There can be no doubt that Jinty Nelson (in some places the editors deliberately retain her official name, Janet) is among the most creative, inspiring, and influential living historians of the Early Middle Ages. Everybody loves her charming amiability and admires her ingenious, sometimes provocative, but always profound challenges to former research. Her extensive and in many respects pioneering work is well respected. It is therefore not surprising that a conventional Festschrift might have exceeded all practical bounds. The editors of this volume, written in her honour on the occasion of her 65th birthday, were therefore well advised when they decided to include only a limited number of selected essays on a particular theme which gives the book—with an ambiguous title!—a strong coherence. In their introduction the editors present a warm-hearted appreciation of Jinty Nelson as a colleague and of her wide-ranging work focused on human interaction, ritual and politics, gender aspects of medieval history, and the politics and culture of the Carolingian period, in particular, the reign of Charles the Bald. If Charles has made some headway towards rehabilitation against the contempt of earlier researchers, then this is largely thanks to Jinty Nelson. It is also worth mentioning that the authors represented in this volume are a mixture of established and younger medievalists.

The fifteen essays in the volume focus on either Frankish history or its influence on Britain (or vice versa), and each of them addresses a different, and mostly new, aspect. Alice Rio (‘Charters, Law Codes and Formulae’) discusses the different significance of the three genres of legal sources mentioned in the title, casting interesting glances at the history of research and emphasizing the importance of the formulae. It may be significant for our own approaches that formulae have required new attention over the last few years since they are a witness to the adaptation of Roman legal and literate structures, especially in non-Roman regions. Formulae form the link between law codes and charters at a regional as well as practical level, revealing how laws were adopted and adjusted in practice. This inspiring essay may, however, overemphasize their difference from charts repre-
Book Reviews

senting ‘the real world’, as most formulae were based on ‘real’ charters. Susan Reynolds (‘Compulsory Purchase in the Earlier Middle Ages’) deals with a neglected topic, the taking of land, especially church lands, for public use. Although there is not much evidence for expropriation, it is documented long before the twelfth century and thus cannot be seen as a consequence of the reception of Roman law. Alan Thacker (‘Gallic or Greek? Archbishops in England from Theodore to Ecgberht’) pursues the development of church structures (metropolis, archbishopric, and pallium) in the West and compares it with developments in England. He shows that Gregory the Great’s plans for church organization were not successful because of the restructuring efforts of the Greek archbishops: Gregory’s personal grant of the pallium ceded to Theodore’s concept of the high authority of his office. This concept was taken up again by Bede who, however, also revived Gregory’s plan for a separation of the twelve bishops subject to Canterbury from the four bishops of Northumbria. As a result, the English archbishops had a much stronger position than their equivalents on the Continent until Willibrord and Bonifatius introduced the English model there.

Paul Fouracre, one of the volume’s editors (‘Forgetting and Remembering Dagobert II: The English Connection’), applies recent approaches to ‘memory culture’ to an almost forgotten Merovingian king. On the one hand he discusses the role of the ‘Vita Wilfredi’, which did not have much influence on the Continent, and, on the other, the development of research. Thus Fouracre gives an instructive lesson on the historian’s dependence on his evidence and on attempts by medieval elites to conceive of their past. David Ganz, the second editor, gives his essay a general title (‘Some Carolingian Questions from Charlemagne’s Days’), which conceals a codicological analysis of ms. BNF lat. 4629, a collective manuscript on laws, capitularies, and formulas, and an edition and translation of a dialogue based on the manuscript without emendations. Thus he not only delivers some insights on the ideas of ethics and virtues, physical beauty, sin, and women in Carolingian times, but also suggests that the simple Latin of the text may reflect the conversations at Charlemagne’s court, which we know of from Einhard.

Matthew Innes (‘“Immune from Heresy”: Defining the Boundaries of Carolingian Christianity’) deals with reproaches of heresy at the time of Saint Boniface. At the council of Soissons in 744, such accusa-
tions were made against the priests Adalbert and Clemens, who had taught that confessions were not necessary because God knew all the sins. Discussing this topic in detail, the author draws our attention to a fact so far ignored: Boniface’s fear of heresy in the final stage of Christianization and the language of heresy in the sources: ‘heretification was not a viable strategy, for it potentially threatened the integrity and identity of Church and kingdom.’ At the same time, the controversy over wrong belief shows that ‘the Franks had indeed become immune from heresy’. Paul Kershaw (‘English History and Irish Readers in the Frankish World’), in a similarly interesting approach, analyses the reception of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History on the Continent. He takes the example of the use made of this work by Sedulius Scottus and the Bern manuscript, which ignored the Old English but considered issues related to the presence of the Irish in Britain. Thus Bede was used to teach Italians about British history. Rachel Stone (‘In Search of the Carolingian “dear lord”’) compares lordship in France and England in order to show that, despite the different traditions of research in Britain, France, and Germany, there are, in fact, common traditions, including an emotional attachment to a (dead) lord, the ideal of loyalty (as in Dhuoda and Nithard), and a political ideology of lordship.

Simon MacLean (‘Making a Difference in Tenth-Century Politics: King Athelstan’s Sisters and Frankish Queenship’) underlines the difference in political marriages between the Anglo-Saxon and the Frankish kingdoms in the ninth century, when Charles the Bald’s daughter Judith was married to Aethelwulf, and the tenth century, when Aethelstan married three of his daughters to Frankish kings and princes. The author emphasizes the role of these queens, while family ties as such were rather fragile. He confirms the impression, well known since the work of Pauline Stafford and Amalie Fössel, that ‘queenship’ was not a fixed institution, but a shifting concept, while family commemoration formed a key part of the queen’s role. Theo Riches (‘The Carolingian Capture of Aachen in 978 and its Historiographical Footprint’) inquires not into the events of 978 (the seizure of Aachen by the West Frankish king, Lothar) but into the historiographical narrative, refuting Hartmut Hoffmann’s conclusion concerning Richer’s incompetence in using classical texts. A comparison of different sources reveals that the authors had distinct perceptions and, diachronically, a decrease in the importance of place (the sym-
bol of Charlemagne’s reign) in favour of a rising interest in people, their motives, and feelings of honour and shame. Sarah Hamilton (‘Abvolutimus vos uice beati petri apostolorum principis: Episcopal Authority and the Reconciliation of Excommunicants in England and Francia c.900–c.1150’) deals with rites of reconciliation that, despite a vast amount of research on rituals, have so far been neglected. A comparison between the absolution given in France and England and a synopsis of the main texts reveals that the ritual had similar procedures, but different prayers and localities. Moreover, the Frankish rites concentrate on the authority of the bishop (submission of the excommunicant), whereas the English bishops absolve in their own name, often several sinners at the same time. John Gillingham (‘Fontenoy and After: Pursuing Enemies to Death in France Between the Ninth and Eleventh Centuries’) is also concerned with a neglected question, namely, what happened after battles when negotiations failed. The battle of Fontenoy between Louis the Pious’s sons may be evidence that even Christian enemies were pursued and killed (Nithard and the other contemporary sources remain silent on this, but suggest at least a feeling of guilt on the part of the victors). It was not until the eleventh century that a shift towards more merciful treatment by taking prisoners instead of killing the enemy seemed to indicate a change. Undoubtedly this question needs further analysis.

Stephen Baxter (‘The Death of Burgheard Son of Ælfgar and its Context’), on the background of the Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England project directed by Jinty Nelson, attempts to shed light on a man (Burgheard), of whom all we know, from a later charter, is that he died on returning from Rome in 1061. It seems, however, that of the twelve Burgheards mentioned in Domesday Book, ten had possessions in Buckinghamshire and can be identified as the same person: the son of Ælfgar. Apparently Burgheard had travelled to Rome to seek papal support for his rights in Lincolnshire. Although the conclusions necessarily remain hypothetical (‘a matter of managing doubt and balancing probability’), they give a good impression of the value of prosopographical studies. David Bates (‘The Representation of Queens and Queenship in Anglo-Norman Royal Charters’) emphasizes the significant office of the two Mathildas, whose roots lie in Carolingian times. (Thus queenship has here become an office.) The essay makes a convincing contribution on queenship, charters, and Anglo-Norman relations.
Finally, Wendy Davies (‘Franks and Bretons: The Impact of Political Climate and Historiographical Tradition on Writing their Ninth-Century History’), surveying the nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography on Brittany and Bretons in the ninth century, illustrates its dependence on political judgements. In the nineteenth century Brittany’s independence was emphasized, while in the twentieth, Carolingian penetration was stressed. This shift supported the process of Brittany becoming a part of France. Historiography, therefore, contributes to the political environment. The volume is concluded by a list of Jinty Nelson’s publications and a Tabula gratulatoria.

All the essays range within the theme of this Festschrift. Almost all of them touch on Jinty Nelson’s favourite topics, often in combination with the author’s own special field. But each of them provides a new and often surprising theme, and fresh perspectives and insights. In total, they offer us not only a valuable collection of essays on ‘Frankland’ and Franco-Anglo-Saxon relations, but also pay tribute to a worthy colleague who is herself one of the greatest authorities in this field. To borrow from David Ganz’s words and hommage to Jinty Nelson, despite the authors’ own talents and skills: ‘they do honour to a scholar who makes us all feel less talented.’

HANS-WERNER GOETZ is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Hamburg. He has published widely on many aspects of medieval history, including Leben im Mittelalter vom 7. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert (6th edn., 2002), which has been translated into Italian, Japanese, English, and Chinese, and Europa im frühen Mittelalter 500–1050 (2003).