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ERIK GOOSMANN

## ARISTOCRATIC EXPLOITATION OF ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY IN THE NINTH CENTURY

The Case of the *villa* Gendt

### Introduction

Towards the end of the twelfth century the monks of Lorsch composed a property book known as the *Codex Laureshamensis*<sup>1</sup>. The compilers occasionally included older charter collections, if they encountered them in the monastery's archive. One such collection consisted of nineteen records and was added in the form of short *notitiae* under the collective heading »On Gendt« (*De Gannita*)<sup>2</sup>. This small collection had probably originated in the second half of the ninth century and its inclusion in the twelfth-century *Codex Laureshamensis* marked the final step of its evolution<sup>3</sup>. While there is ample reason to suspect that the content, order and form of the documents in this collection had been adapted, and sometimes manipulated, over time, it remains difficult to reconstruct the various stages of its development between its ninth-century inception and its current, twelfth-century state. However, because several of the documents in the collection relate, and occasionally refer, to documents situated elsewhere in the *Codex Laureshamensis*, it is worthwhile to study the Gendt dossier in its twelfth-century context<sup>4</sup>. Overall, this small dossier testifies to a series of property donations by men and women of mixed social rank, ranging from members of the local proprietary elite to the king and his leading

1 Karl GLÖCKNER (ed.), *Codex Laureshamensis*, vol. 1–3, Darmstadt 1929–1936. Hereafter: CL. A digital facsimile can be accessed online: [http://archivum-laureshamense-digital.de/view/saw\\_mainz72](http://archivum-laureshamense-digital.de/view/saw_mainz72) (last accessed: 28–07–2017). – I would like to thank Mayke de Jong, Frans Theuws, Marco Mostert, Carine van Rhijn and Karl Heidecker for commenting on earlier versions of this article.

2 I distinguish between diplomas/charters, abbreviated charters and *notitiae*. The abbreviated charter and the *notitia* are both derived from the charter, but are much shorter in length. In addition, the *notitia* describes a transaction in the third person (objective mode), instead of the first (personal mode). Georges DECLERCQ, *Originals and Cartularies: The Organization of Archival Memory (Ninth–Eleventh Centuries)*, in Karl HEIDECKER (ed.), *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, Turnhout 2000 (*Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy*, 5), p. 156; Karl HEIDECKER, *Charters as Texts and as Objects in Judicial Actions: The Example of the Carolingian Private Charters of St Gall*, in: Marco MOSTERT, Paul BARNWELL (ed.), *Medieval Legal Process. Physical, Spoken and Written Performance in the Middle Ages*, Turnhout 2011, p. 48.

3 CL I, nos. 97–118.

4 Erik GOOSMANN, *Reconstructing the Carolingian record: the property of Lorsch in the Low Countries*, in: Claire DE CAZANOVE (ed.), *Cartulaires: témoins et acteurs de »mises en ordre« (IX<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, forthcoming.

courtiers. What they have in common is their focus on Gendt, a rural estate in the *pagus* Betuwe, eight kilometres east of Nijmegen on the opposite bank of the River Waal.

Between 793 and 866 the *villa* Gendt transformed from an ordinary rural estate into a regional administrative centre for the monastery of Lorsch, from which the monastery controlled a vast conglomeration of properties located in the central Dutch river area. Had it not been for the survival of the *Codex Laureshamensis*, Gendt's ninth-century prominence would have gone unnoticed. Archaeological settlement research has also yielded little evidence for Gendt's prominent status. While there is ample evidence that this site was inhabited during the early Middle Ages (including, but not limited to, the discovery of a Merovingian cemetery), it hardly stands out against other sites in the Betuwe, which by early medieval standards was a very densely populated region<sup>5</sup>. Excavations at the site of Gendt's former parish church have uncovered the remains of an older Romanesque building, but nothing specifically »Carolingian«<sup>6</sup>. The settlement's location on the bank of a mayor river might explain these material lacunae, as river banks were unstable and the region around it subject to occasional riverine floods<sup>7</sup>. Gendt's Carolingian history is therefore derived mostly from the records preserved in the *Codex Laureshamensis*. Within the Gendt dossier, the earliest reference to Gendt dates to 793. Property transactions ended in 866, when Lorsch gave the estate and everything associated with it as a benefice to Ansfrid, count of the Betuwe<sup>8</sup>. However, Gendt resurfaces in the *Codex* in 1024, when King Conrad II gave the monastery full jurisdiction over the *mancipia* of Gendt, which is now designated as a *curtis*<sup>9</sup>.

It is not the aim of this article to study these transactions from the institutional perspective of the monastery, despite its role as the main beneficiary in practically all the extant documents. The focus shall be on the donor community instead, which, as I will argue, may have assigned their property rights to Lorsch, yet continued to exploit in various ways what had now technically become ecclesiastical property – thereby adding a very material dimension to Annette Weiner's famous dictum that

- 5 Pieter MODDERMAN, Het oudheidkundig onderzoek van de oude woongronden in de Over- en Neder Betuwe, in: Oudheidkundige mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden 30 (1949), p. 66–93; Willem WILLEMS, Romans and Batavians. A regional study in the Dutch Eastern River area, I, in: Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek 31 (1981), p. 7–217; ID., Romans and Batavians. A regional study in the Dutch Eastern River area, II, *ibid.* 34 (1984), p. 39–331. For a summary of the archaeological record up to 1983, see: Wim OTEMAN, Het geheim achter scherf en bot, in: Yvonne DE BOER-RAVESTEIN et al. (ed.), Gendt tussen stad en dorp, Amersfoort 2008, p. 33–40; Nico WILLEMSE, Ontstaan, bewoning en archeologie van Gendt en omgeving, in: Yvonne DE BOER-RAVESTEIN et al. (ed.), Gendt tussen Kraaijenbosch en Knienebol, Amersfoort 2013, p. 9–18.
- 6 Cf. Yvonne DE BOER-RAVESTEIN, De oudste kerk van Gendt, in: ID. et al. (ed.), Gendt tussen stad en dorp (as in n. 5), p. 49–54.
- 7 Aldo JANSSEN, Gendt, een rivierendorp, in: DE BOER-RAVESTEIN et al. (ed.), Gendt tussen stad en dorp (as in n.5), p. 13–26; ID., De Gendtse Waard opnieuw bekeken. De kaarten van Gorissen vergeleken met grondboringen, in: DE BOER-RAVESTEIN et al., Gendt tussen Kraaijenbosch en Knienebol (as in n. 5), p. 27–42.
- 8 CL I, no. 112 is an exception: a donation by Itda was recorded in Gendt in 891/2.
- 9 CL I, no. 96.

the ritual of gift exchange entailed a »paradox of keeping while giving«<sup>10</sup>. The written sources practically force the reader to situate Lorsch at the heart of these transactions, but this institutional perspective is merely one aspect of a more complex history in which the laity played a much more prominent role than the extant sources give them credit for.

In a gift economy not all deals are final. The act of giving did not end one's influence over the object of the transaction<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, gift-giving was of central importance in early medieval society, as is evident from the fact that the majority of the extant transaction records are concerned with property donations. However, there are numerous biases that have to be kept in mind. For example, charters and their derivatives were composed in a highly formulaic prose. Especially in the east of the Frankish world, charters were often composed by ecclesiastical institutions, which also preserved them and, over time, exposed them to various processes of selection and manipulation (i. e. restructurings, abridgments, rephrasing etc.)<sup>12</sup>. To study ecclesiastical property from the perspective of the local donor community therefore implies going against the grain of the sources. As a result, some aspects of this study will unavoidably remain conjectural. However, in choosing to focus not on a distant monolithic institution, but on the actual actors »on site«, at the very least forces us to think about the incentives and strategies that local proprietors developed in order to protect their interests in a world rife with political and social tension.

In what follows, I shall first briefly introduce the evidence, namely the *Codex Laurens-hamensis* and the Gendt dossier, followed by a reconstruction of how the *villa* Gendt developed into a regional centre for the monastery of Lorsch. I shall argue that Gendt's transformation was not a gradual process, but a concerted effort by a community of donors who can be identified collectively as the regional elite, though their individual social standing may have varied greatly. This community, moreover, revolved around a family that Reinhard Wenskus has identified as a sub-branch of the Immedings, whose leading members transcended local and regional politics and operated at the level of the Carolingian, and later Ottonian, courts<sup>13</sup>. Two men stand

10 Annette WEINER, *Inalienable possessions: the paradox of keeping-while-giving*, Berkeley, CA 1992.

11 Ian WOOD, Review article: landscapes compared, in: *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007), p. 227–232; ID., *Entrusting Western Europe to the Church, 400–750*, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, 23 (2013), p. 37–74.

12 Rosamond MCKITTERICK, *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, Cambridge 1995, p. 77–126; Patrick GEARY, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium*, Princeton, NJ 1996, p. 81–115; Matthew INNES, *Framing the Carolingian Economy*, in: *Journal of Agrarian Change* 9 (2009), p. 42–58, at p. 53. On the use of documents by the laity, see the contributions in Warren BROWN et al. (ed.), *Documentary culture and the laity in the early Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2013; Patrick GEARY, *From Charter to Cartulary: From Archival Practice to History*, in: Robert MAXWELL (ed.), *Representing history, 900–1300. Art, music, history*, University Park, Pa 2010, p. 181–186, at p. 185; Alexandra WALSAM, *The social history of the archive: record-keeping in early modern Europe*, in: *Past and Present*, supplement 11 (2016), p. 9–48.

13 Gerd ALTHOFF, *Immedinger*, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 5, Stuttgart 1999, cols 389–390; Reinhard WENSKUS, *Sächsischer Stammesadel und fränkischer Reichsadel*, Göttingen 1976, p. 115–155; Johanna VAN WINTER, *Die Hamaländer Grafen als Angehörige der Reichsaristokratie im 10. Jahrhundert*, in: *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 44 (1980), p. 16–46; EAD., *Ansfried en Dirk, twee namen uit de Nederlandse geschiedenis van de 10e en 11e eeuw*, in: *Naamkunde* 13 (1981).

out in particular: Gerward, a monk of Lorsch and formerly a court librarian under Louis the Pious, and Ansfrid, count of the palace and count of the Betuwe during the reigns of the two Lothars. Because a family's social status largely resulted from its access to (landed) resources, both men would have been hard pressed to secure, if not increase, their income, which was based on agricultural production.

### Lorsch, the *Codex Laureshamensis*, and the »Gendt Dossier«

Lorsch was founded in 764. In less than two decades, it became one of the leading monastic and intellectual centres of the Carolingian world<sup>14</sup>. The monastery owed its success to its mix of powerful secular and spiritual patrons: shortly after having been founded by the prominent Ruperting family, it acquired the prestigious relics of the Roman martyr Nazarius. In 772, the monastery came under royal protection, which further boosted its prestige. Across the realm, men and women with the means to participate in networks of gift exchange began donating properties to Lorsch's patron saint, thereby entering into the monastery's influential network of spiritual and secular patronage<sup>15</sup>. Lorsch was able to expand its patrimony at an exponential rate well into the second half of the ninth century, accumulating properties from the Frisian coast in the north to the Alps in the south. However, towards the end of the century this surge of donations ended. From the tenth century we know of only a handful of, for the most part local, donations<sup>16</sup>. A variety of factors, including political fragmentation, property alienation and mismanagement, caused Lorsch's golden age to end, ushering in a period of financial destitution<sup>17</sup>. In the centuries that followed, Lorsch's abbots searched for ways to reclaim their monastery's former wealth and grandeur. Perhaps the most outspoken expression of this restoration attempt was the composition of the *Codex Laureshamensis*.

The *Codex Laureshamensis* consists of 229 folios (measuring 46 x 33,5 cm), divided in 30 quires. It contains close to four thousand transaction records. The manuscript is divided into two sections: the first 35 folios (5 quires) form a chronicle cartulary, containing in chronological order the copies of the community's most prestigious

- 14 Bernhard BISCHOFF, *Die Abtei Lorsch im Spiegel ihrer Handschriften*, Munich 1989 (Geschichtsblätter für den Kreis Bergstraße. Sonderband, 10); Helmut REIMITZ, Transformations of Late Antiquity: the writing and re-writing of Church history at the monastery of Lorsch, c. 800, in: Clemens GANTNER, Rosamond MCKITTERICK, Sven MEEDER, *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe*, Cambridge 2015.
- 15 Marios COSTAMBEYS, *Power and Patronage in Early Medieval Italy. Local Society, Italian Politics and the Abbey of Farfa, c. 700–900*, Cambridge 2007, p. 48–55; Bert THISSEN, *Die Besitz der Reichsabtei Lorsch in der villa Geizefurt*, in: Franz-Josef HETJENS (ed.), *Weeze und der Raum an Niers und Kendel im Mittelalter*, Weeze 2008, p. 44–100, at p. 94; Matthew INNES, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages. The middle Rhine valley, 400–1000*, Cambridge 2000 (Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought, 4/47), p. 18–34.
- 16 Heinrich BÜTTNER, *Lorsch und St. Gallen*, in: ID., *Johannes DUFT, Lorsch und St. Gallen in der Frühzeit. Zwei Vorträge*, Konstanz 1965, p. 5–20, at p. 9–11; Josef SEMMLER, *Lorsch in der politischen und kirchlichen Welt der Karolinger*, in: Hermann SCHEFFERS (ed.), *Das Lorsch Evangeliar. Eine Zimelie der Buchkunst des abendländischen Frühmittelalters*, Darmstadt 2000, p. 11–22.
- 17 An early sign of this can be seen in CL I, c. 75. More systematic decline appears to have set in in the eleventh century: CL I, c. 120.

benefactors (i. e. kings, prelates and aristocrats, who are addressed as *spectabiles viri*). These documents were supplemented with short historical notes that enhanced the cartulary's narrative structure, effectively turning it into an institutional history. The remainder of the manuscript consists mostly of abbreviated documents that record the (often much smaller) donations by Lorsch's less prominent patrons, to whom the manuscript refers as *fideles Dei*. Contrary to the acts in the cartulary section, these records were geographically organized, suggesting a more practical or administrative function<sup>18</sup>.

The formation of the *Codex* probably ushered in the end of the monastery's original archive. But whereas contemporary monks may have considered their property book an adequate replacement for the original documents, social historians can only mourn the loss of all the contextual data that was filtered out through the processes of selection and copying. The twelfth-century compilers, on the contrary, were only interested in those documents that could confirm the monastery's legal claim to a certain property. Hence the *Codex* is predominantly made up of donation records. Other types of documents from which ownership could be deduced were only incorporated in situations where a straightforward donation charter was unavailable<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, the compilers only copied what they considered to be the »essentials« of a charter: those sections that could be used in a contemporary legal context to support the monastery's ownership claims. Royal diplomas were an exception, and were copied almost verbatim. This dramatic transformation in archival practice, as Georges Declercq explained, should be seen in connection with »a different attitude towards the nature of the document itself«<sup>20</sup>. It also resulted from the gradual transition from a gift economy to a market economy, which significantly altered society's understanding of concepts such as property and ownership. As mentioned, in a gift economy, the act of giving was not seen as a finite act, »but rather as one element in a series of negotiations«, which made ownership a very fluid concept<sup>21</sup>. In a market economy, however, this ongoing negotiation between two or more parties, by which social hierarchies were established, confirmed or altered, no longer stood at the forefront of a transaction. Instead, transactions came to revolve much more strenuously around the object(s) being exchanged, resulting in a much more absolute, or finite, understanding of ownership. Thus, while the context of the *Codex Laureshamensis* may have been »at least as much that of institutional identity and the preservation of memory as that of convenient consultation and the defence of property rights«, the

18 GEARY, *Phantoms* (as in n. 12), c. 3; DECLERCQ, *Originals and Cartularies* (as in n. 2). See also: Rosamond MCKITTERICK, *The Uses of Literacy in Carolingian and post-Carolingian Europe: Literate Conventions of Memory*, in: *Scrivere e leggere nell'alto medioevo*, vol. 1, Spoleto 2012 (Settimane di studio della Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 59/1), p. 179–208, with discussion of the *Werden* cartulary at p. 189–198.

19 INNES, *State and society* (as in n. 15), p. 14. Compare for example with the wealth and variety of the transactions as preserved in tenth-century Cluny: Barbara ROSENWEIN, *To be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: the social meaning of Cluny's property, 909–1049*, Ithaca NY 1989.

20 DECLERCQ, *Originals and Cartularies* (as in n. 2), p. 163.

21 WOOD, *Entrusting Western Europe* (as in n. 11), p. 62. For an overview on the debate on gift-giving, see: Arnoud-Jan A. BIJSTERVELD, *Do ut des: gift giving, memoria, and conflict management in the medieval Low Countries*, Hilversum 2007, p. 17–62.

selection and manipulation criteria applied by the compilers of this property book above all served to facilitate the latter<sup>22</sup>.

The Gendt dossier begins with the heading *De Gannita* (»On Gendt«), which is followed by a short introduction and twenty-two concise *notitiae*<sup>23</sup>. At first glance, its position within the manuscript is somewhat odd. Despite its modest format and the modest social status of most of the donors involved, this small collection of records had nonetheless been embedded in the prestigious chronicle cartulary, because it was intended to function as an appendix to the preceding diploma by King Conrad II (1024)<sup>24</sup>. According to this diploma, Conrad assigned the monastery full legal jurisdiction over the serfs associated with the *curtis* Gendt. Therefore, it was the primary function of the Gendt dossier to define the extent of this eleventh-century privilege, with the implicit claim that the properties listed all fell under Gendt's jurisdiction. What is less clear, however, is whether the extant composition of the Gendt dossier still resembles the situation in the ninth century, the early eleventh century, or whether it was a twelfth-century fiction designed to expand Lorsch's influence in the Lower Rhine region.

A close inspection of the dossier's content reveals that it has been manipulated over time. The extant *notitiae* in the dossier can be divided into three groups: a small group of documents that record the monastery's earliest acquisitions in the Lower Rhine area (772–813); a core group centred on the *villa* Gendt; and, lastly, a group centred on the *villa* Empel, now part of the city of 's-Hertogenbosch, at the confluence of the rivers Dommel and Meuse (see fig. 1)<sup>25</sup>. We might also identify a fourth group consisting of records that are not included in the Gendt dossier, but have been copied elsewhere in the *Codex*, yet closely match the dossier's geographical and chronological range.

Of these four groups, the ninth-century core group relating specifically to Gendt originally had been compiled as a supplement to a different charter, albeit for exactly the same purpose as that for which it was later reused in the context of Conrad's diploma. As I shall discuss in more detail below, in 866 Count Ansfrid received Gendt as a benefice »and all the things of the aforementioned martyr Nazarius in the places or lands that depend on [Gendt] and which have hitherto served said monastery«<sup>26</sup>. In all likelihood, the monks therefore compiled the original Gendt dossier to keep

22 DECLERCQ, *Originals and cartularies* (as in n. 2), p. 149.

23 Three of the *notitiae* in the dossier refer to transactions for which the chronicle cartulary also contains a verbatim copy of the original charter. Two *notitiae* record a transaction that can also be found in an abbreviated charter at the end of the copybook. Lastly, there are several abbreviated charters in the copybook that refer to property in the Netherlands, but are not present in the Gendt dossier. For an overview, see fig. 1.

24 CL I, no. 96. See also: *ibid.*, c. 36.

25 The inclusion of a short reference to a tenth-century legal dispute between the abbot of Lorsch and the bishop of Liège, in whose diocese Empel was situated, suggests that the Empel material originally constituted a separate dossier. Today Empel is a district within the city of 's-Hertogenbosch. The »Empel dossier« may have been composed to strengthen the abbot's claim, as argued in GOOSMANN, *Reconstructing* (as in n. 4). Cf. THISSEN, *Besitz der Reichsabtei Lorsch* (as in n. 15), p. 95.

26 CL I, no. 33: *Seu in quibuscumque ibidem locis aut terriis consistant res prefati mris. Christi, que hactenus servierunt prefato monasterio.*

track of the properties they had given out as a benefice<sup>27</sup>. This connection between the original Gendt dossier and Ansfrid's transaction with Lorsch is strengthened further by a note that the twelfth-century compiler of the *Codex* included after having transcribed the *prestaría* document confirming Ansfrid's benefice: »Regarding the donations in and around Gendt, because they have been bestowed under various kings and by various faithful of God, we have refrained from copying these at this time, so that under King Conrad II, whose donation in that place was the last, we may order all of them in one series<sup>28</sup>.«

Together, these records enable us to track in considerable detail the transformation of a ninth-century rural estate in the Betuwe into a monastic administrative centre for Lorsch in the Lower Rhine region. That Gendt eventually came to function as a regional administrative centre is suggested by the fact that from 814 onwards almost all transactions in the region were conducted in Gendt. Also, an eleventh-century diploma identifies Gendt as a *curtis* and a surviving twelfth-century rent list states that the monastery's dependents in the region were expected to make their payment in Gendt<sup>29</sup>.

Edition	Date	Actor(s)	Transaction type	Context	Loc. of transaction
CL III, no. 3797 <sup>30</sup>	25.08.772	Hohward	Donation	(Pre-)Empel	Lorsch
CL I, no. 98 (= CL III, no. 3801)	31.08.772	Gerrich and Ratgart	Donation	Coastal/unrelated	Lorsch
CL III, no. 3799	21.03.774	Folrad	Donation	Coastal/unrelated	?
CL I, no. 97 (= CL III, no. 3798)	16.08.776	Godebert (et con.)	Donation	Coastal/unrelated	Lorsch
CL III, no. 3809 <sup>31</sup>	<815	Gullint	Donation	(Pre-)Empel	
CL I, no. 99	793	Walther and Richlint	Donation	(Pre-)Gendt	Lorsch
CL I, no. 100	800	Ruthard, <i>vir illuster</i>	Exchange	Gendt	Lorsch
CL I, no. 101	814	Gerward, <i>clericus</i>	Donation	Gendt	Aachen
CL I, no. 102	814	Adalward	Donation	Gendt	Gendt
CL I, no. 103	814	Lantward	Donation	Gendt	Gendt
CL I, no. 104	814	Waldo	Donation	Gendt	?

27 For arguments, see: GOOSMANN, Reconstructing (as in n. 4).

28 CL I, c. 36: *Donationes vero in Gannita et quaquaversum illuc aspicientibus, quia sub diversis regibus et a diversis dei fidelibus co(n)latae sunt, interim transscribere supersedimus, ut postmodum sub rege Cuonrado IIo cuius extrema ibidem donatio fuit, omnes in unam seriem disponamus*. See also the introduction to the Gendt dossier (ibid., c. 97): *Locus exigit, ut deputum promissi nostri exsolventes, donations in Gannita cum suis appendentiis describamus*.

29 CL I, no. 96 and III, no. 3817 resp.

30 Ibid., no. 106 (815?) includes a donation of one manse in Hoenzadriel by Hoo. Ibid., no. 3797 (772) mentions a donation of one manse in the same settlement by Hohward. The similarity in name may well point to a family connection, making it more likely that these two donations records related to one and the same manse. See: E. J. HARENBERG, *De homines franci uit de Codex Laureshamensis*, in: *Ad fontes*. Opstellen, aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. C. van de Kieft ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid als hoogleraar in de middeleeuwse geschiedenis aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam, Amsterdam 1984, p. 39–60, at p. 45.

31 Lorsch had given these properties *in precaria* to Alfger in 815 (CL I, no. 105).



Edition	Date	Actor(s)	Transaction type	Context	Loc. of transaction
CL III, no. 3613 <sup>32</sup>	31.05.814	Magofrid and Waltrat	Donation	Gendt?	Lorsch
CL I, no. 105	815	Alfger	Donation	Empel	?
CL I, no. 106	815	<i>Homines Franci</i>	Donation	Empel	?
CL I, no. 113	<839	Meginger and Irinfrid	Donation	Gendt	?
CL I, no. 114	<839	Brunhild	Donation	Gendt	?
CL I, no. 115	814–839	Waldo	Donation	Gendt	?
CL I, no. 116	814–839	Lantward	Donation	Gendt	?
CL I, no. 117	839	Magofrid	Donation	Gendt	?
CL I, no. 107	850	Balderic	Donation	Empel <sup>33</sup>	?
CL I, no. 109 (= CL I 24)	13.09.860	King Lothar II	Donation	Gendt	Aachen
CL I, no. 110	855	Wicswint	Donation	Gendt	Gendt
CL I, no. 111	855	Helmger and Witswint	Donation	Gendt	Gendt
CL I, no. 118 (= CL I, no. 33–35)	866	Ansfrid	Prestaria	Gendt	Lorsch
CL I, no. 112	11.891–11.892	Itda	Donation	(Post-)Gendt	Gendt
CL I, no. 108 (=CL I, no. 75)	969	Bp. Eberkar of Liège	Legal verdict	(Post-)Empel	–

Fig. 1: Lorsch's property in the Carolingian Netherlands (in chronological order)

## The Gendt estate

Despite being located almost four hundred kilometres upstream, Lorsch began to attract donations in the Lower Rhine region as soon as it became a royal monastery in 772. In late-August 772, it acquired two manses in the *pagus* Teisterbant, situated west of the Betuwe<sup>34</sup>. One week later, Lorsch received a string of properties along the coastline, from Texel down to the mouths of the Rhine and Meuse rivers<sup>35</sup>. Donations in 774 and 776 also gave the monastery a foothold in the Scheldt estuary<sup>36</sup>. These properties were significant for the monastery, because they were located along major commercial routes

32 If the identification of the donor and the property location is correct, the record appears to have been misplaced in the Codex Laureshamensis.

33 CL I, no. 107 is attributed to the Empel context, because it is inserted between CL I, nos. 105–106 (the donations of Alfger and the *homines franci*) and CL I, no. 108 (a verdict from a tenth-century conciliar ruling in Liège).

34 CL III, no. 3797. Both manses were donated by Hohward and located in the *villae* Buren and Hoenzadriel. Hohward probably belonged to the Empel network. See n. 30.

35 CL III, no. 3797 and CL I, no. 98 (=CL III, no. 3801).

36 CL I, no. 97 (=CL III, no. 3798) and CL III, no. 3799, resp. CL III, no. 3809, may be another early donation of property located in the Kempen region (*pagus Texandria*), but the transaction is undated. Because the property is given out in benefice (CL I, no. 105) the *terminus ante quem* is 815.

and/or produced valuable commodities, such as salt. For example, CL I, no. 97 (776) records a donation by Godebert and his wife of a church (*basilica*) and one manse in the *villa* Maudaco, in the current province of Zeeland<sup>37</sup>. While this may not sound like much, the scribe added that this particular farmstead was occupied by a single unfree household that worked seventeen salt pans (*culinae ad sal faciendum*), indicating that this site specialized in salt production<sup>38</sup>. Such specialized production centres were nevertheless confined to regions with unique soil conditions, such as the salty peat lands in Zeeland or, in the case of iron production, the ore-rich deposits on the Veluwe<sup>39</sup>.

While these records preserve the donors' names, they hardly inform us of their identities, their motives to give to Lorsch, or if their gifts were in some way connected<sup>40</sup>. Thus, we know nothing about the backgrounds of Walther and his wife Richlint, who in 793 donated seven manses (or parts thereof), occupied by fifty-nine unfree tenants, located in seven *villae* across four districts<sup>41</sup>. However, of these manses, one happened to be located in the *marca* of Gendt. Gendt was a strategically positioned settlement on the bank of the River Waal, a major trade route, and very close to Nijmegen, where Charlemagne had ordered the construction of a new palace. Lorsch's interest in the site is clear from a property exchange (*concambium*) with a *vir illuster* named Ruthard dating to 800, when it traded a manse in Teisterbant that it had acquired in 772 for a second manse in Gendt<sup>42</sup>.

So far, all the property transactions in the Lower Rhine region had been drafted up in Lorsch. This changed in 814, when Gerward *clericus* donated five manses in Gendt, as well as an »island« between the village proper and the Waal that had a church on it<sup>43</sup>. In addition, Gerward also donated various other properties, including various woodlands in the *pagus* Veluwe, a region that was known, as mentioned above, for its rich iron ore deposits<sup>44</sup>. Gerward's donation is followed by two other donations dating to the same year, and that are similarly concerned with property located in or close to

37 For exact location, see: Cornelis DEKKER, Zuid-Beveland. De historische geografie en de instellingen van een Zeeuws eiland in de Middeleeuwen, Assen 1971, p. 66–69.

38 Located on Schouwen-Duiveland, Zeeland Province. N.B. the transaction was also recorded in CL III, no. 3798 (an abbreviated charter), albeit with some alterations: a.) location: *in villa Wudarres ambachte* instead of *in lacu villa Maudaco, inter Scald et Sunnonmeri et Gusaha*, and b.) property description: CL III, no. 3798 only mentions the manse and the church, but not the seventeen salt pans.

39 On salt production: Jan BESTEMAN, Frisian Salt and the Problem of Salt-Making in North Holland in the Carolingian Period, in: Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek 24 (1974), p. 171–174; Bas VAN BAVEL, Manors and Markets. Economy and Society in the Low Countries. 500–1600, Oxford 2010, p. 149–150. For iron production on the Veluwe: Anthonie HEIDINGA, Medieval Settlement and Economy North of the Lower Rhine, Assen, Maastricht 1987, c. 10; Michel GROOTHEDDE, Charcoal and iron production at and around Zutphen, in: Medieval and Modern Matters. Archaeology and Material Culture in the Low Countries 4 (2013), p. 61–81.

40 Note, however, the debate as summarized in HARENBERG, *Homines franci* (as in n. 30), p. 52–59, on the *homines franci*, as represented in CL I, no. 106, who formed a separate legal category.

41 CL I, no. 99.

42 CL I, no. 100 reads *Adelricheim*, which might be identified with Erichem, near Buren. See: GOOSMANN, Reconstructing (as in n. 4). If correctly identified, Abbot Richbod had exchanged the manse given to Lorsch by Hohward in 772 for a manse in Gendt.

43 CL I. no. 101.

44 See above, n. 38.

Gendt. Because of these similarities, and because the donors are named Adalward and Lantward, these men are generally assumed to have been close relatives of Gerward<sup>45</sup>. However, a significant distinction between these three transactions is that the transactions of Gerward's alleged kinsmen had been recorded in Gendt, whereas Gerward's transaction was recorded in Aachen. From 814 onwards, most of the extant transactions in the dossier, insofar as they provide this information, were recorded at Gendt, suggesting that from 814 onwards, Gendt functioned as an administrative centre overseeing Lorsch's interests in the Lower Rhine region (see fig. 1).

Lorsch continued to acquire more property in Gendt and the surrounding region. Exactly how much the monastery owned is difficult to reconstruct, since we cannot simply tally up the properties that are mentioned in the donation records. Since objects could be subject to multiple claims of ownership, they could also be the subject of more than one transaction<sup>46</sup>. The donations by Gerward, Adalward and Lantward are a case in point: they gave Lorsch the ownership rights to five, five and four manses in Gendt respectively. Instead of concluding that Lorsch had acquired a total of fourteen manses, we should allow for the possibility that each donor may have given up his individual claim to co-owned family property<sup>47</sup>. Something similar may also have been the case with Gendt's church, which features in three transactions (and assuming that a rural estate like Gendt only had a single church). First, Gerward gave in 814 »that foreland on which the church is constructed with all its appurtenances, which is located between the River Waal and Gendt«<sup>48</sup>. Then there is an undated record stating that Meginger and his wife Irminfrid[a] donated »a church in Gendt, dedicated to Saint Martin, and demesne land for sowing 100 *modii* [of grain]«<sup>49</sup>. Lastly, an equally undated donation states that Lantward purchased »a third share of the manse where that church is built, and 15 *iurnales* [of land], and everything she [Abarhild] had in that mark«<sup>50</sup>. In this specific case, *mansus* refers to a fixed size of land, to which had been added arable land of a size that would take a man fifteen days to plough. Early medieval measurement units are notoriously difficult to convert to modern units: although they were modelled after the Roman system, they lacked a common standard<sup>51</sup>. Nevertheless, Lantward/Abarhild's property is said to have been located in the mark of Gendt, as is the case in Gerward's transaction. It supports

45 CL I, nos. 101–103.

46 ROSENWEIN, Neighbor (as in n. 19), p. 110–115.

47 Compare with CL I, no. 110 (Wicswint) and CL I, no. 111 (Witswint and Helmger). See also below, n. 62.

48 CL I, no. 101: *ipsam insulam in qua ecclesia est constructa cum omnibus appenditiis quae sita est inter fluvium Wal et Gannita*.

49 CL I, no. 113: *dederunt aecclesiam in Gannita, constructam in honore sancti Martini, et de terra indomincata ad c modios sementis*. The church's dedication to Saint Martin may imply a link to Utrecht or, less likely, Elst. See: Kay VAN VLIET, In Kringen van Kanunniken. Munsters en kappittels in het bisdom Utrecht, 695–1227, Zutphen 2002, p. 89–90. Meginger and Irinfrid[a] also donated two farmsteads in Hattum, on the western bank of the River IJssel.

50 CL I, no. 116: *Lantwardus comparavit a quadam femina nomine Abarhild, in villa Ganneta terciam partem de manso ubi ipsa aecclesia aedificata est, et XV iurnales, et quicquid ipsa habuit in eadem marca, et dedit sancto Nazario*.

51 Jean-Pierre DEVROEY, Units of Measurement in the Early Medieval Economy: The Example of Carolingian Food Rations, in: French History 1 (1987), p. 68–92. Devroey focuses specifically on units of volume.

the idea that these transactions may, at least in part, have been concerned with the same object. Whether Gerward and Lantward were related to Meginger or Irminfrid[a] is unknown<sup>52</sup>.

Another problem is that only a few of the *notitiae* are dated. Assuming that the original Gendt dossier was chronologically ordered, and that this order had remained more or less intact as the Gendt material was combined with the Empel material, than Meginger's and Lantward's donations can be dated between 814 and 839<sup>53</sup>. If we then also assume that the three transactions pertaining to Gendt's church date to the same moment in time, as is the case with the donations of Gerward, Adalward and Lantward, than all the transactions that occurred between Gerward's donation (CL I, no. 101) and Lantward's second donation (CL I, no. 116) must have been part of a massive collective transaction that took place in 814 (see fig. 1)<sup>54</sup>.

Most of the donated properties in the Gendt dossier were located outside the *villa vel marca* Gendt, but rarely beyond the *pagi* Betuwe and Veluwe (see map 1). Not everyone in Gerward's network may have had property to donate in Gendt<sup>55</sup>. Waldo, who features prominently with two transaction records, gave properties located directly to the east of Gendt<sup>56</sup>. If he did not own property in the *villa* Gendt itself, he appears to have been well endowed in Gendt's immediate vicinity, with a concentration of property in the neighbouring *villa* Angeren. Brunhild was another member of this network. She gave a farmstead in Hattum (where Meginger and his wife had also donated two farmsteads), in addition to a church and farmstead in Vaast<sup>57</sup>. Magofrid, finally, gave half a farmstead in *Selebach* in 839. Although this sounds like a mi-

52 The copyist of the *Codex Laureshamensis* changed feminine names into masculine ones.

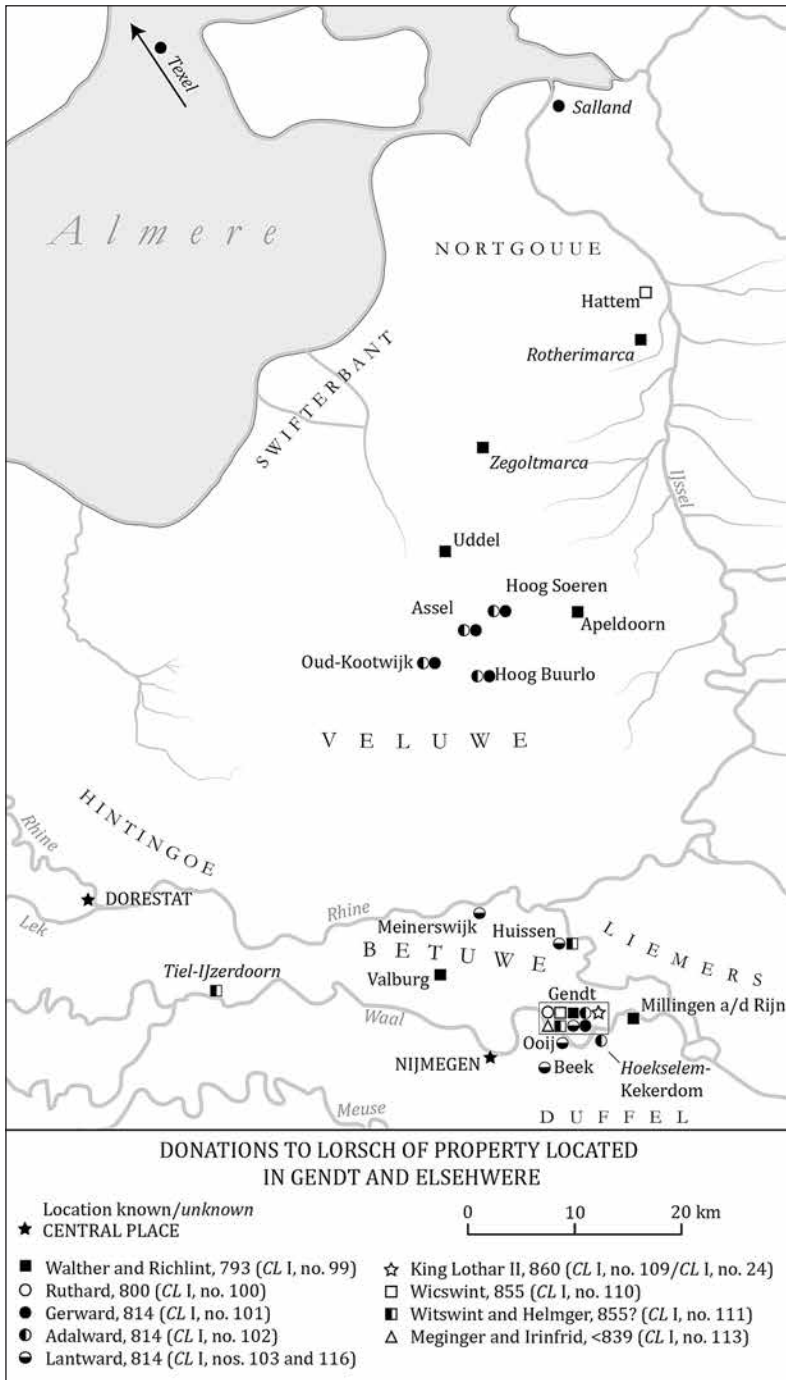
53 CL I, no. 113. CL I, no. 117 is the first dated record after CL I, nos. 112 and 113.

54 The collective donation consisted of CL I, nos. 101–104 and nos. 107–116.

55 These are Waldo (CL I, no. 104 and CL I, no. 115), Brunhild (CL I, no. 114) and Magofrid (CL I, no. 118). In 814 Magofrid donated properties in the same region. However, the record of this transaction appears misplaced in the *Codex Laureshamensis* (CL III, no. 3613). I excluded from this reconstruction the donation of Itda (CL I, no. 112), which occurred well after Lorsch had given its estates in Gendt in benefice to Ansfrid *comes palatii*, in 891/892.

56 CL I, no. 104: Waldo donates four farmsteads in *Stillinhahagamundi*. R. E. KÜNZEL, Dirk Peter BLOK, J. M. VERHOEFF, *Lexicon van Nederlandse toponiemen tot 1200*, Amsterdam 1989, p. 333 offer two etymologies for the name *Stillinhahagamundi*: the name might combine *mundi* (mouth) with *aba* (water) and *stilli* (still, quiet). This interpretation finds much support, for example by Glöckner. Alternatively, it might consist of the elements *Stilli-a-hagamundi*, or »quiet-water-land of the lord«. Perhaps this *locus* was situated close to the church in the mark of Gendt, for which there are several arguments: 1.) Waldo's donation was recorded directly after those of Gerward, Adalward and Lantward. 2.) Gerward's donation mentions an »island« situated between the River Waal and Gendt, referring to the existence of a »dead« river arm, which could be characterized as »quiet« when compared to the »active« river. 3.) CL I, no. 113 and perhaps no. 116 refer to demesne land. This might in turn refer to the property mentioned in Gerward's donation record. *Hagamundi* also indicates »land of the lord«. In CL I, no. 115 Waldo donated property in various estates in the *pagus* Hamaland. These included a church and two farmsteads in Angeren, a half-manse in *Waganlose* (unidentified), Doornenburg and Leuven, and one third of a manse in Velp. (Note that CL I, no. 115 distinguishes between *huoba* and *mansus*. In general these concepts are treated as Germanic/Latin synonyms.) Hamaland is at this time identified as the territory east of the River IJssel and therefore included Velp and perhaps Leuven. Doornenburg, on the other hand, is situated in the Betuwe, directly east of Gendt. On the problematic localization of this *pagus*, see HEIDINGA, *Medieval Settlement* (as in n. 39), p. 182–191.

57 CL I, no. 114.



Map 1: Donations to Lorsch of property located in Gendt and elsewhere

nor donation, *Selebach* has been identified as »Zeelbeek«, a small stream on the Veluwezoom near Doorwerth, where in the late-ninth century a ring fortress was erected known as the Duno<sup>58</sup>. According to H. A. Heidinga, this site was strategically significant because it protected the southern entry route into the Veluwe with its rich iron ore deposits<sup>59</sup>. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the *Codex* contains a second and seemingly misplaced donation by Magofrid, stating that on 31 May 814 he and his wife Waltrat[a] gave »in the woods of *Batero* 20 *iurnalis* of arable land and two dependants«<sup>60</sup>. If Glöckner's identification of *Batero* with Baal (c. 5 km north-west of Gendt) is correct, then the donor may be identical to the Magofrid who gave Lorsch its property in Zeelbeek<sup>61</sup>. Moreover, this transaction record might also provide us with the exact date on which this donor community collectively gave to Lorsch.

Despite these donations, Lorsch probably never became the sole proprietor in the *villa* Gendt. Regardless, from the mid-ninth century onwards, it would have been the dominant stakeholder in the estate<sup>62</sup>. In 855, Wicswint gave a lordly manor (*curtis dominicalis*) in Gendt to the monastery, followed by a second gift in which her father Helmger also participated<sup>63</sup>. Lorsch's final acquisition in the *villa* Gendt dates to 13 September 860, when Lothar II granted Lorsch the rights to the fiscal property in the estate<sup>64</sup>. The cartulary chronicle contains an almost verbatim transcription of the diploma. Although the diploma does not inform us of the size of these royal estates, it does state that the donation was mediated by Count Adalard and Lothar's vassal Tieto/Diedo<sup>65</sup>. And while the text does state why Lothar donated royal lands to an East Frankish monastery, the transaction took place around the same time that Lothar switched allegiance from the West Frankish king Charles the Bald to the East Frankish king Louis the German<sup>66</sup>.

58 Hendrik Jacob MOERMANN, *Nederlandse plaatsnamen. Een overzicht*, Leiden 1956, p. 33; KÜNZEL, BLOK, VERHOEFF, *Lexicon* (as in n. 56), p. 415.

59 HEIDINGA, *Medieval Settlement* (as in n. 39), p. 203–206, argued that the two circular fortresses known as the Duno and the Hunneschans (near Uddel, Gelderland), were twins protecting the northern and southern access to this iron-rich region. Problematic is the lack of a viable access route from the north, due to the marshy peat lands bordering on the Almere. The strategic significance of the Huneschans is therefore closely connected to Heidinga's theory on the navigability of the Leuvense beek (p. 220–222).

60 CL I, no. 3613: *Ego Magofrit et coniux mea Waltrat donamus (...) Batero xx iurnales de terra arabili et mancipia II.*

61 See CL I, no. 117, n. 1.

62 Cf. VAN VLIET, In *Kringen van Kannuniken* (as in n. 49), p. 119.

63 CL I, no. 110. Note, however, that CL I, no. 110 reads *Wicswint* and is dated to the fifteenth year of Louis the German's reign and during the abbacy of Samuel (837–856), whereas CL I, no. 111 reads *Witswint* and is dated to the twenty-fifth year of »the same king« and »under the same abbot«. However, because Abbot Samuel had been deceased by then, Glöckner assumes that the scribe made an error in dating the transaction, arguing for 855/856 as the correct date.

64 CL I, no. 24 (= MGH. D Lo II, n. 14). A reference to this diploma was included in the Gendt dossier (CL I, no. 109).

65 On Adalhard: THISEN, *Besitz der Reichsabtei Lorsch* (as in n. 15), p. 89–90; Karl HEIDECKER, *Kerk, huwelijk en politieke macht. De zaak Lotharius II (855–869) in zes taferelen*, unpublished dissertation, Amsterdam 1997, p. 216–217. I have been unable to identify *Tieto vassalus noster*.

66 I thank Karl Heidecker for having brought this point to my attention.

## Danes in the Betuwe

A short digression is called for to address the issue of the Danish presence in the region. The *Annales regni Francorum* record encounters and diplomatic exchanges between Franks and Danes as early as 804 and again in 808 and 809. In 810, the Danish king Godofrid launched an attack on the Frisian islands. From 834 onwards, Viking raids began to target the Lower Rhine region (see fig. 2). These disruptive events therefore ran parallel to the events and processes that are the focus of the present article. But while there are many contemporary historiographical and hagiographical accounts that refer to these catastrophic events, it has proven very difficult for historians to gauge their social and economic impact in the affected regions. A good example is provided by the contemporary *Vita Liudgeri*, composed by the saint's nephew and successor Altfred (†849), who recounted the following dream:

»In a dream it looked as if the sun fled across the sea from the north and dark clouds were following it. On its flight it passed us by and, growing increasingly faint, withdrew so that it could no longer be seen by us. The gloom that had followed it enveloped the places along the coast. When after a long period of time the sun returned, it was lesser and paler than it had been before, yet it drove the darkness across the sea<sup>67</sup>.«

When asked about its meaning, Liudger explained that the »dark clouds« represented Northmen, who would attack the Frisian coast, bring persecution and destruction, burn down churches and monasteries, and drive its inhabitants from their homes.

The Viking menace was not limited to the coastal regions. Capable of navigating their longboats over the main rivers, Danish pirates struck inland as well. Dorestad and the Betuwe were raided repeatedly, which probably also affected the Gendt community. Lothar II's diploma, in which he granted Lorsch the fiscal property in Gendt, also contains evidence that the Danish »presence« was felt in Gendt, stating that the property used to be part of a benefice granted to Rorik the Dane<sup>68</sup>. The late eighth-century Frankish expansion into Saxony had made the Danes their neighbours. The resulting interaction, which was not always peaceful, eventually resulted in the baptism of the Danish king Harald (d. 852) at Mainz or Ingelheim in 826<sup>69</sup>. To great Frankish dismay, the Christian triumph of Harald's baptism offered no pro-

67 Altfred, *Vita S. Liudgeri*, l. 1, c. 27, ed. Wilhelm DIEKAMP, *Die Vitae sancti Liudgeri*, Münster 1881, p. 32: *Vidi per somnium quasi solem fugientem supra mare a partibus aquilonis et nubes terribilissimas sequentes. Qui fugiens ac deficiens pertransiit nos, ita ut elongatus a nobis videri non posset et caligines, quae eum fuerant secutae, obtinuerunt omnia loca haec maritima. Post multum vero temporis reversus est sol minor et pallidior, quam fuisset prius, effugavitque caligines trans mare.*

68 CL I, no. 24 (= MGH. D Lo II, n. 14).

69 *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. Friedrich KURZE, Hanover 1895 (MGH. SS rer. Germ., 6), s. a. 826 (henceforth: ARF). See also: Ermoldus Nigellus, *Carmen in honorem Ludovici Christianissimi Caesaris Augusti*, ed. and trans. Edmond FARAL, *Poème sur Louis le Pieux et épîtres au roi Pépin*, Paris 1932 (Les classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Âge, 14), l. 4.

tection against a coup that forced the converted king to seek refuge in northern Saxony<sup>70</sup>. Defying their Carolingian overlords, Danish pirates began to attack the wealthy emporium Dorestad in the years 834–837. Perhaps as an alternative strategy to augment Frankish coastal defences, Louis the Pious and his successors resorted to install Danish leaders as their vassals in the affected regions. One of these Carolingian vassals was Rorik, Harald's brother or cousin<sup>71</sup>, whose fief was centred on Dorestad<sup>72</sup>.

This strategy appears to have been a temporary success, for no further attacks were reported in the region until 847. In that year, Vikings pillaged as far up the Rhine as Meinerswijk, located roughly fourteen kilometres from Gendt. The attack probably resulted in Rorik's arrest on charges of treason, for which he was to appear at the court of Emperor Lothar I<sup>73</sup>. Rorik was able to escape and fled to Louis the German instead. He settled in northern Saxony and took up piracy. When he seized Dorestad in 850, Lothar felt he had no other option than to accept Rorik back as his vassal, on condition that he »would faithfully handle the taxes and other matters pertaining to the royal fisc, and would resist the piratical attacks of the Danes«<sup>74</sup>. His fief comprised of »Dorestad and other counties«, which apparently also included the Betuwe, since he also controlled the fisc in Gendt<sup>75</sup>. This time around, however, Rorik's protection proved ineffective, as raids are reported in 851, 852 and 854. In 855 Rorik returned to Denmark in an attempt to seize the throne, but he failed and returned to Frisia<sup>76</sup>.

On 2 January 858 Lothar II gave the monastery of Berg on the River Roer (later known as St. Odiliënberg) to Bishop Hunger of Utrecht, »because the Church of Utrecht [...], facing an imminent threat from barbarous wickedness, has almost been destroyed and reduced to rubble«<sup>77</sup>. A particularly devastating campaign occurred in January of 863, when

»Danes sailed up the Rhine towards Cologne by ship, depopulating the emporium called Dorestad and also a not so small *villa* where the Frisians had taken refuge, killing many Frisian merchants and taking captive large numbers of people. They went as far as a certain island near the fortress of Neuss. Lothar came up and advanced with his men along one bank of the Rhine and the Sax-

70 ARF, s.a. 827.

71 Annales Fuldenses, ed. Friedrich KURZE, Hanover 1891 (MGH. SS rer. Germ., 7), s.a. 850 (henceforth: AF) identify Roric as Harald/Heriold's *frater*; Annales Bertiniani, ed. Félix GRAT, Jeanne VIELLIARD, Suzanne CLÉMENCET, Annales de Saint-Bertin, Paris 1964, s.a. 850 (henceforth: AB) identifies him as his *nepos*.

72 AF, s.a. 850 offers a concise history of Roric's career.

73 Annales Xantenses, ed. Bernhard DE SIMSON, Hanover, Leipzig 1909 (MGH. SS rer. Germ., 12), s.a. 847 (henceforth: AX); Roric's treason is mentioned in AF, s.a. 850.

74 AF, s.a. 850: *ut tributis ceterisque negotiis ad regis aerarium pertinentibus fideliter inserviret et piraticis Danorum incurionibus obviano resisteret*. Cf. AB, s.a. 850 and AX, s.a. 850.

75 AB, s.a. 850: *recepit eique Dorestadum et alios comitatus largitur*; VAN VLIET, In Kringen van Kanunniken (as in n. 49), p. 136.

76 AB, s.a. 855. Cf. AF, s.a. 856.

77 Maurits GYSSELING, Anton C. F. KOCH (ed.), *Diplomata Belgica ante annum millesium centesimum scripta*, vol. 1, Brussels 1950, no. 186: *Quod Traiectensis aeclesia, quae in honore Christi confessoris Martini constructa esse dinoscitur, barbarica imminente nequicia paene destructa et ad nihilum redacta sit*.



ons along the other and they encamped there until the beginning of April. On Rorik's advice, the Danes withdrew by the same way they had come<sup>78</sup>«.

The »Annals of Xanten« add that the pagans had killed many of the Frisian survivors<sup>79</sup>. Rorik's role in the affair is unclear: did he act as Lothar's agent, or had he been involved in the attack? According to the »Annals of St Bertin«, Lothar levied a tax of 4 *denarii* per manse to pay off the leader of the Danish expedition, which meant these attacks had significant financial repercussions for the entire region, and not just those who suffered from these Viking attacks directly. Moreover, the »Annals of Fulda« identify the Danish leader as Rodulf, a son of Harald, and therefore also a close relative of Rorik<sup>80</sup>. The latter's inability to put an end to these Danish raids was probably the reason why Lothar II began to redistribute parts of his benefice.

There may be no reason to doubt the veracity of these Danish attacks, but the question to what extent these raids or Danish lordship had an impact on the daily lives and actions of the region's inhabitants is exceedingly difficult to answer<sup>81</sup>. Not every settlement or manse would have fallen victim to pirate attacks, but the frequency of these attacks no doubt were a major source of stress to those seeking to sustain themselves in the river area. Although the extant sources do not allow us qualitatively or quantitatively to assess the Viking impact on everyday life in the Lower Rhine region, we should at least be aware that these attacks formed the context in which many of the ninth-century transactions that are central to this study had taken place.

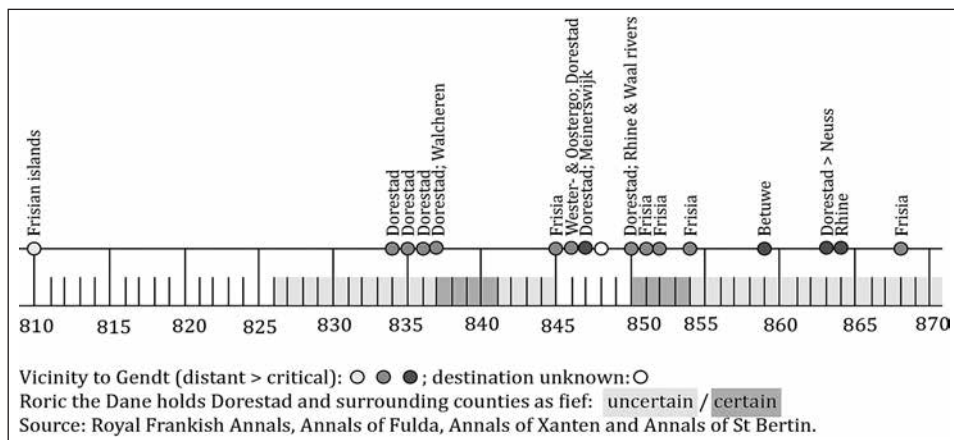


Fig. 2: Viking raids in the Northern Low Countries

78 AB, s. a. 863: *Dani mense Ianuario per Rhenum versus Coloniam navigio ascendunt, et depopulato emporio quod Dorestatus dicitur, sed et villam non modicam, ad quam Frisii confugerant, occisis multis Frisionorum negotiatoribus, et capta non modica populi multitudine, usque ad quandam insulam secus castellum Novesium perveniunt. Quibus Hlotharius ex una parte Rheni cum suis et Saxones ex alai parte adgrediuntur et usque circa Kalendas Aprilis consistunt. Unde idem Dani consilio Rorici, sicut accesserant, et recedunt.*

79 AX, s. a. 863.

80 AF, s. a. 864.

81 THISSEN, *Besitz der Reichsabtei Lorsch* (as in n. 15), p. 91.

Gerward *clericus*

Once the historian moves away from the vociferous men and women that occupied the royal court or controlled the shrines of powerful saints, he finds himself amongst strangers, for whom the extant documents occasionally provide a name or title, but rarely an identity. This is true for almost all the members that make up the »Gendt community«, with the notable exception of Gerward, of whom we know a great deal, precisely because he was both a monk of Lorsch and a valued member of the royal court<sup>82</sup>.

Gerward's family background can be determined largely on the basis of two donation records, which have him donate property to the monastery of Lorsch and the Church of Utrecht. In the first of these, dating to 814, Gerward not only gave the aforementioned properties in Gendt to Lorsch, but also property in Texel (*Thesla*), on the Veluwe and a fish trap near the mouth of the River IJsel<sup>83</sup>. The second document, dating to February 828, has Gerward donate family property located east of the Betuwe to Utrecht. Although the charter does not specify the number or the type of properties that were given, it does inform us that these properties were divided among eight settlements and included forty named unfree dependants (*mancipia*), forming twenty households<sup>84</sup>. These two donations probably did not exhaust Gerward's landed wealth, and they seem to indicate that he was a member of a wealthy landowning family whose powerbase was situated in the eastern Netherlands, or what contemporaries would perhaps have identified as the Frankish-Saxon frontier (see map 2)<sup>85</sup>.

Because the Utrecht charter identifies Gerward as *filius Lantwardi* (the son of Landward), he has been identified as the same Gerward who, fourteen years earlier, had given property to Lorsch. As discussed above, Gerward's donation record in the Gendt dossier is followed by two transactions that occurred that same year (and perhaps on the same date) by men named Adalward and Lantward. The clustering of these documents, the synchronicity of the transactions they record, the circumstance that each of these donors had owned property in the same settlement and, lastly, the shared element »-ward« in their names, have all led historians to conclude that these men must have been closely related<sup>86</sup>. It is unlikely that, one decade later and nine ki-

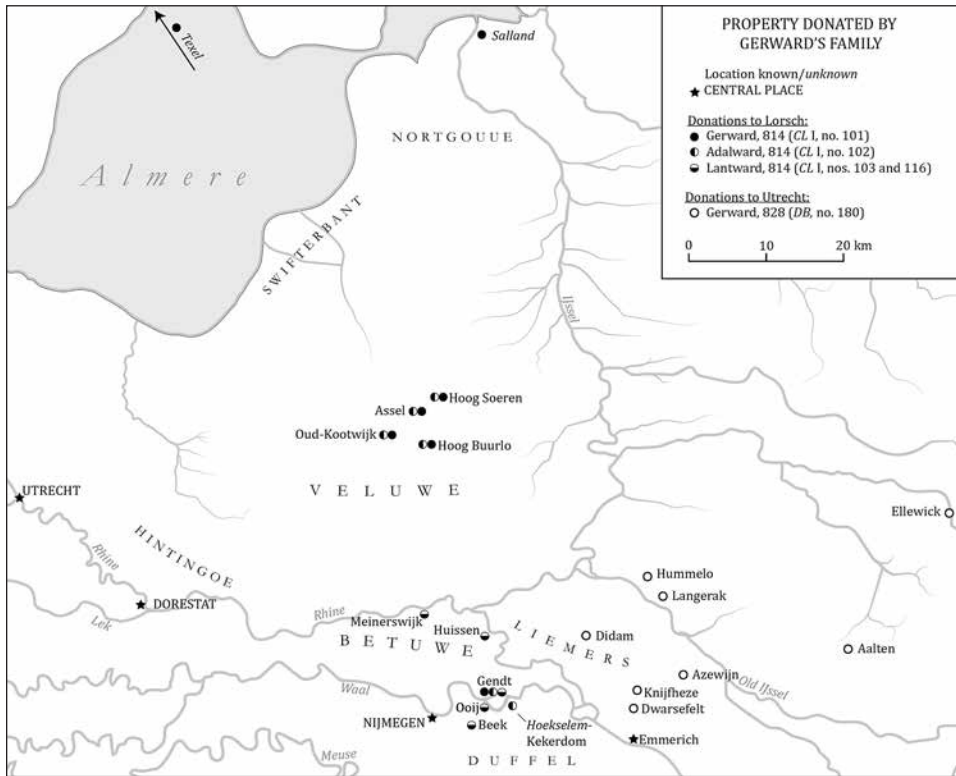
82 On Gerward, see: Philippe DEPREUX, *Prosopographie de l'entourage de Louis le Pieux*, Sigmaringen 1997, p. 214–215; Heinz LÖWE, *Studien zu den Annales Xantenses*, in: *Deutsches Archiv* 8 (1951), p. 59–99, at p. 87–99; Bernhard BISCHOFF, *Die Hofbibliothek unter Ludwig dem Frommen*, in: Jonathan ALEXANDER, Margaret GIBSON (ed.), *Medieval Learning and Literature*. Essays presented to Richard William Hunt, Oxford 1976, p. 6.

83 CL I, no. 101.

84 GYSSELING, KOCH (ed.), *Diplomata Belgica* (as in n. 77), no. 180.

85 *Ibid.*, *Diplomata Belgica* (as in n. 77), no. 180 is attributed to Gerward because the donor is identified as *Gerouwardus filius Landuuardi*. CL I, no. 101, Gerward's donation to Lorsch, is succeeded by two contemporary donations: one by Adalward and the other by Lantward. They are believed to have been close relations of Gerward, although there is a risk of circular argumentation. Although these are unexceptional names, their temporal and geographical proximity is too significant to be considered a coincidence.

86 See: WENSKUS, *Sächsischer Stammesadel* (as in n. 13). But see also: Christof ROLKER, *Me, Myself, and My Name: Naming and Identity in the Late Middle Ages*, in: Franz-Josef ARLINGHAUS



Map 2: Property donated by Gerward's Family

lometres east of Gendt, there would have lived another Gerward, whose father just happened to be called Lantward. While it is possible that the Lantward mentioned in the Utrecht charter is the same as the Lantward who we earlier encountered donating to Lorsch, Heinz Löwe has argued that the latter is more likely to have been Gerward's brother<sup>87</sup>. Together, these records not only offer an impression of Gerward's immediate family, but also reveal that his family's patronage was not limited to Lorsch alone.

Judging from his donations alone, it is difficult to imagine that Gerward was anything more than a (wealthy) member of the regional elite. Were it not for Einhard's writings, we would have been oblivious to Gerward's prominent position at the Carolingian court<sup>88</sup>. In the *Translatio sancti Marcellini et Petri*, Einhard introduces Gerward as a palace librarian, who was also charged with the construction and upkeep of

(ed.), *Forms of individuality and literacy in the medieval and early modern periods*, Turnhout 2015, p. 233–258.

87 Löwe, *Studien* (as in n. 82), p. 88.

88 Gerward composed a dedicatory poem for Louis the Pious in a copy of Einhard's »Vita Karoli«. See: Dirk P. BLOK, *De Franken in Nederland*, Bussum 1974, p. 115. Einhard also wrote letters to Gerward (on these see below). They appear to have been well acquainted.

the royal palaces<sup>89</sup>. The story is situated in 828 and has Gerward travelling back from Nijmegen to Aachen. It finds some corroboration in the fact that this happened to be the same year that Gerward's donation to Utrecht was recorded in Emmerich, c. thirty-five kilometres upstream from Nijmegen. Having stopped for the night at the royal *villa* of Gangelt, Gerward learned of a miracle performed by the martyr Marcellinus, whose relics Einhard had recently acquired and hoped to promote through his writings. The next day, Gerward is said to have informed the emperor of this news. He was therefore not merely a member of the country gentry, but a seasoned court official with access to the emperor.

We do not know how Gerward came by his position at court. As court librarian, it must be assumed that he had enjoyed a solid education, probably at an intellectual centre in the empire. Gerward's career path may in fact have been very similar to that of Einhard, about whom Walafrid Strabo wrote that he had been born into a wealthy family in the Maingau, from where he was sent to Fulda for his education. Proving himself an intelligent and highly talented student, Abbot Baugulf (779–802) sent his pupil on to work for Charlemagne at the royal palace<sup>90</sup>. Gerward, given his affiliation with Lorsch, may well have been an *alumnus* of that monastery<sup>91</sup>.

That Einhard and Gerward were personally acquainted is clear from one, or possibly two, letters that survive in Einhard's letter collection. In the first, addressed to »a friend« and dated April 830, Einhard wrote at length of his physical ailments, which he used as an excuse for not having heeded the emperor's summons to come to Compiègne, where, as it turned out, Louis the Pious was stripped of his royal power by his rebellious sons Pippin and Lothar. Instead, Einhard asked Gerward/his friend to convey the message to the emperor and to send back word of what had transpired at the meeting<sup>92</sup>. The second letter, undated but addressed to »the monk Gerward«, can perhaps be read as a follow-up of the first, possibly written after Louis had been restored to the imperial dignity. The tone of the letter is markedly unfriendly, as Einhard, whose absence from the emperor's side in his hour of need may have been interpreted by some as a sign of wavering loyalty, wonders whether his previous letter to Gerward was misunderstood, or whether Gerward was simply unsympathetic about his ailments. Reluctantly, Einhard decided on the former, but it is clear from the letter that Gerward, whose loyalty to the emperor and empress does not appear

89 Einhard, *Translatio et miracula sancti Marcellini et Petri*, l. 4, c. 7, ed. Georg WAITZ, in: MGH. SS 15/1, Hanover 1887, p. 258. Josef FLECKENSTEIN, *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1959 (MGH. Schriften, 16), p. 69, 235, considers Gerward to have been Einhard's successor as the court's architect. One might wonder what impact the 817 incident of a portico at Aachen collapsing atop the emperor and his retinue, as recorded in the ARF, might have had on his career.

90 See Walafrid's preface in Einhard's »*Vita Karoli*«. FLECKENSTEIN, *Die Hofkapelle* (as in n. 89), p. 68. In two extant letters from Einhard, composed early 830s, he asks Gerward for the situation at court. Einharti Epistolae, nos. 41 and 52, ed. Karl HAMPE, Hanover 1898–1899 (MGH. Epp., 5).

91 MCKITTERICK, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (as in n. 12), p. 189–190. The See of Worms was closely connected to the monastery of Lorsch. Note that Einhard had also given extensively to Lorsch and was remembered as a patron of the monastery in a much more elaborate fashion than Gerward. See: CL I, cc. 19–22.

92 Einharti epistolae (as in n. 90), no. 41; AB, s. a. 830.

to have wavered, had warned Einhard not to stay away. Einhard would hear nothing of it, emphasizing yet again his weak bodily condition, the poor quality of the roads leading to Aachen, and his desire to spend his remaining days in the presence of his beloved martyrs, Marcellinus and Petrus<sup>93</sup>.

Gerward's donation to Lorsch, which had been recorded in Aachen, establishes 814 as a *terminus ante quem* for his time at the royal court. He was still at the emperor's side during the difficult early 830s, but by 838 Gerward appears to have traded bustling Aachen for rural Gendt<sup>94</sup>. Based on his correspondence with Einhard, it would appear that Gerward's exit from court was not caused by the fallout of the crisis years 830–833, but perhaps it should not be ruled out entirely. Whatever the reason, Gerward's name appears in a witness list to a charter dated to 23 March 838, involving a *prestaria* agreement between Count Rodgar and Bishop Alberic II of Utrecht (838–844), which was recorded in Duiven, roughly ten kilometres north-east of Gendt<sup>95</sup>. It identifies Gerward as a *presbyter* which might suggest that, this time around, he did not visit the region on court-related business.

Gerward probably entered the clergy at an early age. In the Lorsch donation of 814, he is introduced as a *clericus*, denoting a lesser clerical ordination. By 838, he had been ordained a priest. At some point in his career, when he worked for the royal chapel, Gerward took the monastic vows at Lorsch<sup>96</sup>. In his second letter to Gerward, Einhard already addressed him as a *monachus*, which suggests that his vows did not mark his transition from the court to Gendt. Moreover, the name Gerward also appears in the Reichenau confraternity book, listed among the monks from Lorsch who had taken their vow during the abbacy of Adalung (804–837)<sup>97</sup>. His priestly ordination, on the other hand, may well have coincided with his return to Gendt, where, or so we may assume, he took up the administration of Lorsch's assets in the region and where he possibly performed pastoral work for the Gendt community.

From the palace library, Gerward had brought with him an impressive book collection that, after his death, found its way to Lorsch<sup>98</sup>. In an addendum later added to a Lorsch book catalogue compiled towards the end of Adelung's abbacy, the follow-

93 Einharti epistolae (as in n. 90), no. 52.

94 On courtly life in Aachen, see: Janet NELSON, Aachen as a place of power, in: Mayke DE JONG, Frans THEUWS, Carine VAN RHIJN (ed.) *Topographies of power in the early Middle Ages*, Leiden 2001 (*Transformations of the Roman world*, 6), p. 217–241; Matthew INNES, A place of discipline: Carolingian courts and aristocratic youths, in Catherine CUBITT (ed.), *Court Culture in the early Middle Ages: The proceedings of the first Alcuin conference, Turnhout 2003*, p. 59–76; NELSON, Was Charlemagne's court a courtly society?, *ibid.*, p. 39–57.

95 GYSSELING, KOCH (ed.), *Diplomata Belgica* (as in n. 77), no. 182.

96 On Gerward's membership of the royal chapel see: FLECKENSTEIN, *Die Hofkapelle* (as in n. 89), p. 66–69.

97 *Das Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau*, ed. Johanne AUTENRIETH, Dieter GEUENICH, Karl SCHMID, Hanover 1979 (MGH. *Libri memoriales et necrologia*, n. s., 1), p. 54. The same column also contains the names »Lantward« and »Adalward«. However, there is no way to verify whether these names belonged to Gerward's associates.

98 Cf. Paul LEHMANN, *Das älteste Bücherverzeichnis der Niederlande*, in: ID., *Erforschung des Mittelalters*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1959, p. 209. Lehmann argued that Gerward's book collection was part of his 814 gift to Lorsch. MCKITTERICK, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (as in n. 12), p. 186–191.

ing is written: »[the monks] found these books in Gendt where Gerward had left them and brought them to [Lorsch]«. This is succeeded by a list of twenty-three volumes containing mostly patristic titles, of which three are still extant today<sup>99</sup>. One of the extant manuscripts, containing a collection of works by Augustine, even contains a colophon stating that this is »the book of Gerward that his *clericus* Flotbert copied for him«<sup>100</sup>. Gerward may also have composed a work of history. Löwe identified him as the author of the first section of the »Annals of Xanten« (640–863), mainly because these annals combine an intimate knowledge of life at court with a distinct interest in local events in Frisia and the Lower Rhine region, especially with regard to the recurring Viking attacks along the rivers Rhine and Waal. Löwe recognized in the stylistic break between the annals of 863 and 864 a change of authorship, which he linked to a particularly fierce Viking raid in 863, when the Vikings advanced as far up the Rhine as Neuss. Since this raid cannot have gone unnoticed in Gendt, Löwe suspected that the author of these annals had fled to Cologne, where he died. The annals must have remained in Cologne, where they were eventually continued in the 870s<sup>101</sup>.

Because of his impressive book collection, Gerward's transition from Aachen to Gendt is all too often presented as an intellectual's retirement from the hustle and bustle of the court, in order to spend the remainder of his life contemplating theology in the countryside, much like Einhard had hoped to spend his old age in the presence of his beloved martyrs in Seligenstadt. However, considering the financial and political implications of Gerward's actions, other motives may have played a role as well. Gerward returned to manage the same estates that his family had held before they assigned the property rights to Lorsch. In fact, as an agent of Lorsch, Gerward controlled a much bigger territory: not just the properties he and his family had donated, but everything Lorsch had accumulated in the Netherlands (possibly with the exception of the properties centred on Empel). If family interests remained just below the surface, spiritual compensation may not have been the only motive behind the 814 donations. The problem with Gerward is that we simply do not know how much of the surplus was sent on to Lorsch, and how much ended up in the mouths and coffers of Gerward, his relatives and his clients. Gendt's history post-863, however, sheds some light on this matter.

99 MS Vatican, BAV, Pal. lat. 1877, f. 33v: *Hos libros repperimus in Gannettias, quos Gervwardus ibidem reliquit, et ab inde huc illos transtulimus*; Wilibrord LAMPEN, *Nederlandse bibliophilen in de Karolingische tijd*, in: Hermeneus. Maandblad voor de antieke cultuur 10 (1938), p. 19–20; Löwe, *Studien* (as in n. 82), p. 90; Rolf BREMMER, *The Anglo-Saxon continental mission and the transfer of encyclopedic knowledge*, in: ID., Kees DEKKER (ed.), *Foundations of learning. The transfer of encyclopedic knowledge in the early Middle Ages*, Paris, 2007, p. 19–50. Three manuscripts from Gerward's collection can be identified: Vatican, BAV, Pal. lat. 134, 210, and (possibly) 1631. See: Wallace M. LINDSAY, *The early Lorsch Scriptorium*, in: *Palaeographia Latina 3* (1924), p. 11. Bernhard BISCHOFF, *Die Hofbibliothek unter Ludwig dem Frommen*, in: ID., *Mittelalterliche Studien*, vol. 3, Stuttgart 1981, p. 171–186; English version in ID., trans. Michael GORMAN, *Manuscript and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, Cambridge 1994, p. 76–92, and ID., *Die Abtei Lorsch* (as in n. 14), p. 64–65.

100 Vatican, BAV, Pal. lat. 134, f. 114v: *Codex de monasterio sancti Nazarii. Liber Gerwardi quem ei scripsit Flotbertus clericus suus*.

101 Löwe, *Studien* (as in n. 82), p. 75–81.

Ansfrid *comes*

In 866 Abbot Thiotroch of Lorsch handed Gendt and everything that was associated with it in benefice to Count Ansfrid, about whom we are not nearly as well informed as we are about Gerward<sup>102</sup>. In fact, most of what we know about Ansfrid is derived from the four transaction records that were included in the chronicle cartulary of the *Codex Laureshamensis*<sup>103</sup>. These acts identify him as Lothar II's count of the palace (*comes palatii*), which meant he held a senior position at the royal court. As it happens, a contemporary charter from Werden (855) also mentions a count of the Betuwe by the same name<sup>104</sup>. It is certainly possible that Ansfrid combined the two positions. In a study on the transformation of the office of *comes palatii* in the ninth and tenth centuries, Martin Lintzel recognized a turning point around the mid-ninth century. Whereas in Charlemagne's day a single *comes palatii* was appointed to preside over the legal disputes presented at the royal court, by the time of Otto I this position was held by several men, each representing a different ethnic community within the empire. These later *comites palatii* also received a territorial *comitatus* in their native region to provide them with the resources necessary to execute their office<sup>105</sup>. While Lintzel was able to trace the earliest examples of this new system to the mid-ninth century, he appears to have been unaware of Ansfrid's existence. Ansfrid's case supports Lintzel's thesis perfectly.

The Lorsch charters present Ansfrid's benefice as part of a compensation for having donated the *villa* Geizefurt (near Weeze, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany). Ansfrid had originally obtained Geizefurt as a benefice from Emperor Lothar I, and was given full ownership over the estate by Lothar II, shortly after his royal accession in 855<sup>106</sup>. In exchange for transferring these rights to Lorsch, Ansfrid would retain the usufruct of both the *villa* Geizefurt and the cluster of properties associated with Gendt. In addition, he would also receive four carts of wine annually<sup>107</sup>. Ansfrid, in turn, compensated the monks with an annual rent of forty cow hides. As has been noted above, this complex transaction, involving a large benefice made up out of a scattered group of properties located across the central Low Countries, is what inspired the monks to compile the original Gendt dossier. Above all, these documents

102 CL I, no. 35. On Ansfrid »the Elder«, see: Ulrich NONN, *Pagus und Comitatus in Niederlothringen. Untersuchungen zur politischen Raumgliederung im früheren Mittelalter*, Bonn 1983, p. 62–64; WENSKUS, *Stammesadel* (as in n. 13), p. 132, n. 1133, believed Ansfrid may have been a direct ancestor of the Immedinger queen Mathilde (d. 968). See also Rolf GROSSE, *Das Bistum Utrecht und seine Bischöfe im 10. und frühen 11. Jahrhundert*, Cologne, Vienna 1987, p. 115–130.

103 CL I, nos. 23, 33–35. CL I, no. 118 refers to charters CL I, nos. 33–35.

104 In 855 Folcker donated property to the monastery of Werden. Some of his possessions were located in the Betuwe, *in comitatu Ansfridi*. Rudolf KÖTZSCHKE, *Die Urbare der Abtei Werden an der Ruhr*, vol. 2: *Urbar A*, § 2 (A 1), Bonn 1906–1917 (Publikationen der Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde, 20), p. 10. Because both transactions occurred at the same period and in the same region, they probably involve the same Ansfrid.

105 Martin LINTZEL, *Der Ursprung der deutschen Pfalzgrafschaften*, in: *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Germ. Abt.* 49 (1929), p. 233–263.

106 CL I, no. 23.

107 *Ibid.*, no. 33.

reveal how monastic, royal, and aristocratic interests could converge in what effectively had become a single, if complex, transaction. What nonetheless remains unclear is exactly what each party stood to gain by this transaction, or what motivated them to take part in it.

### Geizfurt: A gift from the king (855)

On 9 November 855, King Lothar II rewarded his faithful count of the palace by granting him ownership of the *villae* Geizfurt and Soye, which the latter had previously held as benefices from the king's illustrious predecessor, Emperor Lothar I<sup>108</sup>. Both estates were located near important royal sites: Soye in the Ardennes and Geizfurt c. 35 km south-east of Nijmegen<sup>109</sup>. The king's motivation was made explicit in the diploma's *arenga*: »it is appropriate that his royal highness should favour with great pleasure the petitions of his leading men and bring them to effect«, and in so doing commit these leading men to his reign<sup>110</sup>. In this case, a petition had been made by Hucbert. As *dux* of Trans-Jura, abbot of St Maurice d'Agaune and brother-in-law to King Lothar II, Hucbert was the most influential aristocrat in Lothar's realm. Unfortunately, the diploma does not specify Hucbert's motives. His presence as an intermediary in this transaction suggests that the two men knew each other and that Hucbert considered, or wished to consider, Ansfrid as his ally. However, it does not necessarily mean that the two magnates were very close, as Hucbert's presence in this royal, and therefore public, transaction may also have served to communicate his close personal standing to the king.

In 859, ostensibly as a result of a shifting balance of power, Lothar repudiated Teutberga, Hucbert's sister, ending the marriage alliance on which Hucbert's position of influence rested. As his properties and titles were confiscated and redistributed, Hucbert found refuge in west Francia, whence he mobilized political opposition to the divorce, which became one of the biggest scandals of Carolingian history. Militarily, Hugh fought tooth and nail to maintain his Trans-Juran estates, but ended up being killed in battle in 864<sup>111</sup>. But what effect did Hucbert's fall from grace have on the bonds between Lothar and those who, like Ansfrid, had benefited from Huc-

108 Ibid., no. 23: *ex rebus nostri quas ipse iure beneficiario detinet ad proprium*. The compiler of the chronicle cartulary in the *Codex Laureshamensis* mistook King Lothar II for Emperor Lothar I. While this may have been an honest mistake, it can also be interpreted as an attempt to mask the absence of any privileges or donations by Emperor Lothar I, which would have become apparent due to cartulary's chronological structure.

109 The *villa* Geizfurt was located on the eastern edge of a large forested area, locked in between the rivers Rhine and Meuse/Niers, and Nijmegen in the west. Bert THISSEN, *Centrum en symbool van koninklijk gezag*, in: Hendrik PETERSE e. a. (ed.), *Het Valkhof. 2000 jaar geschiedenis*, Nijmegen 2014, p. 98–99.

110 CL I, no. 23: *Dignum est ut regalis celsitudo procerum suorum petitionibus tanto libentius annuat et annuendo ad effectum perducat, quanto eos viderit ac noverit in suis obsequiis persistere effi-caces*.

111 Karl HEIDECCKER, *The Divorce of Lothar II. Christian Marriage and Political Power in the Carolingian World*, Ithaca, London 2010 (*Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past*); Rachel STONE, Charles WEST (ed.), *The Divorce of King Lothar and Queen Theutberga*. Hincmar of Rheim's *De Divortio*, Manchester 2016 (*Manchester Medieval Sources Series*), p. 2–10.



bert's patronage? Lothar's drawn-out divorce case had caused plenty of ink to flow, but little is known about the consequences for those who did not occupy the lime-light. What does seem clear, however, is that aristocratic alliances tended to be short-term contracts based on (shared) opportunism rather than loyalty. Hucbert's public denouncement had probably caused many of his former allies to shift their allegiance. Perhaps, the fact that Ansfrid was able to stay on as *comes palatii* says enough.

### Geizefurt: A gift to the Church (866)

On 5 October 866, eleven years after Ansfrid had received the *villae* Geizefurt and Soye from King Lothar II and two years after Hucbert's demise, he donated both estates to Lorsch.<sup>112</sup> That the donation charter presents this transaction as a spiritual act should neither surprise us nor does it have to be questioned. To give to the Church was a spiritual act, but that does not rule out additional motives, for which the formulaic and highly stylized language of the charter left little room. Any ulterior motives will therefore have to be reconstructed from the political, social and economic context of the transaction.

Ansfrid's donation charter provides a detailed description of the *villa* Geizefurt. It was a lordly manse (*mansus indominicatum*) that comprised three independent farmsteads (*hobae*) and nineteen dependent farmsteads (*hobae serviles*). The estate came with a large forest that could sustain a thousand pigs. However, some objects were excluded from the donation: the farmsteads of Wolfbraht, Thudolf, and Sigeburg were not part of the gift, nor was the monastery to deny these men, or their dependants (*servi*), their rights of pasturage in the forest<sup>113</sup>. The document does not specify the nature of the bond between Ansfrid and these three men, nor does it explain why their farmsteads were excluded from the donation. Ansfrid's gift came with the following condition:

»that he may have these goods for the remainder of his life and everything that belongs to the aforesaid monastery in the place or estate called Gendt, both present and future acquisitions (*tam de quesitis quam de inquesitis*), and the property of the aforesaid martyrs of Christ that may be located in any of the places or lands there, that have hitherto served said monastery. And also wine up to four cartloads<sup>114</sup>«.

For the duration of his life, Ansfrid therefore gained a lot more than he gave away in this transaction. In recognition of Lorsch's ownership and to compensate the monks for their loss of income, Ansfrid agreed to pay an annual rent on the feast day of Saint

112 CL I, no. 33 is devoted to the donation of Geizefurt; CL I, no. 34 to the donation of Soye. However, the compiler placed the emphasis on the first transaction.

113 Ibid., no. 33.

114 Ibid.: *quatinus has easdem res ad dies vitae meae habeam, et quicquid ad prefatum monasterium pertinent in loco vel villa que dicitur Gannida tam de quesitis quam de inquesitis, seu in quibuscumque ibidem locis aut terriis consistant res prefati mris. Christi, que hactenus servierunt prefato monasterio; de vineis quoque ad carradas quatuor.*

Martin »of forty cow hides for the work of the brothers«<sup>115</sup>. These forty cow hides (*coria bovia*) were probably used for the production of parchment, since Lorsch was famous for its book production. Alternatively, instead of a compensation for the benefice, these hides may have been a payment for the cartloads of wine, which would make this a middle-long trade agreement<sup>116</sup>.

From the perspective of the benefice holder, this type of transaction, known as a *precaria remuneratoria*, is generally thought to have been economically advantageous only in the short term, since ultimately the generated surplus would revert back to the proprietor of the estate<sup>117</sup>. In practice, however, such benefices rarely ended with the death of the donor, but were often extended to the benefice holder's next of kin. In this case, the *precaria* document, written by the abbot of Lorsch to confirm this transaction, stated that Ansfrid's benefice would be passed on to his son Hildiward in the event of his death<sup>118</sup>. A careful reading of a lengthy provision in Ansfrid's charter shows that Ansfrid had been looking for rather more long-term sureties for his descendants. In the event of his death, the charter stated,

»both these properties with everything that belongs to it should be returned to the aforesaid venerable monastery without any objection. They should remain in their power and control especially for the nourishment of the brethren, and they should not at any time be given in benefice. But if this were to happen, my heirs have licence to reclaim that [property] and divide it up between themselves, except if to acquire it by means of a *precaria* can be of great use to the monastery<sup>119</sup>«.

Couched in a language that was deeply respectful of the needs and rights of the Church, Ansfrid nonetheless accomplished several important things: first of all, he linked Geizfurt to Gendt's extensive property complex. Secondly, he prevented third parties from benefiting from these estates. Should Lorsch give these estates to another in benefice, Ansfrid's successors were entitled to step in and reclaim the land. These estates were exclusively dedicated to support the Lorsch community, should these lands be needed »for the nourishment of the brethren«, or to his own descen-

115 Ibid.: *coria bovina ad opus fratrum quadraginta persolvere*. It was common for a proprietor to demand a small, symbolic rent for a property given out as a benefice, to remind the beneficiary that the property was a loan. To compensate Ansfrid for his donation of the *villa* Soye to Lorsch, he received the *villa Baldanis* as a benefice, for which he had to pay the monastery an annual rent of (only) three *denarii*. In comparison, the forty cowhides he owed Lorsch for the usufruct of Geizfurt and Gendt is more substantial, and certainly more than a mere »token rent«.

116 I thank Karl Heidecker for this suggestion.

117 THISSEN, *Besitz der Reichsabtei Lorsch* (as in n. 15), p. 97.

118 CL I, no. 35.

119 Ibid., no. 33: *Post obitum vero meum, utraeque memoratae res cum omni integritate ad prenominatum venerabile monasterium absque ullius contradictione recipia[n]tur, et in eius potestate atque dominio permaneant, fratribus specialiter ad sustentaculum; et nulli umquam in beneficium de[n]tur. Quodsi factum fuerit, heredes mei illud inde abstrahere licentiam habeant, atque inter se dispertiri, excepto si maior utilitas eidem monasterio per precariam acquire possit*. Note that this clause is absent in no. 35, the *precaria* document of this transaction drawn up in Abbot Thiodroch's name.

dants in the form of a *precaria*, should such a thing be »of great use to the monastery«. In practice it meant that the income generated by these lands, minus the rent owed to Lorsch, would continue to support Ansfrid's family<sup>120</sup>. The only scenario that allowed the monks to take control of these estates was if Ansfrid's line died out or if the monastery came to rely on its produce for its sustenance. Although this may have become something of a reality by the twelfth century, in Ansfrid's time Lorsch was at its apex, which made Ansfrid's provision above all a respectful gesture. Finally, Lorsch's vast landed wealth, scattered across the Carolingian world, made it impossible for the monks to manage their lands directly. Whether they liked it or not, large monasteries were as dependent on *precaria*-arrangements as their donors were, for it was only through the aid of such benefice holders that they were able to manage their far-flung estates and collect rents.<sup>121</sup>

### Motives for giving

There were many reasons to give to the Church. The promise of a spiritual reward was important, but other, more mundane, motives may have played a role, too<sup>122</sup>. To give one's property to the Church and receive the usufruct back in *precaria*, made it possible to bequeath one's earthly possessions during life, since the donor retained the means to sustain him- or herself. The *precaria* system made vast amounts of landed property available to be (re-)invested in networks of gift exchange. It also made these networks highly dynamic, as it allowed even the poorest proprietors to invest their property without significantly having to injure the material basis from which they derived their income, making it possible, in other words, to have your cake and eat it. Soon, variations on this theme emerged. For example, donors could be compensated with the usufruct of a different property or, as in Ansfrid's case, the donor received the usufruct of other estates in addition to the one he donated. From a material point of view, Ansfrid's transaction was an extremely profitable one, even when we take into account his obligation to pay an annual rent of forty cowhides. What this shows is that not all of these transactions were done exclusively for the sake of spiritual welfare<sup>123</sup>.

There were also disadvantages. Giving away one's property and accept land in *precaria* meant giving up one's property rights, which essentially formed the bedrock of the Frankish concept of legal status. By definition, the reception of a benefice created a bond of legal dependence between the proprietor and the benefice holder, which

120 Cf. THISSEN, *Besitz der Reichsabtei Lorsch* (as in n. 15), p. 97 argues that the benefice would fall back to Lorsch after the death of Hildward. But although CL I, no. 35 states that Hildward would inherit his father's benefice, there is no reason that it ended with him.

121 Alexis WILKIN, *Communautés bénédictines et environnement économique, IX<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Réflexions sur les tendances historiographiques de l'analyse du temporel monastique*, in: Steven VANDERPUTTEN, Brigitte MEIJNS (ed.), *Ecclesia in medio nationis*, Louvain 2012, p. 101-150, esp. 104-110 and 144-145.

122 COSTAMBEYS, *Power and Patronage* (as in n. 15), p. 48-55.

123 On *precaria* see: Laurent MORELLE, *Les »actes de précaire«, instruments de transferts patrimoniaux (France du Nord et de l'Est, VIII<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, in: *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Âge* 111 (1999), p. 607-647; Hans J. HUMMER, *Politics and power in early medieval Europe: Alsace and the Frankish Realm, 600-1000*, Cambridge 2005, p. 76-130.

could be expressed in the form of certain conditions or restrictions and/or in the form of an annual rent, which could be either fairly substantial or merely symbolic. Above all, ties of dependence affected one's status and identity. These disadvantages, however, could easily be outweighed by the advantages of such a pact. In Ansfrid's case, there were substantial material gains, which, through lavish spending, could in turn be used to generate social status. Moreover, to give one's property to the Church could be an effective strategy to protect family property against fragmentation as a consequence of inheritance laws<sup>124</sup>. Those who held church property in *precaria* shared in the legal privileges of the institution that owned their land, ranging from various tax exemptions to immunity from royal agents. Lastly, the status of church property acted as a safeguard against property alienation or confiscation.

Threats to his social status may have been very real to someone of Ansfrid's stature, who had to contend with changing political climates, peer competition and ambitious monarchs, eager to invade and claim their ancestral legacy. Both Louis the German and Charles the Bald had made attempts to annex (parts of) Lotharingia during Lothar II's reign<sup>125</sup>. Moreover, through blood and marital ties, aristocratic kin groups and their interests were rarely confined to a single realm, or beholden to a single ruler. While this could result in conflicting interests, it also stimulated political stability and kept monarchical power in check, for rulers had to ensure that their most powerful magnates would not defect to the competition<sup>126</sup>. This might help us to understand why Ansfrid donated his Lotharingian estates to the East Frankish monastery of Lorsch, and why, according to the donation charter, he had done so »for the welfare of [his] soul and those of [his] Lords, through whom this property is known to have reached [him]«<sup>127</sup>.

In the *prestaria* document attached to the donation charter, these »Lords« are identified as Lothar and Louis. Based on the transaction date, it has been assumed that this implied Lothar II and Louis the German<sup>128</sup>. That property of the royal monastery of Lorsch was involved might easily explain Louis's presence in the charter. However, if viewed from a political perspective, this transaction can also be seen as an attempt at appeasement between Lothar and Louis. Throughout his reign, Lothar II repeatedly shifted his allegiance between his uncles, hoping to prevent either one from invading his realm. A twelfth-century note in the *Codex Laureshamensis* stated that Ansfrid had received his estates from Louis, even though, as we have seen, the

124 Wolfgang HARTUNG, Adel, Erbrecht, Schenkung. Die strukturellen Ursachen der frühmittelalterlichen Besitzübertragungen an die Kirche, in: Ferdinand SEIBT (ed.), Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Festschrift für Karl Bosl zum 80. Geburtstag, vol. 1, München 1988, p. 417–438; HUMMER, Politics and power (as in n. 123), p. 65–66. Hummer spoke of church institutions as a means to establish and maintain »precarial kin-groups«. See also Barbara ROSENWEIN, Property transfer and the Church, eighth to eleventh centuries: an overview, in: Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Âge 111 (1999), p. 563–575.

125 Janet NELSON, Charles the Bald, London 1992, p. 200; Eric J. GOLDBERG, Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817–876, Ithaca, NY 2006 (Conjunctions of religion and power in the medieval past), p. 233–234, 249; HEIDECKER, Divorce (as in n. 111), p. 141.

126 HEIDECKER, Divorce (as in n. 111), p. 143–144.

127 CL I, no. 35: *Pro elemosina tua et domnorum regum Lotharii et Ludouuici*.

128 THISSEN, Besitz der Reichsabtei Lorsch (as in n. 15), p. 98–99.

charter copied into the *Codex* identifies Lothar as Ansfrid's benefactor<sup>129</sup>. In an attempt to explain Louis's presence in these documents, Bert Thissen has pointed to Hucbert's involvement, speculating that Ansfrid may have been implicated in the former's rebellion after all. Lothar must have confiscated Ansfrid's property, which would then have been restored to him through the intercession of Louis the German, albeit on the condition that Ansfrid would donate both estates to Lorsch in exchange for a benefice<sup>130</sup>. Thissen's reconstruction connects the dots in a compelling way, but there is little evidence to support it.

A further obstacle is presented in the final *notitia* of the Gendt dossier, which refers back to Ansfrid's transaction as recorded almost verbatim elsewhere in the chronicle cartulary. The notice reads as follows:

»The donation of Ansfrid, count of the palace, in the district *Hattuaria*, in the mark *Odeheimere*, in the *villa* Geizefurt, and in the district *Darnau*, in the *villa* Soye, and also his *prestaria*, which is copied next to the privilege of King Louis *tercius* and in whose time this was done<sup>131</sup>.«

The final section of the notice is problematic for three reasons: First, Louis *tercius*, otherwise known to us as Louis the Younger, son of Louis the German, is never referred to as such in contemporary accounts. We are likely dealing with a twelfth-century interpolation. Secondly, Louis the Younger's reign formally began in 876, a decade after Ansfrid's transaction with Lorsch. Lastly, no privileges of Louis the Younger have been preserved in the *Codex Laureshamensis*. Various explanations are possible, the most likely being that the twelfth-century compiler confused Louis the German with Louis the Younger, just as he (intentionally or not) mistook King Lothar II for Emperor Lothar I<sup>132</sup>.

If, on the other hand, we do take this attribution to Louis the Younger seriously, than the Louis mentioned in Ansfrid's charter might not refer to Lothar's uncle, but to his cousin instead. As it happened, early in 866 Louis the Younger had seized control of the northern part of the East Frankish kingdom, while his father was occupied in Bavaria<sup>133</sup>. To further bolster his claims, the younger Louis enlisted the support of powerful aristocrats, including that of the Lotharingian aristocrat Adalhard, whose daughter he had agreed to marry<sup>134</sup>. When Louis the German learned of his son's rebellion, he rushed north and negotiated a temporary truce. Come November, father and son had formally reconciled. The »Annals of Fulda« present the entire affair as a minor inconvenience for Louis the German. Apart from cancelling his son's engage-

129 CL I, c. 33.

130 THISSEN, Besitz der Reichsabtei Lorsch (as in n. 15), p. 98–99.

131 CL I, no. 118: *Donatio etiam Ansfridi palatini comitis, in pago Hattuaria in Odeheimere marca, in uilla Geizefurt, et in pago Darnau, in uilla Sodoia, itemque prestaria eius, iuxta priuilegia Luodowici regis tercii descripta est, cuius etiam tempore facta est.*

132 Ibid., c. 23.

133 AF, s. a. 865–866; AB, s. a. 866; GOLDBERG, Struggle for Empire (as in n. 125), p. 275–277. In 865, Louis the German had made plans to divide his realm between his three heirs in the event of his death, assigning the northern part (which included the Wormsgau) to Louis the Younger.

134 AB, s. a. 865. On Adalhard: HEIDECCKER, Divorce (as in n. 111), p. 60.

ment to Adalhard's daughter, Louis the German's response to his son's betrayal appears to have been rather forgiving<sup>135</sup>.

How does Ansfrid fit in all this? His donation to Lorsch is dated to 5 October, when Louis the Younger allegedly claimed to rule the northern part of East Francia, including the Wormsgau, where Lorsch was located. Though formally allied to Louis the German, it is doubtful that Lothar would have objected too strongly to the destabilization of his uncle's kingdom. But had Ansfrid also supported Louis the Younger? Perhaps instead of searching for a link between Ansfrid and Louis, we ought to be looking for one between Ansfrid and Adalard, whom we know supported Louis the Younger's claims. Significant in this respect is that in 860, as noted above, Adalhard had acted as an intermediary in a transaction in which Lothar assigned the fiscal property in Gendt to Lorsch<sup>136</sup>. As count of the Betuwe, Ansfrid's involvement in the transaction is likely. The main purpose of this transaction undoubtedly was to strengthen Lothar's bond with Louis the German, but the deed itself directly benefitted Gerward, who at that time still acted as Lorsch's caretaker in Gendt. As I shall suggest below, Ansfrid was probably a member of Gerward's kin group.

### A family affair?

In the footnotes of his monumental »Stammesadel und fränkischer Reichsadel«, Reinhard Wenskus claimed that the men who held centre stage in the transactions involving Gendt – i. e. Ruthard, Gerward, Adalward, Lantward, Ansfrid and Hildward – had all been related to one another and formed a sub-branch of the influential Saxon clan (*Sippe*) known to history as the Immedings<sup>137</sup>. Unfortunately, Wenskus did little to substantiate this claim, which apparently derived from his general thesis that aristocratic name giving was subject to a strict set of rules which the historian can use to reconstruct kinship ties<sup>138</sup>. Obviously, certain kin groups favoured certain names (or name elements), but the general consensus today is that there are simply too many exceptions to reconstruct kinship ties on onomastic grounds alone<sup>139</sup>. Still, if Wenskus is correct in identifying these men as members of one and the same family, it would add a new dimension to these transactions and the strategies that aristocratic families used to ensure their social and economic survival.

135 AF, s. a. 866, p. 55, n. 6.

136 See n. 65.

137 WENSKUS, Stammesadel (as in n. 13), p. 130, n. 1118. For a critique of the notion that Frankish society was founded on the basis of clan structures, see: Alexander C. MURRAY, Germanic Kinship structure. Studies in Law and Society in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, Toronto 1983, p. 109.

138 WENSKUS, Stammesadel (as in n. 13), c. 3.

139 There is much literature on the subject. See, for example: Karl F. WERNER, Liens de parenté et noms de personne. Un problème historique et méthodologique, in: Georges Duby (ed.), Famille et parenté dans l'Occident médiéval. Actes du colloque de Paris (6–8 juin 1974), Rome 1977, p. 13–18, 25–34; Constance B. BOUCHARD, Conclusions, in: Steffen PATZOLD, Karl Ubl (ed.), Verwandtschaft, Name und soziale Ordnung (300–1000), Berlin, Boston 2014 (Ergänzungsbande zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, 90), p. 307 (with reference to other articles in the same volume).

As explained above, historians have generally assumed that Gerward, Adalward and Lantward were related. The main argument for this assumption is that each of their names contains the element »-ward«. This also allows us to link these Lorsch transactions to the Utrecht donation charter of 828, which identifies Gerward as the son of Lantward<sup>140</sup>. In addition to this onomastic argument, each of these three men had owned property in and around Gendt, which they then each donated to the same monastery, at the same time. Whether the *vir illuster* Ruthard should also be counted among the members of this family is unlikely: although he had owned a manse in Gendt, which he traded with Lorsch in 800, no other arguments substantiate this claim.

A more important question is whether Ansfrid can also be linked to this kin group. There is no hard proof, but three arguments support this claim. First, there is the onomastic argument: Ansfrid's son bore the name Hildiward. Secondly, Ansfrid was active in the same region as the others. Apart from the *villae* Geizefurt and Soye, which originally came to him in the form of benefices given to him by Emperor Lothar I, presumably to support him in his office as count of the palace, we have no other records of Ansfrid's possessions, whether in the Betuwe region or elsewhere. Nevertheless, according to the *prestaría* document it had been Ansfrid who petitioned the monks to assign Gendt to him as a benefice<sup>141</sup>. Moreover, as argued above, the combination of his *honores*, namely count of the palace and count of the Betuwe, suggests he originated from the Betuwe region. The final argument relates to a possible connection between Ansfrid, Lantward and Hucbert. When Lantward donated his property to Lorsch in 814, it included a manse in the *villa* Beek, just east of Nijmegen<sup>142</sup>. In 826, Count Boso, Hucbert's father, exchanged eight manses and a small church (*cappella*) in the same settlement with Emperors Louis and Lothar, in exchange for extensive royal estates in Northern Italy<sup>143</sup>. Hucbert's connection with Ansfrid has already been discussed above. As members of the imperial aristocracy, moreover, Boso would have been acquainted with Gerward via the court. However, their shared holdings in the *villa* Beek may have resulted in a more intimate bond, which in turn might explain why Hucbert interceded on Ansfrid's behalf in 855 (see fig. 3)<sup>144</sup>.

Individually these arguments do not carry much weight, but combined they begin to add up. At first glance, Ansfrid's acquisition of Gendt and its related properties seems unrelated to Gerward's role as caretaker of these same estates. After all, the former received these properties *in precaria*, while the latter, a monk of Lorsch, oversaw this vast conglomeration of estates as an agent of the monastery. Once we consider the possibility that these two men were related, and realize that, from the per-

140 LÖWE, Studien (as in n. 82), p. 87–88.

141 CL I, no. 35.

142 Ibid., no. 103.

143 MGH. D LdF, no. 256; BÖHMER-MÜHLBACHER, Regesta Imperii, vol. I, no. 1277a. Boso became a chief adviser of Emperor Louis II. Piet LEUPEN, De Karolingische villa Beek en de stamvader van de Bosoniden, in: Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden 92 (1977), p. 373–393; ID., Nogmaals Beek en de stamvader van de Bosoniden, ibid. 93 (1978), p. 446–449; HEIDECKER, Divorce (as in n. 111), p. 59–60.

144 LÖWE, Studien (as in n. 82), p. 88.

spective of their family, the net outcome was the same, this transition can be understood as a creative solution to keep the resources generated by these estates within the family. If technically ecclesiastical property, of which Lorsch benefited in the form of annual rents, the situation on the ground was a very different one: these estates would continue to function as the economic basis from which this particular aristocratic family was able to extract the resources it needed to sustain itself and its clients.

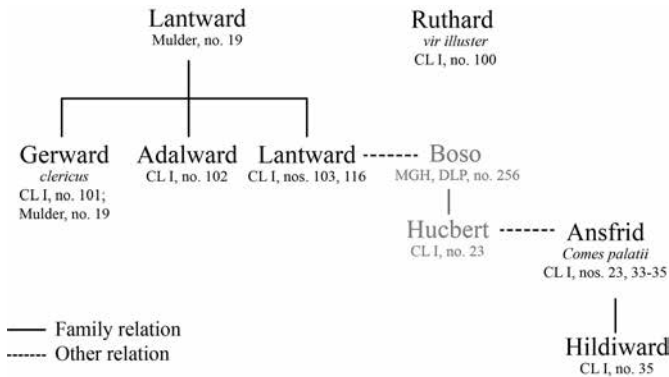


Fig. 3: Relations between Gerward's and Boso's family

## Conclusion

The collection of documents that are concerned with the *villa* Gendt, as preserved in the twelfth-century *Codex Laureshamensis*, presents a unique and rich source of information for one specific rural estate in the Carolingian Netherlands. These documents reveal Gendt's transformation from a seemingly ordinary rural settlement in the *pagus* Betuwe, characterized by a variety of proprietors, into a monolithic monastic estate centre from which Lorsch oversaw its holdings in the Lower Rhine region. Of course, the notion that Lorsch loomed large over Gendt and its affiliated property is precisely the image that the twelfth-century compilers of the *Codex Laureshamensis* had hoped to impress on their readership, for it was their intention to create a property book that would help the community reclaim its former wealth and status.

We have to be careful not to confuse estate ownership with estate exploitation. That we often seem to do just that, owes much to the character of the sources on which we rely for our information: the documents that predominantly recorded the transfer of property rights. Charters project an inherent bias on several accounts: for one, documents preserved in ecclesiastical archives had a much higher chance of survival than »lay« documents. Indeed, very few documents have survived that record transactions between members of the laity. Secondly, the language and form of the charter was dictated by formulaic conventions that above all served to communicate a transaction's religious character, but which left little to no room for any potential social, economic, or political motives. Thirdly, these documents were often com-



posed and preserved by the ecclesiastical beneficiary, especially east of the Rhine. One implication of this is that it becomes very difficult *not* to identify the ecclesiastical beneficiary (acting as both author and record keeper) as the dominant party in the transaction. This effect becomes even stronger as the interests and economic mentalities of ecclesiastical institutions began to shift and archives were being reorganized, subjecting their contents to various processes of selection and manipulation, as has been the case in Lorsch<sup>145</sup>.

This case study has been an exercise in reading the extant documents against the grain, by studying these transactions from the perspective of the men and women in the Lower Rhine region who donated property to a distant monastery in the Wormsgau. Some general observations can be made: First, while some may have donated property from their death beds, others donated while still in the prime of their lives. Having donated, these donors did not simply disappear, but continued to be involved in the properties that, in a modern legal sense, were no longer theirs. Gerward is a case in point, especially if we take into account that he was succeeded by Count Ansfrid, to whom he was probably related. Their continued involvement in the exploitation of the estates that they had given to the monastery of Lorsch, and their continued reliance on the material resources these lands yielded, suggests that these gifts had sprung from a combination of spiritual and material motives. Secondly, a core group of donors associated with Lorsch's property in and around Gendt appears to have acted collectively. Gendt's transformation into a monastic *curtis* (though the earliest explicit reference to this dates to 1024<sup>146</sup>) hardly was a gradual evolution, but came about rather suddenly in 814, when Gerward *clericus*, along with his siblings and a host of other proprietors from the region, donated substantial properties to Lorsch. Because of his background as a courtier, his status as a monk of Lorsch, and the prominent position of his donation among the Gendt documents, Gerward appears to have been the leader of this regional elite network. In all these recorded transactions Lorsch looms large, but it played a very modest role when it came to the exploitation of these estates. As long as the annual rents came in, the monks may not have given their property on the fringes of the Carolingian world a second thought.

That Ansfrid was able to succeed Gerward in Gendt serves as a reminder that family interests came first. Unfortunately, we do not know what Gerward was able to extract from the *villa* Gendt and its dependencies, or how much of its surplus found its way to Lorsch. If we assume that the 814 donations were a collective transaction, Gerward will probably have had to distribute a substantial part of the estate's revenues among his clients. Luckily we are better informed about Ansfrid's takeover. In return for the right to exploit Gendt and Geizfurt, and receive an annual shipment of four cartloads of wine, Lorsch merely demanded forty cow hides. If these payments are indeed to be understood as rents (rather than payment for the wine), it hardly constituted a symbolic reminder of ownership. At the same time, forty cow-hides must have been a fraction of the total surplus generated by these estates, especially if we take into account the large-scale iron production on the Veluwe. While

145 See n. 12.

146 CL I, no. 96.

this industry is well attested archaeologically, there are no written sources to testify to its existence, let alone to inform us how iron production and distribution was organized, or by whom<sup>147</sup>. What is significant, however, is that Lorsch, though formally in possession of the woodlands that generated these vast amounts of iron ore (and charcoal), did not demand a rent in the form of iron ingots, but in cowhides. This, at least, might suggest that its exploitation was left to its aristocratic caretakers, that is to say to Gerward and his circle. The unequal distribution of the surplus and revenues between the exploiter of ecclesiastical property and its legal owner serves as a warning not to confuse the legal reality, as recorded in a charter, with the economic reality on the ground<sup>148</sup>.

This study of the *villa* Gendt contributes to ongoing debates on the character of the Carolingian economy, agricultural production and distribution, and estate management. While this is not the place to present a nuanced overview of the many voices in these debates, a brief and highly generalized sketch of the dominant opinions can be provided. It has become commonplace to argue that the Carolingian economy was marked by growth, caused by technological and organizational advancements (e.g. crop rotation, new ploughing techniques and manorialization). The path to this new prosperity was lit by royal example, as expressed in the famous *Capitulare de villis*, and the model of this royal text was subsequently implemented by major ecclesiastical institutions, particularly those located in the Paris Basin, as evidenced in ninth-century polyptychs<sup>149</sup>. Over time, these techniques trickled down to even the smallest estates owned by local aristocrats (though by then we appear to have arrived in the tenth century). However, what the present case study has meant to show, is that while a successful Carolingian royal monastery like Lorsch dominates the written record, it in practice exerted little influence on the organization of agricultural production, surplus extraction and trade. In the case of Gendt, Lorsch's function resembled that of a trust in which Gerward *cum suis* could invest their property. Their pact with this royal monastery enabled them to gain access to other monastic lands in the region, benefit from the host institution's legal privileges, and protect their income against potential confiscation or alienation by their political rivals and superiors. Although they may have given up their property rights, Gerward and his successors nonetheless remained firmly in control of Gendt: initially through Gerward's affiliation with the monastery, but later through successive benefices. While the Church may have owned over a third of the Carolingian world, the bulk of the resources these lands generated probably never found its way to the coffers of the great ecclesiastical institutions, for which they both lacked the organizational capacity as well as the incentive. Instead, economic agency chiefly resided with ambitious local aristocrats, whose social and political standing hinged on their ability lavishly to consume and distribute wealth.

147 See n. 38.

148 Matthew J. INNES, Practices of property in the Carolingian Empire, in: Jennifer R. DAVIS, Michael McCORMICK (ed.), *The long morning of medieval Europe: new directions in early medieval studies*, Aldershot 2008, p. 247–266.

149 Darryl CAMPBELL, *The Capitulare de Villis, the Brevium exempla, and the Carolingian court at Aachen*, in: *Early medieval Europe* 18 (2010), p. 243–264.