Saints and Demons in the Carolingian Countryside

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I. Introduction. The Sources for the Study of the Carolingian Countryside

»*What a shock it might be if, instead of poring laboriously over the jumbled – and probably artificial – terminology of the Carolingian manorial scrolls and capitularies, we were able to take a walk through a village of that time, overhearing the peasants discussing their status amongst themselves, or the seigneurs describing that of their dependants*«[2)].

Since Marc Bloch wrote those lines in 1941/42, our knowledge of the early medieval countryside in the post-Roman West in general, and in early medieval Francia in particular, has been transformed. That transformation is due in part to improvements in the simple availability of evidence. New editions of key written texts have appeared, and new digital techniques of engaging with them; a few entirely new documents have been discovered and published for the first time[3)]. The material record too has been enriched

1) The origins of this paper lie in discussions between the authors about the shared themes between peasant conflicts in the *miracula* studied by West, and Innes' analysis of narrative episodes (notably in the Annals of Fulda) in the light of documentary and epistolary evidence. The interpretation and argument advanced is thus the result of a shared endeavour. West was responsible for presenting the text at the Reichenau, and subsequent elaboration and refinement has been a shared and iterative process. West discusses the implications of a specific anecdote in Charles West, Le saint, le charpentier et le prêtre, in: Faire lien. Aristocratie, réseaux et échanges compétitifs. Mélanges en l'honneur de Régine Le Jan, ed. Laurent Jégou et al., Paris 2015, pp. 237–248; Innes has a study of Kempten in the context of Carolingian discourse about peasants in preparation. We are grateful to Mayke de Jong and Steffen Patzold for comments on a draft of this paper, to the participants of the *Kleine Welten* conference at the Reichenau for lively discussion, and to the editorial team at Tübingen, especially Petra Seckinger, for their help with preparing the text. Charles West also thanks the Humboldt-Stiftung for its support.

2) Marc Bloch, Apologie pour l'histoire, ou métier d'historien, Paris 1949, p. 84: »Quelle étonnement, peut être si, au lieu de peiner sur la terminologie embrouillée (et probablement artificielle) des censiers et des capitulaires carolingiens, nous pouvions, promenent nos pas dans un village de ce temps, écouter les paysans nommant entre eux leurs conditions ou les seigneurs celles de leurs sujets?«. The English translation is taken from Marc Bloch, The Historian's Craft, transl. Peter Putnam, Manchester 1954, p. 166.

3) Particularly important has been the Chartae Latinae Antiquiores project, with facsimiles and editions of all original documents prior to 800, recently extended to the ninth century; an online edition is planned in the long-term: see http://www.urs-graf-verlag.com/ (28.08.2017). Similarly, the ARTEM project has made accessible all original charters preserved in modern France prior to 1121: http://www.cn-telma.fr/originaux/index/ (28.08.2017). Meanwhile, digitisation has made the texts of many thousands of charters

through an immense accumulation of archaeological data, particularly in France thanks to the remarkable work of INRAP, but elsewhere as well, data whose publication and analysis is ongoing[4]. Most recently of all, there is the promise of new kinds of quantitative evidence beginning to emerge from the hard sciences, with studies on data collections ranging from pollen to tree rings to volcanic dust[5].

Alongside these changes in the corpus of evidence, however, early medieval historians have also honed new methodologies to interrogate what is often rebarbative material to shed light on village communities (understood as groups formed through patterns of interaction, rather than as homogenous or harmonious blocs)[6]. They have drawn on the legal anthropology of conflict resolution, on a renewed sensitivity to transactional networks, on theories of peasant society developed by the Russian economist Alexander Chayanov, and on theories of embedded markets[7]. The consequence of these changes,

published in nineteenth-century editions available: see http://www.cn-telma.fr/chartae-galliae (28.08.2017). In the medium term these technological innovations are likely not only to render traditional editions more accessible and searchable, but also to change how we understand and interrogate the documentary corpus. A good example of an important source entirely unknown to Bloch is the polyptych of Lobbes: Jean-Pierre Devroey, Le polyptyque et les listes de biens de l'abbaye Saint-Pierre de Lobbes (IX^{e}–XI^{e} siècles), Brussels 1986. New documents are still being discovered and edited: for a recent example see Nicolas Schroeder, Documents de gestion inédits provenant de l'abbaye de Stavelot-Malmédy et concernant les domaines de Lantremagne, Jenneret et Louvèigne (X^{e}–XII^{e} siècles), in: Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire 180 (2014), pp. 5–48.

4) The French material is most conveniently approached through the ongoing series Carte archéologique de la Gaule. See Chris Loveluck, Northwest Europe in the Early Middle Ages, c. AD 600–1150. A Comparative Archaeology, Cambridge 2013, and Édith Peytremann, Archéologie de l'habitat rural dans le nord de la France de IV^{e} au XII^{e} siècle, 2 vols., Paris 2003 for good recent syntheses. The latest finds can be accessed at the INRAP website http://www.inrap.fr (28.08.2017). For German settlement archaeology, see Sebastian Brather, this volume pp. 21–66.

5) Michael McCormick/Paul Dutton/Paul Mayewski, Volcanoes and the Climate Forcing of Carolingian Europe AD 750–950, in: Speculum 82 (2007), pp. 865–895; Fredric L. Cheyette, The Disappearance of the Ancient Landscape and the Climatic Anomaly of the Early Middle Ages. A Question to be pursued, in: Early Medieval Europe 16 (2008), pp. 127–165. See also the work of Timothy Newfield, for instance: Id., Human-Bovine Plagues in the Early Middle Ages, in: Journal of Interdisciplinary History 46 (2015), pp. 1–38. A good summary of the overall field is provided by Richard Hoffmann, An Environmental History of Medieval Europe, Cambridge 2015.

6) It is evidently not possible to summarise this work here, but a recent summary and synthesis can be found in Marios Costambeys/Matthew Innes/Simon Maclean, The Carolingian World, Cambridge 2011, esp. pp. 223–270. In this paper we follow the position rehearsed there, that the basic units of rural settlement are most helpfully described as »villages«, notwithstanding debate over the degree of formalisation in their internal structures; and we also refer to »communities« without implying notions of harmonious *Gemeinschaften*, since these small worlds could be ones of »suspicion, discord and oppression« (ibid., p. 252).

7) Disputes: see Warren Brown/Piotr Gorecki, Conflict in Medieval Europe. Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture, Aldershot 2003, whose introduction summarises the development of Anglo-American approaches. Networks: Wendy Davies, Small Worlds. The Village Community in Early Medieval

both in the evidence available and in its analysis, has been a shift in our attitude towards the early medieval European countryside that could be summed up as a move from Henri Pirenne back to Alfons Dopsch in content if not timing: away from a stress on the economics of long-distance exchange, towards the primacy of agricultural production; away from a gloomy picture of auto-sufficiency and bare subsistence, towards a better understanding of the dynamics and opportunities for growth and specialisation[8].

Yet notwithstanding this transformation in our understanding of the early medieval countryside, the key sources remain today what they were in Bloch's day: charters, capitularies and Bloch's »manorial scrolls«, better known as polyptychs. Together, these documents offer more written evidence for the northern European countryside in the ninth century than is available for any earlier period in history, including the Roman Empire, and for several centuries afterwards too. As apparently unequivocal statements of social and economic organisation, they continue to provide the framework for the interpretation of the growing archaeological and scientific data.

That these documentary sources have maintained their historiographical centrality does not of course mean that there have been no methodological innovations in recent decades in how they are interpreted. Historians are increasingly learning not only to read such sources as interested presentations of the relationships which they sought to define, but also to pay careful attention to the agencies of their production and preservation. As a result, we can certainly no longer see »documentary evidence« as somehow more objective than the narratives that have been the subject of such sustained and sophisticated analysis in modern scholarship; documents no less than narratives attempted to control interpretation of multivalent social interactions[9]. In that sense, historians eager to inves-

Brittany, London 1988, and Barbara Rosenwein, To be the Neighbor of Saint Peter. The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049, Ithaca (NY) 1989, inspired a generation of emerging scholars. Theories of peasant society: Jean-Pierre Devroey, Puissants et misérables. Système social et monde paysan dans l'Europe des Francs (VI^{e}–IX^{e} siècles), Brussels 2006; Chris Wickham, Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800, Oxford 2005; embedded markets: Laurent Feller/Agnès Gramain/Florence Weber, La Fortune du Karol. Marché de la terre et liens personnels dans les Abruzzes au haut Moyen Âge, Rome 2005.

8) For recent syntheses, see Wickham, Framing (as n. 7), Devroey, Puissants (as n. 7) and From one Sea to another. Trading Places in the European and Mediterranean Early Middle Ages, ed. Sauro Gelichi/Richard Hodges, Turnhout 2012.

9) See for example Warren Brown, Charters as Weapons. On the Role played by Early Medieval Dispute Records in the Disputes they record, in: Journal of Medieval History 28 (2002), pp. 227–248; Matthew Innes, On the Material Culture of Legal Documents. Charters and their Preservation in the Cluny Archive, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries, in: Documentary Culture and the Laity in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, ed. Id. et al., Cambridge 2013, pp. 283–320; and Josiane Barbier, The Praetor does concern himself with Trifles. Hincmar, the Polyptych of St-Remi and the Slaves of Courtisols, in: Hincmar of Rheims. Life and Work, ed. Rachel Stone/Charles West, Manchester 2015, pp. 211–227.

tigate the workings of rural society have become experts at reading these familiar texts against the grain.

Nevertheless, the intrinsic character of these sources imposes limits on such readings. Despite the significant differences between them, charters, capitularies and polyptychs are all, to use a Weberian terminology, »routinizing« documents[10]. They describe power relations in the countless small worlds of early medieval Europe in a particular way, with reference to law, custom and reason; and they sought to shape those relations in that way, too. To read these documents, the Carolingian countryside was organised in terms of clear cut obligations and rights of ownership, its small worlds animated by issues of formal status and property. That is of course precisely the message that these texts were intended to convey, and that is why they were so carefully preserved.

In what follows, therefore, we shall pursue Bloch's line of thought with which we began, but we also seek to take it further. For the challenge that we face is, *pace* Bloch, not simply that of jumbled or artificial terminology: it rests in the very nature of the dominant forms of evidence. What about social processes that were simply impossible to express in the documentary discourse, or that could only be expressed by transforming their nature, because they took place in a different register altogether? If our documentary archives present a hegemonic »public transcript« of rural power relations[11], can we find anecdotal fragments which may have originated, prior to any reworking by monastic compilers on behalf of their institutions, outside of that discourse; and if we can, what implications do they have for us as historians? These are the questions that this paper explores.

II. The Village in Frankish Miracle Collections: Four Case Studies

The countryside featured heavily – in fact it predominated – in documents that Carolingian monks stored in their archives: but villages and villagers can also be found in quite a different genre of text chiefly produced and preserved by monasteries, namely miracle

10) Used in preference to »normative«, a category which is not always helpful. Essential reading for anyone using Weberian terminology relating to his notion of charisma: Joshua Derman, Max Weber in Politics and Social Thought. From Charisma to Canonisation, Cambridge 2012, conveniently summarised in Id., Max Weber and Charisma. A Transatlantic Affair, in: New German Critique 38 (2011), pp. 51–88. For a recent discussion of early medieval (economic) rationalities, see Jean-Pierre Devroey, Ordering, measuring, and counting: Carolingian rule, cultural capital and the economic performance in Western Europe (750–900), http://difusion.ulb.ac.be/vufind/Record/ULB-DIPOT:oai:dipot.ulb.ac.be:2013/124981/Holdings (22.10.2017).

11) The terminology is that developed by James C. Scott, in a range of sociological studies of modern peasant societies, see for example: James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of the Resistance. Hidden Transcripts, Yale 1992.

collections[12]. Accounts of the eruption of the divine into the everyday life of rural communities in early medieval Francia appear with regularity in the reams of parchment used to record the interventions of monasteries' heavenly patrons in the lives of those subjected to them, as monks, professional rememberers, strove to prevent important details being lost, or even the events being forgotten altogether (and often severely castigated their predecessors for neglecting this commemorative duty)[13]. The genre was far from new in the ninth century – Gregory of Tours had written extensively on miracles in the sixth century – but the Carolingian age witnessed its renewed blossoming, as contemporaries recognised[14].

Traditionally, historians have skirted round texts of this kind. Misgivings about their value mean that many important representatives of the genre – including most of the ones discussed in this paper – are still only accessible in antiquated editions. Even Einhard's *Translatio Sanctorum Marcellini et Petri* was included in the august MGH series only on suffrance, because of the fame of its author – the miracles themselves seemed to the editor »everyday and hardly worthy of remembering«[15]. More recently, there has been a remarkable surge in attention to hagiographical texts in general, and this has spilled over to include visionary texts concerning the fate of kings and bishops, or those which provide unusual detail on the precise topography of the afterlife[16]. But the otherwise comparable and far more numerous anecdotes concerning more humble levels of society that con-

12) Recent and important studies of the genre include Mirakel im Mittelalter. Konzeptionen, Erscheinungsformen, Deutungen, ed. Martin Heinzelmann/Klaus Herbers/Dieter Bauer, Stuttgart 2002; Mirakelberichte des frühen und hohen Mittelalters, ed. Klaus Herbers/Lenka Jirousková/Bernhard Vogel, Darmstadt 2005; and Miracles d'un autre genre. Récritures médiévales en dehors de l'hagiographie, ed. Olivier Biaggini/Bénédicte Milland-Bove, Madrid 2012.

13) Criticism: for example Heiric, Miracula Germani, ed. Migne PL 124, c. 40, col. 1227; cf. Wandalbert, Vita et Miracula sancti Goaris, ed. Heinz Erich Stiene (Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 11), Frankfurt (Main) 1981, p. 2.

14) For recognition of the vibrancy of the genre in the ninth century, see Wandalbert, Vita Goaris (as n. 13), p. 3. Carolingian hagiographers were keen readers of Gregory of Tours: for example, see Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 41, col. 1227, describing him as a *miraculorum curiosus indagator ac studiosissimus editor.*

15) […] *ut ita dicam, cotidianis et memoria parum dignis:* Georg Waitz, MGH SS 15/1, Hanover 1887, p. 238. A new edition of Einhard's Translatio by Carlos Pérez Gonzáles for the Corpus Christianorum series is in progress; in the meantime, references in this paper are drawn from the new German facing-page translation and commentary, which uses the Latin text of the new edition: Einhard. Translation und Wunder der Heiligen Marcellinus und Petrus, ed. Dorothea Kies et al., Seligenstadt 2015.

16) Paul Dutton, The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Renaissance, Lincoln (NE) 1994; more recently, Jesse Keskiaho, Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages. The Reception and Use of Patristic Ideas, 400–900, Cambridge 2015.

stitute the bulk of early medieval miracle collections remain, in contrast, relatively neglected[17].

It is not difficult to account for this. Sprawling, often anonymous texts, these collections were put together by monks primarily as a way of demonstrating the power of the relics that lay at their monasteries' heart, often at a particular moment of crisis or triumph: as the late Tom Head put it, they are written proofs of the »logic of saintly patronage«[18]. That is why they seem at first glance to confine themselves to providing almost endless examples of cures from the illnesses that afflicted rural populations before the arrival of antibiotics, of the visions that preceded these cures, and of the divine vengeance wrought on those who rashly challenged the monks' property rights, at whatever social level. These texts were intended to be cumulative, and to be added to, rather than reworked as was common with other kinds of hagiography[19]. Even today, then, such compilations might seem best suited to statistical analysis, which has the potential to unlock patterns not visible to the casual onlooker[20].

Yet some of the stories they preserve would seem to have something to offer the historian of the Frankish countryside; they provide us with a fresh vantage point from which to glimpse something of rural society[21]. And that vantage point – whilst preserved in written form primarily in monastic archives – was not always divorced from the world beyond the cloister. In a few cases, as we shall see, these stories record supernatural interventions in social contexts in which the monastery that recorded them was only a peripheral player, or at least not the only one. Miracle stories of this kind can, in other

17) As pointed out by Hans-Werner Goetz, Wunderberichte im 9. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zum literarischen Genus der frühmittelalterlichen Mirakelsammlungen, in: Mirakel im Mittelalter (as n. 12), pp. 180–226, at p. 181. See n. 12 however for some recent studies.

18) A classic literary reading is provided by Thomas F. Head, Hagiography and the Cult of the Saints. The Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200, Cambridge 1990. Not all miracle collections were anonymous of course (see below), and perhaps the most famous author of such a collection, Einhard, was not a monk. However, Einhard wrote in the context of a religious community that he had founded and with which he closely self-identified: see Julia M. H. Smith, Einhard, the Sinner and the Saints, in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 13 (2003), pp. 55–77.

19) Wandalbert of Prüm, for instance, requested that blank pages (*vacantes pergamenas*) be left at the end of his account of the Miracles of Saint Goar (c. 850) to allow for later additions to be made: Vita Goaris (as n. 13), p. 84. On réécriture, see La réécriture hagiographique dans l'Occident médiéval, ed. Monique Goullet/Martin Heinzelmann, Ostfildern 2003; for miracle collections in particular, see Jeroen Deploige, Écriture, continuation, réécriture. La réactualisation des miracles posthumes dans l'hagiographie des Pays-Bas méridionaux, ca 920 – ca 1320, in: ibid., pp. 21–65.

20) Goetz, Wunderberichte (as n. 17). A team led by Bryan Ward-Perkins is attempting to create a database bringing together all the evidence for saints' cults before 700 in western Eurasia: http://cultofsaints.history.ox.ac.uk/ (29.08.2017).

21) Simon Yarrow, Saints and their Communities. Miracle Stories in Twelfth-Century England, Oxford 2006 offers a comparable study on a later period. See also n. 38 below.

words, be treated as evidence for the countryside as well as the cloister, worlds whose interconnection these texts attest and embody.

To illustrate this point, let us begin in the monastery of St-Riquier in the far north of Francia, where a ninth-century monk put together a large and impressive account of miracles wrought by the monastery's saint, Riquier (or Richarius), who had died some two centuries earlier, around 645[22]. One of these miracles concerned a holy beech tree (*fagus*) in the village of Sorrus (Pas de Calais), located some 50 kilometres from the monastery[23]. An aristocrat named Heuto, who had been given the village in benefice by the abbot, decided to chop this tree down for firewood, despite warnings that it was associated with Saint Riquier himself, who had supposedly often passed through the area centuries before. Once felled, the log proved strangely difficult to split, and weird objects were discovered embedded within it, including a cross that mysteriously vanished shortly afterwards, despite being kept behind locked doors. Heuto was duly punished for his temerity by dying five days later.

For the St-Riquier monk who incorporated the story into the miracle collection, the point of the Sorrus episode, and of Heuto's grim fate, was presumably that aristocrats holding monastic land should respect the power of the saint, or face the consequences. But the text strongly suggests that there was some kind of local context to this story, too, and that it might not just have been the monks who resented Heuto's actions. It stresses that the holiness of the tree was a matter of popular, not monastic knowledge – it was the family tradition (*paterna traditio*, *linea genealogiae ducente*) of local residents (*accolae*, *coloni*) that associated it with Saint Riquier, claiming that he used to lean on it while he prayed, and the account emphasises that it was the object of popular devotion. It stresses too that it was the locals who pleaded with Heuto not to fell the tree. And the account declares that the story had been passed onto the monks of St-Riquier by witnesses, including two *coloni* of the village, Herold and Herrard, who witnessed what happened – Herrard who had accompanied Heuto to go hunting for hares shortly after the incident, and saw him fall ill; Herold who had been present when the mysterious cross had been

22) Miracula sancti Richarii, ed. AA SS April III (BHL 7230), cols. 447–457. No detailed study of the miracle collection is known to us, but for a study of the historiographical complex as a whole, see Joseph-Claude Poulin, Remanier Alcuin hagiographe, in: Amicorum societas. Mélanges offerts à François Dolbeau pour son 65 anniversaire, ed. Jacques Elfassi/Cécile Lanéry/Anne-Marie Turcan-Verkerk, Florence 2013, pp. 665–698. BHL lists six manuscripts of the Miracula, of which the earliest, Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. Lat. 488, dates to c. 1000, and appears to be a hagiographical collection produced at the monastery of St-Riquier itself that passed to Fleury at an early date.

23) Miracula Richarii (as n. 22), i, 2–3, cols. 447–448. The holy tree is a common motif: cf. Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 14–15, col. 1214. The church of Sorrus is still dedicated to Saint Riquier today.

found in the tree trunk, and who had stored it for safekeeping before it inexplicably disappeared[24].

In another large set of miracles again put together in the ninth century, the monks of St-Denis near Paris recalled a miracle at Bargny (Oise), a village around 60 kilometres from the monastery, which had taken place a few decades previously[25]. An aristocrat named Andramnus had acquired the *villa* in benefice from the monastery much like Heuto had at Sorrus, and he began to use the local church there as an outbuilding, keeping his hawks in it and his horses in the porch[26]. However, a resident (*colonus*) named Madalwin had a vision, in which Saint Denis himself appeared, killed the birds and the horse, assaulted Andramnus, and promised Madalwin a reward. When Madalwin awoke, he consulted with his wife, then went to visit Andramnus to tell him about the dream – and found that the animals had died, and Andramnus's leg was now crippled. The story asserts that Andramnus later became a monk at the monastery, so it was probably him who passed on the details of Madalwin's vision[27].

The monks of Stavelot in the Ardennes also put together a large collection of miracles around the middle of the ninth century[28]. Amongst the miracles they recorded was a story about an episode at Marche-en-Famennes (now in Belgium), a village about 50 kilometres away from the monastery. The monastery did not actually own the village, though the residents apparently claimed that in the long distant past it once had[29]. It was

24) Miracula Richarii (as n. 22), i, 3, col. 448: *Haec autem ita se habere ex multis ipsius villae incolis, praesertim Herrardi et Heroldi, quos superius posuimus, qui interfuere, testimonio confirmata sunt.*

25) Miracula Dionysii, Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti, ed. Jean Mabillon, Paris 1672, III/2, i, 3, p. 344. On the Miracula Dionysii, see Léon Levillain, Études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis à l'époque mérovingienne, vol. 1: Les sources narratives, in: BECh 82 (1921), pp. 5–116, particularly pp. 58–115; building on Achille Luchaire, Études sur quelques manuscrits de Rome, Paris 1899, who identified a tenth-century manuscript with an extract from the miracles (Reims Bibl. Municipale, ms. 1137). A new edition has been promised by Alain Stoclet, and West plans further research on this text.

26) The desecration of holy space with hunting birds appears often in miracle texts: cf. Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 68, col. 1238, for the village of Cherré.

27) Andramnus is not mentioned in the surviving lists of monks from St-Denis, but these are not of course complete: see Otto Gerhard Oexle, Forschungen zu monastischen und geistlichen Gemeinschaften im westfränkischen Bereich, Munich 1978, particularly pp. 23–34.

28) Seven manuscripts of the text are known, of which the earliest seem to be Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Hist. 161, fols. 28v–84v; and Vatican, BAV, Reg. Lat. 615, fols. 51v–80r, from the early and later tenth centuries, respectively. See Philippe George, La vie quotidienne à Stavelot-Malmédy autour de l'an mil. Moines et société à travers les »Miraculi Remacli«, in: Bulletin de l'Institut Archéologique Liégeois 111 (2000), pp. 15–58. See also Nicolas Schroeder, Les hommes et les terres de Saint Remacle, Brussels 2015; and Tjamke Snijders, ›Obtulisti libellum de vita domni Remacli‹. The Evolution of Patron Saint Libelli as Propagandist Instruments in the Monastery of Stavelot-Malmedy, 938–1247, in: Low Countries Historical Review 128 (2013), pp. 3–30.

29) Miracula Remacli, ed. AA SS Sept. I (BHL 7210), cols. 696–721, here c. 18, col. 700: *villam* […] *ferunt incolae in dotem ecclesiae monasterii nostri cessisse.*

the residents (*indigenae*) of Marche themselves who built a church (*oratorium*) there and invited the bishop to consecrate it, but they turned to the monastery for the relics required for any new church, thus creating or reinforcing a connection which made the monks take an interest in what happened there[30]. The account that the Stavelot monks preserved tells of how a local woman named Grimvara, who had been a driving force behind the local church's construction (*cuius ea maxime gerebantur instinctu*), donated an altar cloth to the new church, indeed handing it to the bishop during the consecration ritual. Another woman, however, who had devoted herself to serving the new church as a *sanctimonialis*, decided to use this cloth to cover her hair before going out – and she suffered the consequences, for all her hair fell out, and her scalp became infested with worms[31].

The account in the miracle collection explicitly names Grimvara, her spouse and the other residents of Marche as witnesses to, and implicitly as the sources for the story. For the Stavelot monks, the point was, obviously, the power of the relics of Saint Remaclus that were embedded in the altar. But we might wonder whether there was something else going on at Marche – whether for instance the conspicuously unnamed *sanctimonialis* who had installed herself in the new church would have agreed that Grimvara had led the way in establishing it, or whether we can see here traces of a local competition to capitalise on the social capital that the new building had created.

One final example will suffice. In the course of the 870s, the great scholar and teacher Heiric of Auxerre put together a remarkable set of miracles performed by Saint Germain[32]. Heiric was interested in these manifestations of the saint's power not just in the monastery of Auxerre where his body lay, but wherever his relics were present, right across Francia, including some frankly rather »obscure little places«[33]. One of the stories

30) Cf. Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 68, col. 1238, where *incolae* at *Cadriacus* (perhaps Cherré) build a wooden extension to their church, though the estate is owned by Vivian. By 1102 the monastery of Stavelot controlled the tithe at Marche: see Schroeder, Hommes (as n. 28). Schroeder suggests that the construction of the church marked the takeover of the village by the monks.

31) Miracula Remacli (as n. 29), c. 19, col. 700: *caput totum prurigo pervadit eotenus ut, quod dictu turpe est, ipsis quoque vermibus scateret.* In fact, using altar cloth for veiling nuns was far from unheard of: cf. Geoffrey Koziol, Flothilde's Visions and Flodoard's Histories. A Tenth-Century Mutation?, in: Early Medieval Europe 24 (2016), pp. 160–184, at 180.

32) The text survives in just a single ninth-century manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 13757. On the collection, see Amy Bosworth, Representing the Saint. The Structure of Heiric of Auxerre's Miracula sancti Germani, in: Discovery and Distinction in the Early Middle Ages. Studies in Honor of John J. Contreni, ed. Cullen Chandler/Steven Stofferahn, Kalamazoo 2013, pp. 252–272. Bosworth provides chapter headings from the manuscript that are omitted in the standard edition. See ead., Re-creating a Patron for the Ninth Century: Geography, Sainthood and Heiric of Auxerre's Miracula sancti Germani, in: Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures 41 (2015), pp. 93–120, for an insightful study of the geography of Heiric's work.

33) Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 79, col. 1244: […] *in locellis obscuribus.*

that Heiric included came from the monastery of Montfaucon in the Argonne, also dedicated to the saint, and concerned the village Lion-devant-Dun (Meuse), some 20 kilometres distant. Here a *vicedominus* or *iudex* visiting to distribute labour obligations to everyone gave more work to the dependants of Montfaucon resident there than was just, and when they resisted, ordered one of them to be beaten with rods[34]. Saint Germain duly intervened, and punished the wicked *vicedominus* by breaking his leg.

However, a local resident, an unnamed *matrona* of higher social status (*ex illustribus*), was not impressed by the saint's involvement in the matter, and observed that the *vicedominus* did not deserve such a cruel punishment – after all, he was only seeking what was his[35]. With terrible inevitability, she too received her punishment, becoming crippled in her right foot. For Heiric, the message was clearly that the saint looked after his own, and would not tolerate unfair treatment or even criticism. Yet the story suggests that not everyone in Lion thought the same way about the saint and his dependants, and that there may have been tensions around how labour obligations were to be shared out amongst the residents of the village as a whole.

III. »Most truthful and most certain witness of these miracles for me«[36]: Miracles and Monastic Knowledge of the World

As Uta Kleine has noted of texts from a later period, miracle collections such as those drawn on above represent the finished product of a process of information gathering: they are an intersectional kind of text, the result of an interaction between the oral and the written, between the writer, the monastic community, and those who had experienced a saint's actions[37]. Miracle compilers required, in the words of Simon Yarrow, the »au-

34) Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 75, col. 1242: *Eiusdem loci vice-dominus quadam die discutiendis negotiis data singulari opera, ecclesiasticam familiam iniquis imperiis opprimebat.*

35) Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 75, col. 1242: *Non, inquit, decuerat sanctum Germanum in hac parte ita facilem exstitisse, ut hominem sua quaerentem tanta crudelitate conficeret.* The *sua* could grammatically refer to Germanus, in which case the *vicedominus* was seeking what was the saint's. However, the text neither suggests that the *vicedominus* (also termed as *iudex*) was representing the monastery, nor that Montfaucon owned the entire village of Lion (in the eleventh century, other institutions are attested as holding rights here, such as St-Airy of Verdun); and monasteries seldom recorded critiques of their own agents. On the figure of the *matrona*, see Hedwig Röckelein, Matrona. Zur sozialen, ökonomischen und religiösen Stellung einer Gruppe von Laienfrauen im Frühmittelalter, in: Geschichtsvorstellungen. Bilder, Texte und Begriffe aus dem Mittelalter. Festschrift Hans-Werner Goetz, ed. Steffen Patzold/Anja Rathmann-Lutz/Volker Scior, Vienna 2012, pp. 277–298.

36) Wandalbert, Vita Goaris (as n. 13), p. 77: *horum mihi miraculorum certissimus relator extitit et verissimus*, referring to the monk Herirad.

37) Uta Kleine, Gesta, Fama, Scripta. Rheinische Mirakel des Hochmittelalters zwischen Geschichtsdeutung, Erzählung und sozialer Praxis, Stuttgart 2007, p. 3, talking of the »Interaktionsfeld von Münd-

thentic, raw material of human experience«[38]. That was often highlighted by the ninth-century compilers themselves, who stressed again and again that what they had written down was what they had heard from trustworthy sources, as well as what they had themselves seen[39]. We should not be misled by the nature of our sources: indeed, it has been argued that the cult of the saints was primarily an oral phenomenon that hagiographers were attempting to shape, that »cults were orchestras of voices that could not be conducted«[40].

Often the stories that are recorded in such collections concern events that had occurred within a monastery, typically at the saint's shrine itself where most cures took place, and this made the details easy to gather. Memories of these events sometimes simply circulated as stories amongst the monastic community, but sometimes they were pegged to particular objects stored in the monasteries[41]. In some cases, we know that a written register of miracles was kept[42]. However, saints could and did make their presence felt far outside the cloister too, as we have seen in the stories about Sorrus, Bargny,

lichkeit und Schriftlichkeit«. Kleine noted that a similar study to hers is lacking for before 1000. Cf. also (in a different context) Rachel Koopmans, Testimonial Letters in the Late Twelfth-Century Collections of Thomas Becket's Miracles, in: Christianity and Culture in the Middle Ages. Essays to John van Engen, ed. David Mengel/Lisa Wolverton, Notre Dame 2015, pp. 168–201.

38) Yarrow, Saints (as n. 21), p. 16.

39) Examples of references to the oral nature of the stories: Miracula Richarii (as n. 22), ii, 1, col. 452 (*fidelium relatione testium*); Miracula Remacli (as n. 29) i, prologue, col. 696 (*relatu veracium hominum)*; Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 40, cols. 1226–1227 (*ex eo saltem colligere possumus, quod nonnulli adhuc seniorum superstitem agunt vitam, qui se ante fores sacri huius templi innumera patratorum signorum appensa vidisse confirmant insignia* […]), and c. 46, col. 1230 (*Supersunt hodieque quamplurimi, qui se rei gestae interfuisse, satis subnixa relatione fatentur*); Miracula Dionysii (as n. 25), preface, p. 343 (*quae a dignissimis fide viris audierim*); Wandalbert, Vita Goaris (as n. 13), p. 39 (with a particular reliance on Theodrad and Herirad). Cf. Walahfrid, Vita Sancti Galli, ed. Ernst Tremp and transl. Franziska Schnoor, Stuttgart 2012, i, 34, p. 108; ii, 9, p. 130, though Walahfrid chose to omit the names of those *qui scribendorum testes sunt vel fuerunt* because they were German, and thus unsuitable for Latin texts; and ii, 46, p. 188. See further Einhard, Translatio (as n. 15), iii, preface, p. 80, and iv, 15, p. 140.

40) Rachel Koopmans, Wonderful to relate. Miracle Stories and Miracle Collecting in High Medieval England, Philadelphia 2011, who emphasises the personal element of the storytelling (here at p. 5).

41) The preservation of objects associated with miracles is recorded in most miracle collections. Miracula Remacli (as n. 29), c. 1, col. 697 (crutches: *servantur etiam baculi* […] *pendentes ad januas ecclesiae*); ibid., c. 27, col. 702 (a vineyard: *huius res testis est ipsa vinea, quae in praedicta villa a nobis ex omnibus possidetur sola*); and ibid., c. 31, col. 703 (a cup). Miracula Dionysii (as n. 25), i, 7, p. 346 (a sheaf: *merges ante vestibulum appensus*). See also Wolfhard, Miracula Walpurgae, ed. Andreas Bauch, Eichstätt 1979, p. 312 (crutches: *pendentes de muro claudorum multorum iam de sua recuperatione gaudentium sustentacula*); cf. also Walahfrid, Vita Galli (as n. 39), ii, 6, p. 126 (a cloth and some wax) and ii, 20, p. 154 (a sword that *ob testimonium miraculi in eodem loco suspensus, multo tempore ibi permansit*). For examples of the circulation of stories within the community, see Wandalbert, Vita Goaris (as n. 13), p. 41, and Wolfhard, Miracula Walpurgae, p. 282.

42) Cf. Monheim's *cartula* mentioned by Wolfhard, Miracula Walpurgae (as n. 41), p. 282.

Marche-en-Famennes and Lion-devant-Dun. If we assume that the compilers did not simply invent such anecdotes out of thin air (and the preventative censure of the immediate audience formed of – in the first instance – the contemporary monastic community makes this an unreasonable starting point) then we have to suppose a chain of information transmission that began outside of the monastery.

Often we may guess that a local priest mentioned prominently in the course of a miracle story could have acted as the mediator; occasionally, as in the account given by the Miracles of St-Denis about an event at Concevreux, this is actually specified[43]. Such priests were often connected with monastic communities through educational or prayer networks, and so they were a natural conduit of information from rural localities into monastic (and episcopal) writing-rooms[44]. On occasion, though, ninth-century miracle collections specify that a story had come from the person most closely affected[45]. This should not be surprising either. People might well have wanted to talk about what they had experienced simply because it mattered to them[46].

But we should also consider whether recipients of miracles might have had other good reasons to spread their stories about the saints, whether for the social cachet it could bring, or more practically as a means of earning a living, if they could persuade the monks to take them onto their alms roll by telling them what they wanted to hear. A blind man named Alberic, for example, seems to have established himself very comfortably at Einhard's foundation of Seligenstadt thanks to his privileged access to the saints who visited him nightly, and there are plenty of comparable examples[47]. If we compare the miracles

43) Concevreux: *Sicut a quodam fideli presbytero, nomine Rudulfo, post didicimus:* Miracula Dionysii (as n. 25), iii, 1, p. 361. Compare Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 64, col. 1237 (*quae per sacerdotem eius basilicae fideliter comperta tenemus*). Other examples where a priest seems likely to have passed the story on: Miracula Richarii (as n. 22), ii, 3, col. 453 and ii, 12, col. 455; Miracula Dionysii (as n. 25), i, 24, p. 351 and ii, 33, p. 358.

44) See Carine van Rhijn, this volume, pp. 237–253. Note that Hildemar's commentary on the Rule to St. Benedict includes specific references to priests joining the monastery: Hildemar, Expositio Regulae, ed. and transl. Albrecht Diem et al., http://www.hildemar.org (28.08.2017), c. 60. See also below, n. 72.

45) Miracula Richarii (as n. 22), ii, 9, col. 455 (*ipseque nobis omne istius rei capitulum composuit*); Miracula Remacli (as n. 29), ii, 17, col. 700 (*quod postea narrare nobis consuevit*); Miracula Huberti, Liber Primus, ed. AA SS November I (BHL 3996), cols 819–829, here c. 5, col. 820 (*Denique monasteri undequaque perlustrans, qualiter sospitati perfrui meruisset* […] *omnibus intimavit*). Cf. Einhard, Translatio (as n. 15), iii, 16, p. 100; iv, 4, p. 112.

46) Koziol, Visions (as n. 31).

47) Alberic: Einhard, Translatio (as n. 15), iii, 6, pp. 84–86; iii, 12, p. 92; iii, 13, p. 94. Other examples: Miracula Richarii (as n. 22), i, 8, col. 449 (*usque ad supremas finis sui metas permanens circa monasterii limina, pastus est eleemonsynis fratrum*); i, 16, col. 451 (*usque ad terminum suae mortis permansit circa monasterii januas, utens eleemosynario pane hospitalis*); Miracula Remacli (as n. 29), c. 17, col. 700 (*in excubiis eiusdem templi incolumnis perseverans perenniter manet*) and c. 29, col. 702 (*per triennium pene apud nos demorati, acceptis stipendiis*); Miracula Huberti (as n. 45), c. 1, col. 819 (*usque ad obitum suum*); and c. 2,

collected in Einhard's *Translatio* with the petitioning recorded in his surviving letters, the interactions between the ideology of saintly intervention and the practice of monastic patronage become clear: we meet free and unfree men and women, some peasants, some impoverished clerics and minor landholders anxious to maintain their tenuous footing in the right social circles, rehearsing the powers of Marcellinus and Peter, and asking Einhard for a word here and a favour there[48].

We might consider that these stories collectively formed part of monastic knowledge about the outside world: knowledge that would have been all the more valuable in a world of oblates, monks whose entire life had been spent within the cloister walls, and who were not supposed to be sent beyond them even for the most grievous faults[49]. For while Carolingian reform articulated and to a large extent enforced stricter expectations about the sacrality of the cloister itself, it did not cut off monasteries as institutions from the society around them[50]. Quite the opposite: in texts by monks such as Notker and Regino, we have clear indications of the continuing role of ties of kinship, neighbourhood and patronage, and of monastic involvement with clients, estates and churches in their wider region as crucial conduits of political and social information[51]. Integration, after all, works both ways, and the more influence increasingly wealthy and established monasteries had on the world that surrounded them, the more knowledge about that world could enter the monastic community[52].

In a handful of cases, we can even trace the formal and informal structures which might be seen as attempting to institutionalise these conduits of communication[53]. Take, for example, Rudolf of Fulda's remarkable account of his own working methods in

col. 819 (*usque ad obitus sui diem in monasterio*). Cf. Madalwin's reward in Miracula Dionysii (as n. 25), i, 3, p. 345; and ii, 15, p. 355.

48) See for example Matthew Innes, Practices of Property in the Carolingian Empire, in: The Long Morning of the Middle Ages. New Directions in Early Medieval Studies, ed. Jennifer Davies/Michael McCormick, Aldershot 2007, pp. 247–266, at pp. 259–266, discussing Einhard, Epistolae, ed. Karl Hampe (MGH Epp. 5), Berlin 1898/99, pp. 105–145.

49) On oblation, see Mayke de Jong, In Samuel's Image. Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West, Leiden 1996. On the impossibility of returning oblates to the outside world, see Hildemar, Expositio (as n. 44), c. 2 and c. 28.

50) A point emphasised by Mayke de Jong in a series of fundamental studies. See for example Mayke de Jong, Internal Cloisters. The Case of Ekkehard's Casus Sancti Galli, in: Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter, ed. Walter Pohl/Helmut Reimitz, Vienna 2000, pp. 209–229.

51) For Notker, see Hans-Werner Goetz, Strukturen der spätkarolingischen Epoche im Spiegel der Vorstellungen eines zeitgenössischen Mönchs. Eine Interpretation der »Gesta Karoli« Notkers von St. Gallen, Bochum 1981, and Matthew Innes, Memory, Orality and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society, in: Past & Present 158 (1998), pp. 3–38.

52) On sacralisation of the landscape in this period connected with monastic expansion, see Thomas Kohl, this volume, pp. 309–336.

53) The collection of the miracles at Monheim by Wolfhard in the Miracula Walpurgae (as n. 41) might represent a comparable case.

compiling a *vita* of the holy woman Leoba, who had died just over half a century before his commission in 836. Rudolf establishes the veracity of his account with an extended discussion of his researches in the records made by several monks, notably one Mago, of the accounts given by Leoba's four closest companions. Mago had taken brief notes as an aide-memoire, often on loose sheets of parchment and in a personal shorthand, whose meaning was unfortunately sometimes obscure, but had died before he could work up a formal narrative as befitted his subject. On the orders of his abbot (Hraban Maur), Rudolf drew on local public knowledge both to validate this scattered material, and to shape it into a linear narrative[54].

Thanks to the rich seam of material from Fulda, we know that from Abbot Hraban's time at the latest the monastic community was managing its wider interests through a series of subsidiary monastic cells, where monks with the local knowledge and practical skills to fulfil a gamut of social and managerial functions resided. Rudolf's account clearly points to the wider cultural significance of those individuals we know best through their frequent appearance as charter scribes and property agents, and suggests that the dossiers of parchments they kept might have included more than the formal legal notices that later found their way into Fulda's cartulary; a decade after his account of Leoba, these structures were to underpin Rudolf's account of the *Miracula* of the relics translated into the churches of the Fulda community[55]. After all, it is surely no accident that Rudolf uses the legal notarial terminology of *notitiae* and *scedulae* to refer to these materials, just as the accounts of many of the miracles performed by Marcellinus and Peter away from Seligenstadt in Einhard's *Translatio* take the form of *notitiae.*

Just as we should not underestimate the local elements – and the local documentation kept by those monks responsible for managing specific estates – that underpinned polyptychs and cartularies, so the internal structuring of institutional interests may have encouraged a capillary flow of gossip from localities to monastic centres. The way that miracle collections name the people who had played a role in the chain of communication might best be paralleled by how cartulary scribes sometimes copied scrappy records of the more pragmatic local rituals of investiture within an outlying village appended to the formal acts of donations performed within the monastic precinct[56]. In both cases, extraneous material was worked into monastic commemorative accounts.

54) Rudolf, Vita Leobae, ed. Georg Waitz (MGH SS 15/1), Hanover 1887, pp. 118–131, prologue, p. 122.
55) On these developments see Janneke Raaijmakers, The Making of the Monastic Community of Fulda, c. 740–900, Cambridge 2012, esp. pp. 175–213. For how they shaped the Fulda archive and structured relations with lay society, see Matthew Innes, Rituals, Rights and Relationships. Some Gifts and their Interpretation in the Fulda Cartulary, c. 827, in: Studia Historica. Historia Medieval 31 (2013), pp. 25–50.
56) On the significance of this phenomenon see the chapters of Hans Josef Hummer and Matthew Innes in Documentary Culture (as n. 9).

IV. The »native account«: Remastering and Transmission

Such a capillary flow of gossip must have lain behind the four cases discussed above, whose events took place outside the monastery, »off-stage« in relatively distant estates and settlements, dozens of kilometres away from where they were written up. In other words, these too were stories that must have been based on some kind of »native account«. In itself, that is not particularly unusual. What makes these four stories more interesting than most of the cures and miracles recorded in such numbers, however, is that they present interactions taking place within villages in an unusually rich context. With these stories, and perhaps others like them, we might reasonably imagine that we are listening into the fragments of village gossip[57].

If so, we must also accept that what we are hearing is a remastered version of that gossip, for all these texts have been filtered by the very process that preserved them for posterity[58]. That is not to say that monks might not sometimes have sympathised with the lot of the poor in Frankish society, whose social role Frankish monks were of course keen to define – indeed Heiric of Auxerre famously provided in the very course of his account of the miracles of Saint Germain an early and celebrated account of the »three orders«, encouraging the monks to remember their connections to those who protected and those worked for them[59]. The purpose of writing these texts was perhaps as much as social as religious, as has been recently argued for Merovingian material, and though the monastic audience was presumably primary, we should not assume that these stories were always designed to remain within the monastery (though we should remember the importance of retelling miracle stories to provide collective reassurance in the truth behind the stories too)[60].

57) Cf. Walahfrid's Vita Galli (as n. 39) for comparable material, for example ii, 19, pp. 150–152. For frameworks within which to interpret gossip, see Chris Wickham, Gossip and Resistance among the Medieval Peasantry, in: Past & Present 160 (1998), pp. 3–24, and Fama. The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe, ed. Thelma Fenster/Daniel Lord Smail, Ithaca (NY) 2003.

58) For a study of this theme in a Welsh context, see Wendy Davies, Property Rights and Property Claims in the Welsh Vitae of the Eleventh Century, in: Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés, IV^{e}–XII^{e} siècles, ed. Evelyne Patlagean/Pierre Riché, Paris 1981, pp. 515–533. Our thanks to Professor Davies for bringing this article to our attention.

59) Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 128, col. 1270: *aliis belligerantibus, agricolantibus aliis, tertius ordo estis.* For Heiric, see Dominique Iogna-Prat, Le »baptême« du schéma des trois ordres fonctionnels. L'apport de l'école d'Auxerre dans la seconde moitié du IX^{e} siècle, in: Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations 41 (1986), pp. 101–126. On Carolingian conceptions of labour, see Charles West, Carolingian Kingship and the Peasants of Le Mans: the *Capitulum in cenomannico pago datum*, in: Charlemagne. Les temps, les espaces, les hommes. Construction et déconstruction d'un règne, ed. Rolf Grosse, Turnhout 2018, pp. 227–244.

60) Jamie Kreiner, The Social Life of Hagiography in the Merovingian Kingdom, Cambridge 2014; for doubt, Stephen Justice, Did the Middle Ages believe in their Miracles?, in: Representations 103 (2008), pp. 1–29.

Ultimately, though, the monk-compiler wrote down stories of miracles for his and his own community's benefit and advantage, now and in the future, and he, or sometimes she, represented the countryside, and what happened in it, in that light[61]. The same is doubtless true of the rare instances of early medieval labouring saints[62]. The extent of this filtering in the four instances summarised above is now wholly unknowable, since we have no alternative version of them for comparison. Two versions of the same event recorded in Einhard's *Translatio* however at least give an illustration of the kinds of effects that textual redaction could have on miracles of this kind, the flattening that could take place in the passage from the oral to the written, even if neither of the versions takes us outside elite circles nor of course outside written discourse altogether.

In his text, Einhard related a story about an encounter with an angry peasant on 19 June 828, a story which he had heard orally from George, the Venetian cleric and *rector* of St-Saulve in Valenciennes to whom he had entrusted some of his precious relics[63]. While transporting Einhard's relics in a wagon, George had let the oxen graze on a meadow by the roadside at Wasseiges (now in Belgium)[64]. The peasant whose meadow it was turned up with a pitchfork to confront the cleric (*furibundus intravit*), crossly asking why he had done this (*stomachando percontatur*) before he was miraculously cured of a toothache by the relics, to the delight of the whole community. A few lines below, however, Einhard also copied out George's own written version of the same miracle[65]. And in this version, the anger, the pitchfork and the confrontation have all disappeared, leaving behind only the miracle cure from toothache. The social context of the miracle – a small landowner trying to protect his resources from a predatory passing cleric, and being gently but very firmly put in his place by divine power – has been almost entirely erased in pursuit of a more focused narrative.

These competing written accounts of the same event perhaps give a sense of the way that oral material could be reshaped. In particular, the transformation of context so as to support a dominant narrative parallels that reworking imposed upon documentary ma-

61) For monastic representations of countryside, see Jean-Pierre Devroey, Représenter l'attelage de labour au IX^{e} siècle en pays rémois. Mythe, symbole ou représentation du monde rural, in: Images, imaginaires et réalités rurales. L'iconographie au cœur de l'histoire des techniques. Études en l'honneur de Georges Comet, ed. Aline Durand, Aix-en-Provence, forthcoming: http://difusion.ulb.ac.be/vufind/Record/ULB-DIPOT:oai:dipot.ulb.ac.be:2013/16197/Details (access 15/03/2019). Monheim shows that this work could include women: Wolfhard, the writer of the Miracula Walpurgae, was male, but he relied on a *cartula* written by the nuns. See n. 43 above.

62) More work is required on such figures. They include Flavitus (BHL 3025), Tresanus (BHL 8313), and Serenus (BHL 7592).

63) Einhard, Translatio (as n. 15), iv, 9, p. 118. Einhard clearly distinguishes between the (oral) *relatio* from George, and George's own (written) *libellus: Hoc signum ipsius Georgii relatione constat mihi esse compertum. De ceteris autem quae nunc dicenda sunt ab eo libellum accepi* […].

64) For the identification of *Uuasidium*, see Einhard, Translatio (as n. 15), iv, 8, p. 117, n. 14.

65) He explicitly noted that he had already given a fuller version (*plenius*).

terials as they were reordered and then recopied into the monastic cartulary collections of the ninth to twelfth centuries. As documentary scholarship is stressing, the more we are aware of the transformative process, the more we can seek to understand the social contexts it obscured[66]. If monastic authors permitted themselves this kind of liberty in rewriting their material, then we must proceed with caution in reading miracle texts to learn about the Carolingian countryside[67].

Very occasionally, however, we have access to stories that seem less mediated, or at least differently mediated, and that to some extent give us more confidence in tackling the more conventional material[68]. One of these »less mediated« stories concerns an unnamed village somewhere in northern Francia in the mid ninth century[69]. In this village, a carpenter called Dagobert was visited by Saint Vaast as he lay desperately ill in bed. The saint restored Dagobert to health, in exchange for him passing on certain messages. Some of these messages were aimed at outsiders, at people involved in the village from without. The village's lord was ordered to restore property, and the local judge was told to stop unjustly tormenting the inhabitants, with particular reference to an unfair twelve pence fine. Some of Saint Vaast's messages though were for internal consumption. The local priest was ordered to do his job better; the local mayor was informed that he was being punished for his part in a village scandal; and a village bigwig, a man called Ebruin, was castigated for having been the driving force behind this scandal, which concerned the ownership of some slaves, over whom the saint claimed some kind of rights.

This story was probably intended to be integrated into a miracle collection that was put together at the monastery of St-Vaast in the mid ninth-century. For some reason, that did not happen, and the story seems to have survived as a free-standing text until the late tenth century, at which point it was appended onto a revised collection of St-Vaast hagiography. In its original form, it might well have been a loose parchment analogous to those referred to by Einhard and Rudolf, akin to those pragmatic documentary records normally elided by cartulary compilers but that occasionally made their way into monastic archives.

66) As emphasised by Documentary Culture (as n. 9).

67) Note that Einhard may have rewritten the *libelli*, too: Translatio (as n. 15), iv, 11, p. 128 (*si bene recolo*). Cf. the versions of the Visio Bernoldi, studied by Maaike van der Lugt, Tradition and Revision. The Textual Tradition of Hincmar of Reims' »Visio Bernoldi« with a Critical Edition, in: Archivum latinitatis medii aevi 52 (1994), pp. 109–149, who points out that Flodoard excised the bulk of the vision as not relevant for his purposes.

68) Again, compare the Visio Bernoldi: Van der Lugt, Tradition (as n. 67), argues on stylistic grounds that version A was distributed by Hincmar, but was probably not written by him, contrary to what has often been assumed.

69) For a preliminary study of this episode, see West, Saint (as n. 1), and further Charles West, Visions in a Ninth-Century Village: an Early Medieval Microhistory, in: History Workshop Journal 81 (2016), pp. 1–16.

The fact that it was apparently not rewritten means that it has certain rather unusual features. To begin with, it has an author who was not a monk but a local priest, a man called Hubert. Hubert declared himself to be the nephew of the village priest, and showed himself moreover in his story as taking some responsibility for pastoral care (he had ministered the last rights to Dagobert as he lay dying), just as was demanded by Carolingian legislation[70]. Without doubt Hubert had connections to the monastery of St-Vaast which ultimately preserved his story, and he may well have been educated in the monastery – as may well have been common, if we are to judge by the role that monasteries played in copying texts for local priests' use[71]. Yet Hubert was not himself a St-Vaast monk. Reading between the lines, we can reconstitute some of the reasons for which Hubert wrote. He paints himself as diligent and his uncle as corrupt; he stresses that the monastery has neglected its rights within the village, even if these are rather vague in his own account; he stresses that the monastery's saint had already become involved, and that the saint had moreover promised repairs to be made to the local church. He probably wrote the text as a means to try to involve the monastery in his village's affairs.

Whatever the motivation, however, Hubert's account gives a good idea of the context that might well have underpinned the stories recorded in the collections discussed above. These were stories whose meaning and purpose was grounded in a local context, that had local meanings, and that we have seen were sometimes passed on to monasteries by local priests like Hubert or by other local residents, for their own reasons and expressed in ways that suited them, before they were re-edited and reshaped to fit a universalising agenda. We must not neglect the capacity of monks to rewrite these stories, but we should also remember that we are dealing with a kind of palimpsest. Hubert's text helps show that something of the partially erased original might be dimly visible in comparable texts.

V. Demons in the Annals: the Case of Kempten

The stories discussed so far concentrated on the activity of saints, but demonic forces too made their presence felt in the Carolingian countryside. For the most part, these interventions took the form of devilish instigation to commit acts of wickedness, or incidents of demonic possession that were a kind of punishment for some wicked action, or that

70) For instance, the Council of Nantes, c. 8, ed. Wilfried Hartmann/Isabel Schröder/Gerhard Schmitz (MGH Conc. 5), Hanover 2014, p. 586.

71) Compare Walter the priest of Sindlingen mentioned in Einhard, Translatio (as n. 15), iii, 20, p. 104, *a parva aetate educatus* at the monastery of Hornbach; and the Fulda situation, discussed above. On manuscripts, see Carine van Rhijn, this volume, pp. 237–253, as well as Steffen Patzold, Correctio an der Basis. Landpfarrer und ihr Wissen im 9. Jahrhundert, in: Karolingische Klöster. Wissenstransfer und kulturelle Innovation, ed. Julia Becker/Tino Licht/Stefan Weinfurter, Berlin 2015, pp. 227–254. Cf. the reference to the monastic education of priests in Walahfrid, Vita Galli (as n. 39), ii, 28, p. 168.

simply constituted opportunities for a saint to exercise his healing powers[72]. Though recorded less often in the miracle collections than other types of event, the texts already mentioned preserve several examples[73]. If anecdotes of such demonic ill-doing are less insistently a feature of Carolingian literate culture than were miraculous tales of saintly patronage, that was simply because commemorative specialists had little cause systematically to collect reports of this kind.

It follows that where the demonic in the Carolingian world is at its most apparent is where it impinged on the analysis and discussion of regnal politics that shapes our historiographical narratives. Just as ninth-century monks poured energy into collection of miracles, other authors at work in ecclesiastical institutions – and sometimes perhaps the same ones – brought miraculous events into another characteristically Carolingian genre of written remembrance, the year-by-year account of the doings of kings and their relationship to divine power in the forms of annals[74]. Whilst prodigies (abnormal winters, floods and droughts) were included in annals from their first skeletal apparitions, the deployment of anecdotes of miraculous events became regular in major annalistic narratives from the first decades of the ninth century onwards. The conscious interjection of the mundanely miraculous into the regnal narratives of the annals may seem today more disruptive than enlightening, at best a reminder of the parochialism of the authors of even the most widely ranging narratives[75]. It might, however, be better understood as an important element of authorialisation and narrative technique within the annalistic genre by the ninth century: a means of offering oblique comments on the doings of kings, of providing a reminder of God's presence in present history, and of linking the narrative of the present to an Old Testament template.

72) A classic, though brief, study is Michel Rubellin, Le diable, le saint et le clerc. Deux visions de la société chrétienne au Haut Moyen Âge, in: Haut Moyen Âge. Culture, éducation et société. Études offertes à Pierre Riché, ed. Michel Sot, La Garenne 1990, pp. 265–272. More recently, see Moines et démons. Autobiographie et individualité au Moyen Age (VII^{e}–XII^{e} siècles), ed. Dominique Barthélemy/Renata Grosse, Geneva 2014, and Dominique Barthélemy, Une crise démoniaque à Beauvais (milieu du IX^{e} siècle), in: Faire lien (as n. 1), pp. 147–154. For the later period, see Nancy Caciola, Discerning Spirits. Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages, Ithaca (NY) 2003.

73) For example: Miracula Remacli (as n. 29), ii, 15, col. 699 (*per somnium a spiritibus nequam vulneratus*); Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 46, col. 1230 and c. 77, col. 1243; Miracula Dionysii (as n. 25), i, 13, p. 347. More broadly, Wandalbert, Vita Goaris (as n. 13), pp. 49, 69 and 80; Walahfrid, Vita Galli (as n. 39), ii, 23, p. 158; and Einhard, Translatio (as n. 15), iii, 14, p. 96 (the famous case of Wiggo).

74) On Carolingian annals, see Rosamond McKitterick, History and Memory in the Carolingian World, Cambridge 2004, and Sarah Foot, Annals and Chronicles in Western Europe, in: Oxford History of Historical Writing, vol. 2: 400–1400, ed. Ead./Chase Robinson, Oxford 2012, pp. 346–367.

75) See however the article of Koziol, Visions (as n. 31), and note Paul Dutton, Observations on Early Medieval Weather in General, Bloody Rain in Particular, in: Long Morning (as n. 48), pp. 167–180.

Within this intrusion of the supernatural into the Old Testament-inspired and classicising narrative modes, the demonic played a significant role[76]. In many ways, political demonic interventions worked in a manner analogous to the political visions that we also encounter in increasing numbers in this period, as means of commenting on moments of crisis whose interpretation was inherently dangerous and difficult[77]. But on occasion, there is good reason to suppose that the origins of the prodigies and demonic goings-on that find traction in the hands of political writers were located in the Carolingian countryside, prior to their reworking in the cloister or court, in a process parallel to that apparent in the miracle collections.

One striking example can illustrate the potential of this material. In 858, around the same time as Saint Vaast visited Dagobert, a wicked spirit made its own visit to another Carolingian village, one called Kempten, now a suburb of Bingen[78]. The spirit began as what we would call a poltergeist, throwing stones and loudly banging on walls. Then it began to speak out openly, and to betray secrets about thefts. Next, it sowed discord amongst all the inhabitants. Finally, it focused everyone's attention on one particular man, as if it were his fault that these things were happening. To ensure there was no doubt who was to blame, the spirit set on fire every house that this man entered. As a result, this man and his family were forced out of the settlement to live in the fields, and even his relatives were unwilling to shelter him. But the spirit did not stop there, for when the man had gathered in his harvest – apparently stored in individual compartments in a single collective building – it burned it all, again implicating the one individual. Now it seemed likely that this man would face death at the hands of his neighbours, possibly as the outcome of some form of community-based »rough justice«.

It was at this point that an agency external to the village is introduced to the action. The accused man desperately proposed an ordeal of hot iron to establish his innocence, and the archbishop of Mainz, some 25 kilometres away, sent priests and deacons »with relics and crosses«. This expedition was perhaps initially intended to carry out the ordeal (which needed sacerdotal administration), but it culminated with a concerted attempt at ecclesiastical peace-making to heal a divided community, with an exorcism performed to

76) For an analysis of how one demonic episode worked, see Simon MacLean, Ritual, Misunderstanding and the Contest for Meaning. Representations of the Disrupted Royal Assembly at Frankfurt (873), in: Representations of Power in Medieval Germany, c. 800–1500, ed. Id./Björn Weiler, Turnhout 2006, pp. 97–120.

77) Cf. Dutton, Politics (as n. 16).

78) Annales Fuldenses, ed. Friedrich Kurze (MGH SS rer. Germ. 7), Hanover 1891, pp. 51–52. There is an excellent translation into English by Tim Reuter, The Annals of Fulda, Manchester 1992, pp. 44–45, although it omits a line about the demon being quiet for a while ([…] *tamen modicum temporis a sua infestatione quievit*) and implies that only men were present at the event, which is not stated. See also Costambeys/Innes/Maclean, Carolingian World (as n. 6), esp. pp. 231–232, 239, 251–252, 256, 269–270. Innes has a detailed study in preparation.

expel the demon from the village. We are told that stones were thrown at the people gathered to watch the rites with prayer and holy water being performed in the house that had suffered most from demonic activities – some onlookers were injured – but then the demon quietened down for a little while. But after the priests had left, the spirit began to speak out again, revealing himself to the inhabitants in some form of community gathering, and declaring in a series of speeches (*sermones*) that the exorcism had not worked. In an address replete with Biblical echoes, the demon explained that one of the priests had corrupted himself and so become subject to the Devil and a protector of his evil emissary: this priest had had a liaison with the daughter of the local estate manager (*procurator*), and allowed the evil spirit had found shelter under his ceremonial vestment and so escape the holy water during the exorcism ceremony.

What makes this text unusual is not so much the evidence of demonic activity in the Carolingian countryside, for as already mentioned that is attested elsewhere, but its outcome. Unlike most accounts of the activity of wicked other-worldly powers that find their way into miracle collections, this tale has a remarkably bleak ending. The concerted attempt at peace-making through the supernatural agency of priests and prayer, hot iron and holy water, relics and crosses: all failed, and in the narrative, the demon effectively established itself in the position abdicated by the corrupt priest and the estate manager with whom he was illicitly connected. This was a nightmare vision of the official structures of power falling into the hands of the Devil, as a result of the moral corruption of those who ought to have exercised *ministerium* over the village. Our source reports that the spirit then remained in the village for three more years, until almost all the buildings had been burned down, and implicitly the settlement was abandoned – and there was apparently nothing that anyone could do about it. No attempt was made to shape this story into the promotion of a saints' cult: a demon was involved, but not, it seems, a saint.

The only reason we hear about the events at Kempten is because the story seemed pertinent to the author of the Annals of Fulda, who worked it into his account of the convoluted politics of the year 858. Whatever the identity of the author (the case for Rudolf of Fulda is strong though not proven)[79], the Annals were written from the perspective of the social networks around the archbishopric of Mainz: they delicately negotiate the controversial political positions taken by successive archbishops, including the incumbent in 858, Charles, and the tensions that these could cause within the archbishop's entourage, who were capable of taking a contrary view. It is tempting, indeed, to relate the inclusion of this story to the broader political crisis of 858, when King Louis

79) Historians should perhaps consider why the annalistic genre – even when it involved extended narrative as in the ninth-century Carolingian examples – seems to have involved conventions of authorial anonymity. Even Hincmar did not explicitly intrude a named authorial persona into his section of the Annals of St-Bertin. On Hincmar as an author, see Janet L. Nelson, The Bearing of Hincmar's Life on his Historical Writing, in: Hincmar (as n. 9), pp. 44–59.

the German invaded Charles the Bald's kingdom, not least as in these literary circles there was a live tradition (harking back to Einhard's *Translatio*, and the political messages of the demon Wiggo and angel Gabriel) of interpreting the politics of the Carolingian dynasty in terms of demonic and other supernatural intervention.

Yet notwithstanding the personal political involvement of Archbishop Charles of Mainz in the crisis of 858 – which focused on the struggles between his two uncles, Louis the German and Charles the Bald, over the region of Aquitaine where his own father had once been king, as well as marking a crucial stage in the convoluted scandal over the marital affairs of his cousin, King Lothar II – the Kempten story does not map directly onto regnal politics[80]. And it certainly cannot be seen as an allegory. The complexities and inconsistencies of the account – which not only elides a series of episodes, but also shifts in its interpretation of the demon's activities, which have strong folkloric parallels – underline that this should be read as a genuine anecdote included here as a pointed but oblique reminder of the real dangers of demonic entryism where moral corruption took hold of terrestrial affairs[81].

More immediately, though, the evident pastoral concerns chime with those debated in the rich tradition of local synodal activity centred on Mainz, and the story – perhaps reminiscent of the sufferings of Job – serves as a vivid illustration of the dire consequences of a lack of clerical celibacy, airing accusatory gossip about an unnamed priest whose identity must have been a matter of more than academic debate amongst the immediate audience of this historiographical text. In this, it is consistent with another marked feature of the text, the projection of an Old Testament tinged template of the archbishop as a model of paternalistic lordship and pastoral care, perambulating his estates and diocese. As with the case of St-Vaast, then, an exceptional path of transmission reveals the kind of village reality that we might suppose also underlay the miracles preserved in more conventional means in the miracle collections discussed above.

VI. »Popular Religion« and Village Community

What is the significance of texts like these for the historian: texts preserved and transformed in monastic or clerical contexts, but that record nevertheless some extra-institu-

80) On Charles of Mainz, see Theodor Schieffer, Karl von Aquitanien. Der Weg eines karolingischen Prinzen auf den Stuhl des heiligen Bonifatius, in: Universitas 2. Festschrift Bischof Albert Stohr, ed. Ludwig Lenhart, Mainz 1960, pp. 42–54.

81) The demon's initial manifestations are physical, but it is subsequently described as a spirit; it sometimes is presented as acting independently and tangibly, but at other points acts through human agents via »possession«. For manifestations of the unquiet dead, who might be experienced as zombie-like revenants in »folkloric« contexts but be interpreted as ghostly spirits in »learned« circles, see Nancy Caciola, Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture, in: Past & Present 152 (1996), pp. 3–45.

tional reality concerning villages such as Kempten, Sorrus, Bargny, Marche and Lion? It might be tempting to use them as sources for popular religion, and to suppose that their value rests primarily in their power to offer a privileged insight into the beliefs of the rural populace[82]. Yet we should be cautious about imposing a sharp separation between the beliefs of the learned elite and the inhabitants of Frankish villages. A hard and fast divide between literate clerical culture and oral folkloric popular religion cannot be sustained for the Carolingian period, still less any model which imposes modern value judgements about the extent to which the latter was »truly Christian«[83]. Learned discourse – the writings of men like Agobard of Lyon and Hincmar of Rheims – presupposed without question a range of potential supernatural interventions in terrestrial affairs.

If malign, those interventions could be the outcome of human invocation or manipulation through magical practice – just as monks sought to manage and mediate saintly patronage – but they were also understood as the manifestation of evil spirits and demons who were agents of the Devil, in David Ganz's words »perhaps the most understudied Carolingian noble«[84]. Unlike their later successors, there is no sense in our sources that Carolingian bishops and thinkers sought systematically to impose a learned hierarchy or interpretative template in tension with »popular belief«[85]. The life of Willibrord written by Alcuin around 797, for instance, has a similar example of an arsonist poltergeist (*malignus spiritus*) to that which afflicted Kempten, although in this case the church was able to provide a remedy, in the shape of a miracle wrought by Saint Willibrord (though only after a house was burned down)[86].

Much the same is true of benign supernatural activity: monks believed in saintly intervention perhaps even more so, and in more or less the same kinds of intervention too,

82) Aron Gurevich, Medieval Popular Culture. Problems of Belief and Perception, transl. János M. Bak/Paul A. Hollingsworth, Cambridge 1990.

83) Classic discussions are Jean-Claude Schmitt, Religion, Folklore and Society in the Medieval West, in: Debating the Middle Ages. Issues and Readings, ed. Lester Little/Barbara Rosenwein, Oxford 1998, pp. 376–387, and John van Engen, The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical Problem, in: American Historical Review 91 (1986), pp. 519–552. Caciola, Discerning Spirits (as n. 72), and Ead., Wraiths (as n. 81) stresses legibility/interpretability in a fruitful approach to the »two cultures« debate.

84) For Hincmar's attitudes towards the supernatural, see The Divorce of King Lothar and Queen Theutberga: Hincmar of Rheims's De Divortio, transl. Rachel Stone/Charles West, Manchester 2016, pp. 64–69; for Agobard see Paul Dutton, Charlemagne's Mustache and other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age, New York 2004, cap. 7: Thunder and Hail over the Carolingian Countryside, pp. 169–188, and now Rob Meens, Thunder over Lyon. Agobard, the *tempestarii* and Christianity, in: Paganism in the Middle Ages. Threat and Fascination, ed. Carlos Steele/John Marenbon/Werner Verbeke, Louvain 2013, pp. 157–166. For the devil as »sadly neglected in Carolingian Personenforschung«, see David Ganz, Humour as History in Notker's Gesta Karoli Magni, in: Monks, Nuns, and Friars in Mediaeval Society, ed. Edward King/Jacqueline Schaefer/William Wadley, Louvain 1989, pp. 171–183, at p. 180.

85) Cf. Caciola, Discerning Spirits (as n. 72) for the later period.

86) Alcuin, Vita Willibrordi, ed. Christiane Veyrard-Cosme, L'œuvre hagiographique en prose d'Alcuin, Florence 2003, pp. 33–75, at c. 22, p. 64.

as did uneducated people living and working on the land. Carolingian monks could be sceptical about some miracles, of course, and this included monks who compiled miracle collections. Heiric of Auxerre was not alone to complain about far-fetched miracles, in that case some that had been attributed to Saint Germain[87]. But contemporaries of Heiric, albeit from less prestigious institutions, had no scruples in recording the story of Flavitus, an Irish pigherd who taught himself to read and summoned his livestock by blowing a horn he had removed from the head of a passing unicorn, or that of Gengulf's wife, who for her role in her husband's murder was cursed to break wind instead of speaking (a punishment so extraordinary that it may be best read as an ironic critique of these kinds of stories)[88].

Conversely, miracle collections themselves show that monks had no monopoly on doubt about the power of relics: quite the reverse[89]. For instance, the third book of the Miracles of St-Denis, written around 877, describes the case of two women from Breuil and Chaudardes (Aisne) whose faith had been subverted by preaching pseudo-clerics into believing that God was everywhere and did not need to be beseeched in any particular place. (Needless to say, when they were persuaded by their neighbours to turn up to a festival at St-Denis, they soon learned the error of their ways[90].) For all their stress on holy trees or visions, these texts do not support the notion of a great gulf between learned and popular beliefs as such, and we do not need them to realise that most people in early medieval Francia believed in the power of otherworldly forces to do good or evil.

Where the value of these texts rests is not therefore in the beliefs that they attest, but rather in the interaction between these beliefs and the social circumstances of the believing community. The texts explored here are not necessarily more accurate in what they convey than polyptychs, charters or even archaeological evidence, but they provide information about the Carolingian countryside that these more conventional sources, whether housed in archives or archaeological collections, generally do not. Just as we need to consider charters and archaeology as separate but complementary registers for patterns of social activity and interaction, so we need to consider these texts as adding a further

87) Heiric, Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 1, cols. 1207–8 (*partim fabulosa*); cf. also Miracula Dionysii (as n. 25), i, preface, p. 343 (*fabulosa*). Cf. also Einhard, Translatio (as n. 15), iv, 15, p. 140, talking of *increduli.*

88) Vita Flaviti, ed. Henri Moretus, Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum latinorum bibliothecae scholae medicinae in Universitate Montepessulanensi, in: Analecta Bollandiana 34/35 (1915/16), pp. 292–305. On the story of Gengulf's wife, see Steffen Patzold, Laughing at a Saint? Miracle and Irony in the Vita Gangulfi prima, in: Early Medieval Europe 21 (2013), pp. 197–220.

89) A classic discussion is Susan Reynolds, Social Mentalities and the Cases of Medieval Scepticism, in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (Sixth Series) 1 (1991), pp. 21–41, who notes at p. 29 that »The miracle stories are full of scoffers.«.

90) They were afflicted by spasms, followed by fainting: Miracula Dionysii (as n. 25), iii, 15, p. 364. Cf. the defence of miracles by Heiric in Miracula Germani (as n. 13), c. 124, col. 1266. On Carolingian heresy, see now Warren Pezé, Le virus de l'erreur. La controverse carolingienne sur la double prédestination. Essai d'histoire sociale, Paris 2017.

dimension to our understanding[91]. There may be fertile ground here for collaboration between historians and the fledgling disciplines of data science and digital humanities through the development of techniques to map and analyse these multiple registers of evidence, and to tease out their interaction; systematic analysis could exploit the fact that the same scribes, and the same institutional archives, produced and preserved different types of texts about the same locales (and that these same monastic and clerical centres and their estates structured the production and exchange of so many of the material objects which make up the archaeological record).

As one might expect from sources whose point of origin seems to have been from within the villages concerned, we are presented with places that are neither merely units of property nor repositories of unchanging custom, but rather real, vibrant human communities, where kinship mattered though it could be overridden, and where neighbourliness itself created obligations. In other words, these miraculous – or demonic – anecdotes provide a certain three-dimensionality. We learn that some inhabitants of the village were experts at hunting for hares; that others were too poor to have their own essential farming equipment; how petty jealousies and jarring misfortunes might give rise to allegations about theft and arson, and gossip about illicit sex; and that villages had topographies within which social relationships were inscribed, as the talk of fields and houses, doors and barns, stone-throwing and rough justice, remind us. We might suppose that incipient commercialisation, the intrusion of the market, was beginning to create greater inequalities; but we can also see continued expectations about collective action[92].

That is not a picture in direct contradiction to sophisticated interpretations of the documentary evidence[93]. After all, officials or »mediators« of the kind mentioned in these anecdotes are attested in the documentary archive as well: for example, the village mayor, a position which first emerges in the sources in the ninth century, and the local priest, who is first attested in this period in significant numbers too[94]. Documentary archives also hint at the inequalities of wealth within the village that is evident from the miracles, from wealthy village elites, in contact with monasteries, through *coloni* and down to *mancipia*[95]. Of course, inequalities of wealth and of status could and presumably often did overlap in practice: Carolingian landlords were particularly worried about the

91) Cf. the appeal for comparing multiple registers of evidence, potentially via GIS, at the end of Matthew Innes, Framing the Carolingian Economy, in: Journal of Agrarian Change 9 (2009), pp. 42–58.

92) The miracles of St-Hubert are particularly revealing in this respect: Miracula Huberti (as n. 45).

93) Cf. Thomas Kohl, this volume, pp. 309–336.

94) Cf. Jean-Pierre Devroey, this volume, pp. 165–203. It would be interesting to map this development onto work on »witness leading«. For earlier rural priests, see Robert Godding, Prêtres en Gaule mérovingienne, Brussels 2001.

95) Cf. Jean-Pierre Devroey, this volume, p. 175 and p. 180.

dangers posed to estate management by rich mayors, and reading Hubert's account of the politics of his village, one can understand why[96].

As well as mining such stories for evidence of how villages worked internally, however, we can also read these texts for information about how these communities were integrated into wider structures of authority. It is clear, for example, that most, or perhaps all, of these villages, were subject to labour obligations. But these texts reveal some of the flexibility over the distribution of these obligations, quite different from the black-and-white proscriptions of the polyptychs or the charters. This flexibility was not a negotiation of equals, as shown by the *vicedominus*'s use of force at Lion, legitimate or otherwise. But none of these villages was merely a unit of property, and claims of ownership, where present, did not extinguish what we might well think of as local politics. Conventionally the integration of these communities into the wider Frankish world is framed as a question of the »top-down« exercise of power, and of sporadically documented resistance to it; it may be however that we would do better to view them as defined by a logic of »in-out« instead[97].

Admittedly, stories like those explored above do show how these villages might be subjected to numerous pressures – from distant monasteries, local aristocrats, and perhaps even from public authorities of various kinds. We should not romanticise the position of the ninth-century peasant, whose »caging« was well under way[98]. But to some extent, all these connections also opened up possibilities for action, since it meant these communities (or more accurately, elements within them) could choose potential alliances, for example by associating with a monastery, as at Marche. Elites were not monolithic, and different groups in the village could associate with different patrons. That is why elites were not the only people with the capacity to act and to make decisions, even in the manorialised north of Francia – indeed, especially in the manorialised north, for it is from there that most of the stories derive. In a world of »in-out« relations, it was precisely the option of appealing to an alternative, overlapping, external agency that kept negotiation central – again, we should think of the range of petitioners we meet in Einhard's letters, ranging from independent landowners who had fallen foul of their local count to dependent peasants convicted by their peers, who threw themselves on the mercy of Marcellinus and Peter. It may even have been precisely this space for negotiation that made outright peasant rebellion and revolt so rare in the period[99].

96) Cf. Jean-Pierre Devroey, this volume, pp. 183–195.

97) As pointed out by Bernd Schneidmüller at the conference; cf. Devroey, Puissants (as n. 7), pp. 490–503.

98) Chris Wickham, The Inheritance of Rome. A History of Europe from 400–1000, London 2009, pp. 529–551.

99) Chris Wickham, Space and Society in Early Medieval Peasant Conflicts, in: Uomo e spazio nell'alto Medioevo. Atti della 50. settimana di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo (Spoleto, 4–8 aprile 2002), Spoleto 2003, pp. 551–586, and now also id., Looking Forward: Peasant Revolts in Europe,

These communities seem to have existed irrespective of the strategies imposed on them by the elites, and were not simply called into existence through the process of their own subjection, important though that subjection certainly was in bolstering cohesion[100]. Indeed, these were villages that could have their own sense of history – at Sorrus, for example, where the visits of a long-dead holy man were treasured and associated with local landmarks, as well as in the Saint Vaast miracle recorded by Hubert, in which the village is said to have been founded by King Dagobert (a Merovingian king not, as it happens, honoured by the monastery that ultimately preserved the text). These stories show villages that were capable of building their own church, at Marche, and also, perhaps, in the account of Hubert. And in the case of Kempten, we see a community with its own mechanisms of policing and exclusion, capable of arranging its own ordeal, and in the end of driving someone outside the community altogether, into the no-man's land of the *marca*[101]. For all that the term »village« has been debated by modern historians and archaeologists, that former resident of Kempten and his family would have known what an early medieval village was: an interacting group of people of varying social statuses, and in this case a community so riven with conflict that its problems proved in the end intractable even for the archbishop of Mainz's own agents.

VII. Routine/Charismatic Dispute Processing in the Frankish Countryside

Even though (or maybe because) these texts focus on miraculous and demonic events, they restore important dimensions of activity to a social history: what emerges is a fuller picture of Carolingian Francia, with implications for the early medieval countryside more generally, and in particular its northern parts, which is where these kinds of stories cluster. Such accounts confirm the emergent picture in the wider historiography of a distinctive early medieval kind of rural life, one neither dominated by tax (despite the growing impact of the tithe) nor by reified seigneurial power[102]. These communities were complex, with their own internal dynamics – and it follows that in seeking to understand them, we should not neglect dissent, tensions and processes of change. For to the modern historian, it must seem that it was these forces, and not those of the other world, that really lay behind the stories that clerical elites turned to their own purposes.

In some cases, these tensions were clearly linked to external authorities, and thus to instability in local hierarchies. At both Bargny and Sorrus, the issue was the arrival of an

600–1200, in: The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Revolt, ed. Justine Firnhaber-Baker/Dirk Schoenaers, London 2017, pp. 155–167.

100) See Jean-Pierre Devroey, this volume, pp. 165–203.

101) Cf. Wickham, Framing (as n. 7), pp. 383–388, with references to detailed case-studies on village structures in this area.

102) Innes, Framing (as n. 91) and West, Visions (as n. 69).

aristocrat who clearly intended to exercise a more hands-on, day-to-day authority than that of the (rather distant) monastery, whose presence might have been intermittent, and whose footprint light. But in other cases, the issue was more the balance of power between factions within the community. At the village visited by Saint Vaast, the issue that prompted divine intervention seems to have been the dominance of the classic triumvirate of a local »coq du village«, a village priest and a village mayor that others were trying to overturn, for their own purposes. The community at Lion was apparently divided between those linked to a monastery, and those who resented the claims that group made, confident in its distant patrons. At Kempten, the tensions surrounded an individual for reasons unknown, but we are told that the village was suffering from theft. Of such small-time scheming was local politics made in the ninth as in many other centuries: small-scale, but not necessarily less charged for that, for we know that tactics could encompass murder[103].

In all these cases, however, these disputes were not taken to courts, nor were they processed by »legal« or routinizing means. They were instead connected in some way to the dramatic intervention of non-human forces. Taken together, what these stories reveal is an alternative pathway for dispute processing, quite different from those preserved in charters, discussed in capitularies, or recorded in other kinds of »routinizing« documentation: what we might think of as a kind of »charismatic« dispute settlement. Allegations of supernatural interventions may have been particularly useful in allowing villagers to raise accusations and suspicions that were too dangerous to state unambiguously: they were a mechanism for bringing a prominent individual's behaviour under the spotlight without making a direct challenge to their position, and they implicitly offered potentially face-saving ways for all parties to climb down, removing blame from within the community to otherworldly outsiders[104].

As far as we can tell, no property was exchanged, no written records made in the course of any of these conflicts: the implicit object of conflict in the stories summarised above was often more subtle than bald assertions and counter-assertions of property rights. We could conclude that these were not legal disputes; but it might be better to say that the disputes that provide the context for these otherworldly interventions were not articulated in legal terms, but revolved around unwritten codes of behaviour, around shifting balances of power within small rural communities: around status, honour and

103) See Warren Brown, this volume 110–114.

104) See William Miller, Dreams, Prophecy and Sorcery. Blaming the Secret Offender in Medieval Iceland, in: Scandinavian Studies 58 (1986), pp. 101–123. Cf. for the use of visions in a higher political register: Dutton, Politics (as n. 16); van der Lugt, Tradition (as n. 67); and Antonio Sennis, Dreams, Visions and Political Competition in the Monasteries of Medieval Central Italy, in: Compétition et sacré au haut Moyen Âge. Entre médiation et exclusion, ed. Philippe Depreux/François Bougard/Régine Le Jan, Turnhout 2015, pp. 361–378. One is also reminded of the (contested) functional anthropological interpretation of trial by ordeal, which remains a neglected topic in its Carolingian manifestations.

other intangible quantities. From a purely documentary perspective, the kind of intimate local politics that these texts reveal was in a sense impossible to set down, since it lay outside the terms of reference of the recording mechanisms, alien to the authorising narrative of the charter or the asset-listing of the estate survey[105]. That does not mean it was less important for those involved.

Doubtless, then, the presence of this kind of conflict processing in these texts was in large part a reflection of the nature of the particular conflicts in question. Yet we should also remember that monasteries and ecclesiastical institutions might have been reluctant to recognise and record this kind of activity unless they could in some way claim credit for it. Their position was after all to some extent based on a concentration of this kind of authority within their walls, just as much as it rested on a concentration of legal authority embodied in the documents assembled in the archive. Judging by the surviving manuscripts, monasteries may even have avoided giving local priests copies of saints' lives[106]. Monks would not necessarily have welcomed the presence of the charismatic at work in their estates, circumventing or transcending more conventional paths for dispute resolution or dispute prosecution, unless it was under quite controlled and carefully mediated circumstances – their saint, acting in defence of their interests. After all, miracle collectors could be quite jealous on the matter of which saints had been responsible for any given miraculous event[107].

So, it is hardly surprising that the case of Kempten is so isolated: for why would any monk or cleric choose to record such a story, which at best showed the failure of his community's relics in this instance, and at worst perhaps threatened to cast doubt on their efficacy in general? We may suppose that it was in the interests of major monasteries to »routinize« their relations with their estates, just as it was for Carolingian bishops to ensure that religious experience took place within the circumscribed and authorised setting of the liturgy as performed in local churches, and not in other forms less amenable to *correctio*, and more prone to error[108].

105) For charters as narratives, see Charles West, Meaning and Context. Moringus the Lay Scribe and Charter Formulation in Late Carolingian Burgundy, in: Problems and Possibilities of Early Medieval Charters, ed. Jonathan Jarrett/Allen McKinley, Turnhout 2013, pp. 71–88. General context provided by Documentary Culture (as n. 9).

106) As pointed out by Carine van Rhijn during the conference.

107) Einhard, Translatio (as n. 15), iv, preface, p. 108.

108) Cf. Charles West, Unauthorised Miracles in Mid-Ninth-Century Dijon and the Carolingian Church Reforms, in: Journal of Medieval History 36 (2010), pp. 295–311, and now also Shane Bobrycki, The Flailing Women of Dijon: Crowds in ninth-century Europe, in: Past & Present 240 (2018), pp. 3–46. On monastic efforts to rationalise their estates, Devroey, Puissants (as n. 7), pp. 591–593, 604–607, as well as Devroey, Ordering (as n. 10).

Historians of the countryside may well share that perspective, for historiographical reasons – the proud traditions of legal or quasi-legal history that have long dominated the study of social relations in early medieval Europe, most notably the formidable research concept of *Grundherrschaft* – as well as for more mundane ones[109]. If one bases one's research within an archive, one inevitably tends to write within the frames of reference set by that archive. Those who have focused on the early medieval »settlement of disputes« have gone far to set the legal documentation within a wider social frame, but can only work within the constraints of the kinds of disputes recorded by the documentation at their disposal. These do offer hints of less bureaucratic processes – for example, the feasting and processions mentioned in the polyptychs, and illuminated to such great effect by Kuchenbuch and Devroey, or occasional references in charters to trial by ordeal – but these hints are firmly set within a documentary or bureaucratic context[110]. Interactions in the localities such as the ones discussed above were difficult to fit into an archive of property documents, because they were not expressed solely or primarily in terms of property: as a result, they are difficult to fit into historical schemes constructed upon those archives.

VIII. Conclusion

No one would deny the wealth of the documentary archives for the Carolingian countryside, compared both to the centuries that preceded and to those that followed. These archives were important, and played a key part in the historical processes that they documented. But no one could deny that they are patchy, either, and it is beyond any doubt that the surviving charters, polyptychs and estate surveys are just a fragment of what once existed. It is equally beyond doubt that the documentary terminology is, in Bloch's words, in some way »artificial«, describing villages in ways that the villagers might well not themselves have recognised.

Yet as we hope to have shown, the issue here goes a little further than questions of preservation and bias: it is a matter of the perspective of the legal and documentary sources, taken as a whole. A history of the early medieval countryside in whatever century based on legal documents is, inevitably, a legal history of the countryside in that period, and by

109) For a recent defence of this concept, see Werner Rösener, Die Grundherrschaft als Forschungskonzept. Strukturen und Wandel der Grundherrschaft im deutschen Reich (10.–13. Jahrhundert), in: ZRG Germ. 129 (2012), pp. 41–75.

110) Ludolf Kuchenbuch, Porcus donativus. Language Use and Gifting in Seigniorial Records between the Eighth and the Twelfth Centuries, in: Negotiating the Gift. Pre-modern Figurations of Exchange, ed. Gadi Algazi/Valentin Groebner/Bernhard Jussen, Göttingen 2003, pp. 193–246, and Jean-Pierre Devroey, Communiquer et signifier entre paysans et seigneurs, in: Comunicare e significare nell'alto medioevo (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 52), Spoleto 2005, pp. 121–153.

that token incomplete. It is not just a primarily monastic perspective, it is a monastic perspective refracted through a particular set of lenses: a refraction that has encouraged modern historians in turn to apply property-based rational negotiation models of social relations. What the sources that we have discussed, both the hagiographical collections and the annals, remind us is that there were some kinds of events, some kinds of social tensions, that found articulation in non-legal discourses in ways that could not be reduced down into charter *formulae*, or at least not in a way that remains normally visible[111]. There could have been many more miracles, and demons, in early medieval villages than we can now know, and they could have been more important than we can now guess[112].

It may therefore be that we can understand neither how the Frankish countryside functioned at the time, nor how to set it in a longer-term context of change, without grasping the significance of the dimensions of »unroutinised« behaviour hinted at by these texts about saints and demons: attempts to resolve disputes and negotiate tensions that circumvented legal or bureaucratic means – the panoply of courts – and that instead found expression in the manifestation of divine or malevolent power, on a sliding scale of intensity. Such interactions with the holy and demonic, intermittently recorded by monks for their own purposes and when it suited them, might have been as significant as the legalities of ownership enunciated on parchments held in store-rooms in a distant monastery or cathedral, since they might well have better articulated the social tensions naturally generated within these small-scale communities. We should not assume, in other words, that our miracle texts necessarily represent the imposition by monks or clerics of otherworldly interpretations on social conflict in the localities for their own purposes: those conflicts might have taken on an otherworldly nature for the immediate participants too, as abundantly attested in comparative anthropological studies of small-scale societies in different times and places at moments of stress and transition[113].

Indeed, if we take this argument to its logical conclusion, we may wonder whether even attempting to read these miracle texts in this way is not to universalise a framework oriented to one particular discourse[114]. For the participants in the events that we have touched on, the otherworldly interaction could have been more real than the »social tensions« that modern historians like to discern beneath them. There is a risk that to quarantine this otherworldly material off into the »charismatic« is, in a sense, merely to repeat the work of Carolingian clerical elites, who did not need to have read Weber to channel

111) On formulae, see Warren Brown, this volume, pp. 102–103.

112) Cf. John Blair, The Dangerous Dead in Early Medieval England, in: Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald, ed. Stephen Baxter et al., Aldershot 2009, pp. 539–560, and Caciola, Wraiths (as n. 81).

113) See for instance Luise White, Speaking with Vampires. Rumor and History in Colonial Africa, Berkeley 2000.

114) Thanks to Klaus von Eickels for a discussion on this point at the Reichenau conference.

their knowledge of the outside world into the complementary but distinct registers of the hagiographical and the legal[115]. Rather than seeing these episodes as representing »social tensions«, should we not contemplate reversing the analytical priority, and considering the extent to which the property-based networks visible in charters were themselves underpinned, and maybe even to some extent were generated, by distinctly less »rational« forms of interaction? We should not assume that the property rights our documents describe were always and everywhere prior to and independent of the relationships in which they were embedded, since such rights too are ultimately representations of interpersonal relationships expressed in a particular, albeit powerfully performative, discursive register. The division by clerical elites of their material into hagiographical and documentary registers may distort a more seamless lived reality[116].

In the quotation with which we began, Marc Bloch imagined what it would be like to stroll along the lanes of Carolingian villages, and wondered whether we would find what people were saying shocking. It seems likely that we would: not though because they were »discussing their status amongst themselves« in terms slightly different from those of the polyptychs, but rather because the topic of conversation could have been of a totally different nature altogether. Historians always like to assume that the really crucial pieces of evidence are those which survive; in the case of those studying the Frankish countryside, those documents, for reasons of both production and preservation, are primarily economic and social in their remit, and routinizing in their outlook: polyptychs, charters and capitularies. Yet to understand the real value of our sources, we need also to understand their limitations, to see what they obscure. Perhaps the best way to ascertain the loading of the routinizing sources, to perceive the weight they bear, is to compare them with different, complementary perspectives, and not automatically to privilege the legal dimensions. In truth, it may be that we need to write a cultural history of the Carolingian countryside in order to be able to write a social one.

115) For a discussion of the methodological risks of reproducing the categories of analysis of our sources, see Philippe Buc, The Dangers of Ritual. Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory, Princeton 2002, together with the critique by Geoffrey Koziol, The Dangers of Polemic. Is Ritual Still an Interesting Topic of Historical Study?, in: Early Medieval Europe 11 (2002), pp. 367–388, and the response of Philippe Buc, The Monster and the Critics: a Ritual Reply, in: Early Medieval Europe 15 (2007), pp. 441–452. Historical analysis rests on correctly calibrating our interaction with »their« categories, so that we respect past agency without simply rehearsing their analysis, but instead generate meaningful responses to our questions.

116) A line of reasoning first explored by Rosenwein, Neighbor (as n. 7); for further reflections see Innes, Rituals (as n. 55), and (in the context of archival development) Id., Material Culture (as n. 9).

Summary

This paper examines a series of stories about supernatural intervention in conflicts within Carolingian villages. These stories are primarily drawn from miracle collections put together at a range of northern Frankish monasteries (chiefly St-Denis, St-Germain of Auxerre, St-Riquier, St-Vaast, Seligenstadt and Stavelot), along with a comparable anecdote included in a text of a different genre but similar institutional origin, the Annals of Fulda. The paper demonstrates that such texts have much to tell us about how these village communities worked, in conventional terms. This is not simply because monastic authors, in order to provide plausible backdrops against which to rehearse the saintly credentials of their holy patrons, drew on their experiences and expectations about villages and so provide circumstantial detail; we also argue that, prior to their reworking to fit authorial agendas and genre expectations, the raw stories of strange events often originated within the communities in which they were set. We go on to suggest that such stories pose a methodological challenge to our normal frames of analysis, by illustrating how tensions and social change within the early medieval village could be processed in »charismatic« ways as well as or instead of the »routinizing« register privileged by the documentary archives. The Carolingian countryside was not necessarily as »legalised« or »routinized« as the received canon of charters and polyptychs (perhaps deliberately) make it seem.