, teacher of the heresy of Predestination, but the tone here could reflect some sympathy with the condemned. Juxtaposed in the same 847 annal is the story of the daughter of Lothar – another unnamed woman – abducted by a vassal of Lothar’s brother Charles.⁵⁰ The sincere but unsuccessful efforts of Louis, the third brother, to effect a reconciliation between Carolingians, occupy almost all the remainder of this annal. What is the annalist’s purpose? The clearest message is of a world at risk of being turned upside down, an emperor’s paternal authority flouted, he himself exposed as weak, by a younger man of inferior rank, who despite having earlier held a countship, had been reduced to a vassal in the fall-out from the civil wars of the early 840s. The vassal might do the honourable thing in marrying the Carolingian’s daughter. But for Lothar this could not repair the breach of trust and honour. At the court of the East Frankish king, which constituted these annals’ target-audience in the 840s, sympathies may have been divided along generational lines, with elders aligning themselves with the emperor, young men with the vassal. These narratives were “rhetorical set-pieces”. But within the annals-genre they also do indicate things specific in revealing the fault-lines running through royal families and straddling the boundaries of kingdoms recently-established (at Verdun in 843), and also in spurring readers and listeners to serious engagement in moral debate. The world of the later 840s was new-made, arrangements provisional: people who had had to take sides still looked for bearings. Against old notions of marriage by parental and family arrangement were pitted new

⁴⁹ J. T. Schulenburg, ‘Female Sanctity: Public and Private Roles c. 500–1100’, in M. Erler and M. Kowaleski, eds, *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988), pp. 102-25, at p. 116; S. Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500–900* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), p. 145.

⁵⁰ S. Reynolds, ‘Carolingian Elopements as a Sidelight on Counts and Vassals’, in B. Nagy and M. Sebök, eds, *The Man of Many Devices Who Wandered Full Many Ways: Festschrift in Honor of János Bak* (Budapest: Central European UP, 1999), pp. 340-46.