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ROGER COLLINS

DECEPTION AND MISREPRESENTATION  
IN EARLY EIGHTH CENTURY  
FRANKISH HISTORIOGRAPHY: TWO CASE STUDIES

In comparison with the period that followed the death of Gregory of Tours in 594, the eighth century in Francia saw an extraordinary flourishing of the art of historiography. Whereas the seventh century produced only the compilation of what has erroneously but irrevocably come to be known as the Chronicle of Fredegar, its successor is marked by a proliferation of historical writing, with a notable number of works of varying size and scale emerging from different regions of the Frankish kingdoms. Thus, the period of the activities of Charles Martel, from 714 to 741, is far more substantially recorded and perhaps therefore more capable of being understood than, for example, the equally significant reign of Dagobert I (623–638). Yet, an apparent abundance, at least in relative terms, of literary source materials brings with it its own problems, some of which may not yet have been fully recognised.

The texts that provide the basis for the narrative outline of Charles's career are well known, though the status of some of them has not always been assured. This is particularly true of the so-called *Annales Mettenses Priores*, a work whose compositional history is both complex and only recently established<sup>1</sup>. Its worth as a source for this period was once denied, but it is now much more highly regarded; possibly too much so<sup>2</sup>. This is a question that will be considered further in the first of the two studies offered here. Equally problematic in some respects are the various collections of brief, chronologically structured texts that collectively go by the name of the Minor Annals. The brevity of their entries for the years in question and the still debatable questions of their origins and mutual relationships limit their use in the composition of detailed narratives of the events of the period of Charles Martel<sup>3</sup>. For this recourse has been made primarily to the anonymous text known as the *Liber Historiae Francorum* (LHF) and to the Continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar. The LHF was written c. 726/7, and only extends its coverage up to the years 721/2<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, as an adapted version of the LHF provides the principal source for the

1 Hans HOFFMANN, *Untersuchungen zur karolingischen Annalistik*, Bonn 1958, pp. 9–68; Irene HASELBACH, *Aufstieg und Herrschaft der Karolinger in der Darstellung der sogenannten Annales Mettenses Priores*, in: *Historische Studien* 412 (1970) pp. 1–208.

2 For older views see Heinrich Eduard BONNELL, *Die Anfänge des karolinischen Hauses*, Berlin 1866, pp. 157–181.

3 François Louis GANSHOF, *L'Historiographie dans la monarchie franque sous les Mérovingiens et les Carolingiens*, in: *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* XVII (1970) pp. 667–674; HOFFMANN (see n. 1) pp. 70–90. W. LEVISON and H. LÖWE, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter II*, Weimar 1953, pp. 180–192.

4 On this see Richard A. GERBERDING, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum*, Oxford 1987.

Continuations of Fredegar in its treatment of the same period, the latter here lacks much independent authority. For the 720s and 730s, though, the Continuations of Fredegar appear to provide the basic interpretational framework for the study of the Frankish kingdoms and for the career of Charles Martel.

Any new approach to this period must start with an assessment and evaluation of these sources, but, as has been indicated, so far very few of them have been subjected to a sustained investigation. Even when this has been done, it has not always proved possible to secure general agreement on the conclusions to be drawn<sup>5</sup>. In part the difficulty lies in the limited way any one of these sources can be used to control another. While the LHF provides the fullest account of the years from 714 to 721, the Continuations of Fredegar do the same for the next two decades, but with neither offering any independent corroboration of the other. The Minor Annals are all exceedingly brief, and lacking in detail. It is also important to note how geographically conditioned the different sources can be. The Minor Annals refer to a series of events relating to Charles' activities in Frisia and east of the Rhine, particularly in the 720s, of which the Continuations of Fredegar make no mention<sup>6</sup>. Thus the contributions of later compilations, such as the *Annales Mettenses Priores* and the *Chronicle of Moissac*, could be exceedingly useful, but the information they offer has to be evaluated in the light of views held concerning their compositional history<sup>7</sup>. The relative dearth of non-literary documentary texts dating to the period makes it all too rare, though not impossible, for them to contribute to such inquiries. Where, however, it does prove possible to contrast the information offered by two or more sources any conflicts that emerge can prove highly telling in assessing the merits of particular texts. Two examples of such conflicts will be examined here. In both cases the specific enquiries can lead to wider conclusions concerning the nature and purposes of two of the sources most frequently used in reconstructing the history of the ascendancy of Charles Martel. It may be hoped that in the process some new light may also be thrown on the particular episodes and individuals around which the two studies centre.

5 As in the case of the stimulating but controversial study of the LHF by GERBERDING (see n. 4) or with some of Hoffmann's arguments concerning the *Annales Mettenses Priores*. See Donald Bullough, 'Europae Pater': Charlemagne and his achievement in the light of recent scholarship, in: *English Historical Review* 85 (1970) pp. 64–65.

6 *Annales Sancti Amandi, Tiliani, Laubacenses et Petaviani*, ed. H. PERTZ, Hannover 1826 (MGH SS 1), pp. 6–9. The informationally thin and chronologically imprecise nature of the Continuations' treatment of the period c. 719–731 should be born in mind when considering the arguments presented below for the non-contemporary nature of this source's recording.

7 See n. 1 for the AMP; the *Chronicle of Moissac*, ed. H. PERTZ, Hannover 1826 (MGH SS 1), pp. 282–313, has received less attention. Although an early ninth century compilation, there are grounds for believing that some use has been made in it of an otherwise lost set of southern Annals relating particularly to Narbonne. HOFFMANN (see n. 1) pp. 28–30.

## 1. The ›Afterlife‹ of an Arnulfing Mayor of the Palace: Theudoald Son of Grimoald II

Few of the Arnulfing Mayors of the Palace of the seventh and eighth centuries proved incapable of playing a dominant personal role in the politics of their day. If asked to name those members of the family who held this office but failed to exercise any real power, historians might (until recently) have come up with two candidates: Drogo son of Carloman and Theudoald son of Grimoald II. Drogo became Mayor of Austrasia in 747 when, for reasons that have never been fully explained, his father retired into monastic life in Italy. A letter of Boniface attests to Drogo holding the office in 748, but it has generally been assumed that soon after this he was deposed by his uncle Pippin III, then Mayor of the western sections<sup>8</sup>. Pippin could thereby be seen as reuniting all the Frankish territories under his own control and thus taking the first step towards his elevation as king in 751<sup>9</sup>. Recently, however, a forceful case has been made for prolonging Drogo's political survival and for envisaging him and his supporters as representing a serious threat to Pippin until the latter was able to capture and tonsure him, and confine him in a monastery in 753/4<sup>10</sup>. This excellent piece of detective work apparently leaves only Theudoald as an Arnulfing *fainéant* Mayor. However, it is possible that the case of Theudoald also merits some re-examination.

Theudoald was a child when installed as Mayor of the Palace of Neustria in 714. He was probably the first minor to be thus invested with the highest office beneath the throne in any of the Frankish kingdoms. Unlike the later case of his second cousin Drogo, it has proved possible for historians to feel reasonably certain of Theudoald's age when made Mayor in the spring or summer of 714. The *Liber Historiae Francorum* indicates that he was born in the year in which his uncle Drogo, the count of Champagne, died. This event can be dated to either 707 or 708<sup>11</sup>. He was thus about six years old at the time of his father Grimoald's murder in April 714<sup>12</sup>.

Grimoald had previously held the office of Mayor of the Palace in Neustria, under the Merovingian kings Childebert III (695–710/1) and Dagobert III (710/1–715). The degree of Austrasian control over Neustria and of Arnulfing ascendancy over the

8 Boniface, *Epistulae*, ed. M. TANGI, Berlin 1916 (MGH Epp. Sel. 1), p. 172. On Carloman's decision see Claire Stancliffe, *Kings who opted out*, in: Patrick WORMALD, Donald BULLOUGH and Roger COLLINS (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, Oxford 1983, pp. 154–176, especially 159–160.

9 Rosamond MCKITTERICK, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987*, London 1983, p. 34; Roger COLLINS, *Early Medieval Europe, 300–1000*, London 1991, p. 254 see Drogo off quite quickly; Michael J. ENRIGHT, *Iona, Tara and Soissons: the Origin of the Royal Anointing Ritual*, Berlin–New York 1985 (*Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung* 17) pp. 112–115, allows his political survival until at least 750.

10 M. BECHER, *Drogo und die Königserhebung Pippins*, in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 23 (1989) pp. 131–153.

11 *Annales Sancti Amandi* s. a. 708; *Annales Tiliani* sa 708; *Annales Petaviani* s. a. 708 (see n. 6, pp. 6–7), for 708; *Gesta Sanctorum Patrum Fontanellensis Coenobii*, ed. F. LOHIER and J. LAPORTE, Rouen 1936, p. 40, for 707. GERBERDING (see n. 4) p. 115, n. 50.

12 *Annales Sancti Amandi* s. a. 714 (see n. 6) p. 6.

Merovingian monarchs after the battle of Tertry in 687 has often been exaggerated, but it was probably at its height following the death of Childebert III. Whatever his motives for making the choice, Pippin II the Mayor of the Austrasian palace must have felt confident enough of his political grip over Neustria at the time of the death of his son Grimoald to be able to force the western court into accepting the latter's six year old son as titular Mayor. Real power must have been intended to be vested elsewhere, doubtless primarily in the hands of those members of the Neustrian nobility who had profited from the Arnulfing ascendancy following the battle of Tertry, but the details are concealed by the very limited nature of the relevant sources<sup>13</sup>.

It is by no means certain that Pippin II anticipated personally being able to continue to direct affairs in Neustria or even in Austrasia for very much longer. He had been seriously ill earlier in the year, and it was on the way to visit him that his son Grimoald had been assassinated in the church of St. Lambert at Liège. This event, perpetrated by a certain Rantgar, may have been part of a blood feud initiated by Arnulfing involvement in the murder of St. Lambert, only about ten years earlier<sup>14</sup>. The death of the second of his legitimate sons and his own declining health may have led Pippin to take the unprecedented step of making his infant grandson Mayor in Neustria. What plans he had for Austrasia are not clear, and he died later in 714, probably on 16th December, leaving power in the hands of his widow Plectrudis, and with his illegitimate son Charles excluded from any immediate role.

The distinctly uneasy political structures cobbled together in the last months of Pippin II's life did not long survive him. Theudoald was still functioning as nominal Mayor of the Palace in Neustria in June of 715, when king Dagobert III is found making a donation to the monastery of Saint-Wandrille *suggestente Theodaldo maiore domus regiae*<sup>15</sup>. However, before the end of the year a major revolt had broken out in the ranks of the Neustrian nobility. The supporters of the Arnulfing house, who had benefitted for over a quarter of a century from Pippin II and Grimoald's patronage, gathered around the person of the young Theudoald, but were defeated by the rebels in a battle in the vicinity of Compiègne, possibly on 26<sup>th</sup> September 715<sup>16</sup>.

Theudoald is reported in both the *Liber Historiae Francorum* and in the *Continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, which here largely depend on the LHF, to have fled from the battle. It may be more charitable, in view of his age, to say that he was carried to safety. However, neither of these texts reports his ultimate fate. Nor, indeed, have they anything more to add about him at all. It is another work, the *Annales Mettenses Priores*, that adds to its reference to the battle a sentence outlining

13 See Paul J. FOURACRE, *Observations on the Outgrowth of Pippinid Influence in the Regnum Francorum after the Battle of Tertry (687–715)* in: *Medieval Prosopography* 5,2 (1984) pp. 1–31.

14 GERBERDING (see n. 4) pp. 117–120.

15 *Gesta Sanctorum Patrum Fontanellensis* (see n. 11) pp. 29–31. The date given is V Iduum Iuniarum, which is said to be a Sunday. The 9th of June actually did fall on Sunday in 715.

16 *Liber Historiae Francorum*, ed. B. KRUSCH, Hannover 1888 (MGH SRM 2) c. 51; *Continuations of The Chronicle of Fredegar* *ibid.*, c. 8, Wilhelm LEVISON, *A propos du calendrier de saint Willibrord*, in: *Revue Bénédictine* 50 (1938) pp. 37–41, for the probable date of the battle.

what became of the child Mayor: *non multo post tempore vitam innocentem finivit*<sup>17</sup>. From this all historians who have paused even to consider what befell the fainéant child Mayor have drawn the obvious conclusion: that he died as unnoticeably as he had ruled some time very soon after the battle. Some have even embroidered the story a little, having him expire >de peur et de fatigue<<sup>18</sup>.

It is thus highly surprising to find evidence for Theudoald apparently being alive some seven years after his presumed death. As is well known, the Neustrian rising of 715 was but the first step in the tumultuous series of events covering the years up to 721 which led to the establishment of Pippin II's illegitimate son Charles Martel as the dominant figure in Austrasia and eastern Neustria<sup>19</sup>. In comparison with the reigns of the late seventh century Merovingian kings or those of his later eighth century Carolingian successors, the period of Charles's ascendancy is marked by the survival of surprisingly few charters. Amongst these, however, are two that he gave to the monastery founded by the Anglo-Saxon missionary Willibrord at Utrecht<sup>20</sup>. The first of these documents is dated to the first of January in the second year of the reign of king Theuderic IV, which has been taken to be equivalent to 722, but is more likely to have been 723, or even 724<sup>21</sup>. Amongst the list of signatories witnessing the grant may be found *Signum Thiedoldi nepotis ejus*<sup>22</sup>.

Although the original of this charter does not survive, there is nothing about the text that has aroused doubts as to its being anything other than a genuine diploma of Charles Martel<sup>23</sup>. Thus, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of the attestation of Theudoald to this document. What might be queried is the identity of the Theudoald in question. It is clear enough that if the relationship cited in the signature is to Charles Martel, who was the donor of the charter, then there is no other person it can be other than Theudoald the quondam Mayor of the Palace of Neustria. A number of features make this identification certain. Firstly, Theudoald was not a normal Arnulfing name, and no other member of the family is known to have used it. Secondly, although *nepos* is a somewhat ambiguous word that could be applied to both nephews and grandsons, this presents no problems here. In 723 Charles Martel certainly had no grandchildren. Nor indeed

17 *Annales Mettenses Priores*, ed. B. DE SIMSON, Hannover–Leipzig 1905 (MGH SRG in us. schol.) p. 20. The phraseology is a repetition of that used to record the death of the Merovingian king Clovis IV (691–695): *ibid.* p. 15.

18 J.-H. ROY and J. DEVIOSSE, *La bataille de Poitiers*, Paris 1966, p. 139.

19 *Liber Historiae Francorum* (see n. 16) c. 51–53; *Continuations of Fredegar* (see n. 16) c. 8–11; COLLINS, *Early Medieval Europe* (see n. 9) pp. 245–251.

20 J. M. PARDESSUS (ed.), *Diplomata, Chartae, Epistolae, Leges, aliaque Instrumenta ad res Gallo Francicas spectantia*, Paris 1849 vol. II, doc. DXXI pp. 334–335.

21 Pardessus gives 722 and this is followed by PRINZ (see n. 23 below) and others. Problems of late Merovingian regnal chronology are notoriously difficult and some are beyond resolution. However, if the Continuator of Fredegar is right in placing the death of Dagobert III in the winter of 715/6 and in giving a six year reign to Chilperic II, that of Theuderic IV cannot have begun before the winter of 721/2. Depending on whether he succeeded Chilperic II before or after 31st December 721, the 1st January in the second year of his reign would have to fall in either 723 or 724.

22 PARDESSUS (see n. 20) vol. II p. 335. This identification was also made by Theodor BREYSIG, *Jahrbücher des fränkischen Reiches 714–741*, Leipzig 1869, pp. 45–46, also p. 13 n. 2.

23 F. PRINZ, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Darmstadt 1988, p. 209 and n. 249.

were any of those that he would have ever called Theudoald. Of his nephews, the sons of his half-brothers Drogo and Grimoald II, only Theudoald the son and successor of the latter bore that name.

As for the possibility that the Theudoald of the charter might be the nephew or grandson of someone else, in other words one of the other signatories of the document, not only would such a usage be peculiar but it is possible to show from another comparable diploma of Charles Martel that such a style was used to refer only to the relatives of the donor<sup>24</sup>. In the middle of a list of witnesses to a charter of 741 recording a gift made by Charles Martel to Saint-Denis may be found the attestation *S. Grifonis filii sui consent*<sup>25</sup>. The individual thus referred to was Charles Martel's son Grifo (d. 753). As in the document of 723/4, the familial relationship of the witness to the donor is deliberately expressed in the formula of attestation. Overall, the implication that Theudoald, the nephew of Charles Martel and former Mayor of the Palace, is the person indicated in the charter of 723/4 seems inescapable. That it has hitherto escaped historian's notice is due to the mistaken belief in his previous demise, the view propagated by the *Annales Mettenses Priores*. How that story came into being will be considered below. First, though, it is necessary to consider some of the implications of Theudoald's continued survival, and to seek for evidence of his actual as opposed to implied death.

It is perhaps surprising to find Theudoald not only alive, but also appearing as a member of the entourage of the uncle who had replaced him. It would be interesting to know how large a role he played in that context and for how long. It is regrettable that only two other charters of Charles Martel containing lists of witnesses have survived<sup>26</sup>. In neither of these does the name of Theudoald or any approximation to it survive, but this is too limited a sample for us to be able to hazard a guess as to whether he was or was not a regular member of Charles's entourage. It can at least be said that he does not appear as a witness to Charles's next charter to Willibrord and his church in Utrecht. This is dated July in the sixth year of Theuderic IV<sup>27</sup>.

In itself the fact of his survival is interesting, and symptomatic of a greater degree of family solidarity in these years than is sometimes allowed for. This alone might cast doubt on the suggestions that other members of the Arnulfing house, such as the sons of Drogo, were inherently hostile to Charles<sup>28</sup>. His cultivation of Theudoald may also indicate something of Charles's political needs and methods, especially in the difficult period of the 720s when his power was far from secure and his authority had not even been established in western Neustria<sup>29</sup>. Just as it paid Charles to enhance the standing and territorial influence of his nephew Hugo, son of Drogo, so

24 Josef SEMMLER, Zur pipinidisch-karolingischen Sukzessionskrise, in: *Deutsches Archiv* 33 (1977) pp. 1–36 at p. 6 n. 40 believes that this Theudoald must be the *nepos* of the Adalhard who precedes him in the list of signatories.

25 PARDESSUS (see n. 20) vol. II doc. DLXIII, p. 380.

26 PARDESSUS (see n. 20) vol. II docs. DXXXVII and DLXIII.

27 PARDESSUS, vol. II doc. DXXXVII, p. 347. This is normally taken to be in 726, but 727 is more likely.

28 For such a suggestion relating to Drogo's son Hugo, bishop of Rouen and abbot of Saint-Wandrille see GERBERDING (see n. 4) pp. 137–139; for further doubts on this see COLLINS, *Early Medieval Europe* (see n. 9) p. 250.

29 This would only come after the expulsion of Raganfred from his base at Angers after 624: *Annales Laureshamenses* s. a. 624; *Annales Petaviani* s. a. 624, ed. H. PERTZ, Hannover 1826 (MGH SS 1) pp. 8

too former partisans of Grimoald II could be made into allies by his treatment of Theudoald.

Little as may be known of the detail, it seems certain that the quondam Mayor of Neustria survived the regime of his uncle Charles, and may have prospered under it. However, the disturbed sequence of events that followed the latter's death in 741 was to prove fatal for him. This much may be gathered from an all too laconic entry in the *Annals of Lorsch*. In this text in the entry for the year 741 it is recorded that *Carolus mortuus et Theodald interfectus est*<sup>30</sup>. These were certainly turbulent times. Charles had intended a division of the territories over which he had imposed his authority between all three of his sons: Pippin III, Carloman and Grifo, but the two former had united to exclude the latter. At the same time the uneasy ascendancy established by Charles over Aquitaine was destroyed by a revolt that was led by Hunald, the son of the former duke Eudo. The duchies of Alamannia and Bavaria also refused to recognise the authority of Charles's elder sons<sup>31</sup>. In such circumstances Theudoald, as the representative of the senior and legitimate branch of the Arnulfing house, could either hope to play a leading role or be suspected of such ambition. The brevity of the annal entry unfortunately denies us the possibility of knowing whether he perished in the course of an active bid for some regional power or was merely eliminated as a threat to one of the other contenders. Retrospectively, though, it might have comforted him to know that he had at least managed to live for a quarter of a century longer than later generations of historians would be prepared to allow him!

The existence of evidence that would seem to show Theudoald very much alive after the *Annales Mettenses Priores* would wish to suggest that he was dead inevitably raises the question as to why this source purveys such misleading information. As previously mentioned, the status of this text has undergone considerable amelioration in recent years. Where its evidential value was once largely denied, modern study has at least been able to offer a more nuanced evaluation of the merits of its parts, through an analysis of its compositional history and ideological purposes<sup>32</sup>. Compiled somewhere around the year 802, with an original section extending thence to 805, it consists largely of rewritten extracts from earlier sources for the period from 687 onwards<sup>33</sup>. For the opening decades of the eighth century the debt to the *Continuations of the Fredegar chronicle* is particularly marked, as well as to some of the minor annals<sup>34</sup>. Sections of these texts are incorporated into the work almost verbatim or with limited rewriting. As far as these sections are concerned, the *Annales Mettenses Priores* clearly have nothing original to offer. Where uncertainty lies, though, is in respect of other short sections or individual sentences that can not

and 24; *Continuations of Fredegar* c. 11, ed. John Michael WALLACE-HADRILL, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, London 1960, p. 89.

30 *Annales Laureshamenses* s. a. 741, ed. H. PERTZ, Hannover 1826 (MGH SS 1) p. 24.

31 J. JARNUT, *Alemannien zur Zeit der Doppelherrschaft der Hausmeier Karlmann und Pippini*, in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Regnum Francorum*, ed. R. SCHIEFFER, Sigmaringen 1990, pp. 57–66.

32 HOFFMANN (as n. 1) pp. 9–68, and HASELBACH (as n. 1).

33 There is also one continuation of it, made soon after 830, which uses the *Annales Regni Francorum* for the period 806 to 829, and then adds an original section for the year 830 that is highly favourable to Louis the Pious and the empress Judith. Ed. B. VON SIMON, Hannover 1895 (MGH SRG in us. schol.).

34 All clearly indicated in the MGH SRG edition.



be traced to identifiable sources, and which are inserted into a narrative largely composed from identifiable texts.

Are these flights of fancy on the part of the early ninth century compiler, or do they represent extracts from otherwise lost eighth century annals or chronicles? Some historians are prepared to allow a fair measure of credence to such sections<sup>35</sup>. It must be admitted that if any such hidden source existed it related almost exclusively to the years 708–717, and it is possible to suspect that what has on occasion been treated as the imprint of an independent source is little more than a more literary elaboration by the ninth century compiler of the bald narrative of one of the extant minor annals<sup>36</sup>. There is no way of solving that particular problem on the basis of this one issue alone, but it is at least suggestive that the report of Theudoald's death in the *Annales Mettenses Priores*, which is added on to an account that otherwise derives from the *Continuations of Fredegar*, can be demonstrated to be clearly false. The compiler of c. 802, whose sources did not include the *Lorsch annals*, would have found no reference to Theudoald after 715 in the *Fredegar Continuations* or in the other historical texts that he or she used, and may have decided to draw the conclusion of an early death to explain it<sup>37</sup>. On the other hand, such a deduction was also in line with the ideological principles that have been detected as underlying this work.

It has long been appreciated that, whatever was believed about its date of compilation, the *Annales Mettenses Priores* are highly partisan, in presenting an account of late seventh and eighth century events that is consistently favourable to the Carolingians. More than that, though, it was pointed out in the 1860s that the text was also likely to be deliberately misleading when it came to divisions within the ranks of that dynasty. In particular, the achievement of power by Charles Martel is so handled as to obscure any grounds for doubt as to the legitimacy of his authority<sup>38</sup>. Thus, from the perspective of the compiler of the *Annales* the survival of a son of Charles's elder half-brother and one, moreover, who had both been designated by Pippin II and had exercised, however briefly, the office of Mayor of the Palace was distinctly embarrassing. Just as the *Fredegar Continuator* and the author of the first recension of the *Annales Regni Francorum* would deliberately distort the significance of or omit serious reference to Drogo the son of Carloman, so do the *Annales Mettenses Priores* seek to obscure the survival of an Arnulfing with a stronger *de jure* claim to authority than had Charles Martel<sup>39</sup>. The *Annales Mettenses Priores* were not alone, moreover, in trying to sweep Theudoald under the historiographical carpet. More effectively than by using a vague formula to imply an early death, the *Liber Historiae Francorum* and the *Continuations of Fredegar* do

35 GERBERDING (see n. 4) p. 144 writes of the *Annales Mettenses Priores* providing 'near contemporary support' for redating a campaign of 718/9.

36 The items of information that cannot be equated with those of extant sources are very few, and in all cases can be explained as being literary or ideologically motivated flourishes that the compiler of 802 would have been capable of or prone to making.

37 It is just possible that the *Annales Mettenses Priores* were compiled in the convent of Chelles, then under the direction of Charlemagne's sister Gisela. See BULLOUGH (as n. 5) pp. 65 and n. 2.

38 BONNELL (see n. 2) pp. 129–131, and more generally pp. 157–181.

39 BECHER (see n. 10) pp. 132–135.

very much the same by omitting any further reference to him after the defeat of his forces at the battle near Compiègne in 715. He just vanishes from sight in these works.

The authors of these works may also have taken another step towards reducing any ideological challenge his survival might have presented to Charles's status as the political heir of Pippin II. This was by stating that Theudoald was illegitimate and was the son of Grimoald II *ex quadam concubina*. As is well known, this was actually Charles Martel's condition, in being the son of Pippin II by his liaison with a lady called Alpaida. Significantly, the *Liber Historiae Francorum*, followed by the *Fredegar Continuator* try to make her Pippin's wife, deliberately overlooking the fact that he was already and for a long time married to the Plectrudis who tried to exercise power in Austrasia in 714–715. Their authority in the matter of Arnulfing family relations is thus hardly high. The order of events in the *Liber Historiae Francorum* at this point is by no means always fully sequential, and it is possible that in placing the birth of Theudoald prior to Grimoald's marriage the author was deliberately distorting his chronology<sup>40</sup>. It is particularly striking to note that Grimoald's wife was named Theudesinda<sup>41</sup>. It may just be an extraordinary coincidence, but were anyone to try to produce a composite name for a son from those of the two spouses Grimoald and Theudesinda, the result would be *Theudoald*.

Thus, in the case of this lesser but by no means insignificant member of the Arnulfing house it is possible to find evidence of deliberate distortion and misrepresentation in all of the major narrative accounts relating to this period. This can be demonstrated on the basis of the survival of contradictory indications in other sources, in this case a single charter and some of the minor annals. Once the deception is revealed, the motivation behind it is not hard to find. In turn, this can lead to doubt being cast on other aspects of these texts' information on the same subject, even when alternative sources do not exist to prove bias or mendacity. In this particular instance this means that while we can be certain that Theudoald, far from dying c. 715, was still alive in 723 and probably only died in 741, we might equally well wish to doubt that he was anything other than the legitimate son of Grimoald II.

## 2. A Climate of Treason?

### The Supposed Collaboration of Duke Eudo of Aquitaine and Duke Maurontus of Marseille with the Arabs

It may be thought in examining the case of the historiographical ›damnatio memoriae‹ of Theudoald that, while the *Annales Mettenses Priores* and the *Liber Historiae Francorum* have proved themselves to be deliberately misleading witnesses, the author of the *Continuations of Fredegar*, who is doing no more than offering a

40 GERBERDING (see n. 4) pp. 116–145 for the author of the LHF's treatment of this period. *Liber Historiae Francorum* (see n. 16) c. 49 and 50 for the placing of Theudoald's birth before the marriage.

41 *Liber Historiae Francorum* (see n. 16) c. 50.

slightly revised text of the latter, was himself merely deceived by his model<sup>42</sup>. That may be true in this particular instance, but in its treatment of the period for which it becomes the prime source of our information, the 720s and 730s, this text in turn proves to be highly deceptive. For example, its version of some aspects of the events leading up to the battle of Poitiers in 732 or 733 has been rightly found erroneous<sup>43</sup>. Similarly, its treatment of the Aquitanians more generally has been shown to be prejudiced<sup>44</sup>. Other instances will be discussed below. However, in neither of these two cases just referred to has it been claimed that the Continuator was being deliberately misleading. Such charity towards this author may be misplaced<sup>45</sup>.

The possibility that he may be offering a deliberately distorted view of the events of these years derives especially from the treatment in this work of Charles Martel's involvements in both Aquitaine and Provence. In particular, the local rulers of these regions, Duke Eudo of Aquitaine and Patrician or Duke Maurontus of Marseille, are accused of allying themselves with the Arabs against Charles<sup>46</sup>. In 1961 Professor Michel Rouché produced a brief but cogent defence of the Aquitanians, using a contemporary Spanish source, the *Chronicle of 754*, to provide an alternative and more credible account of the events immediately preceding the famous battle of Poitiers<sup>47</sup>. It is worth reviewing this sequence of events once more here, at the same time putting them in a wider context, as this can serve to highlight the ideosyncratic nature of their presentation in the *Continuations of Fredegar*. What follows, firstly, is a brief reconstruction of the relevant episodes, relying primarily on the *Spanish Chronicle of 754* and, where possible, the minor Frankish annals. This will be compared with the version of these events offered by the Continuator.

Following the effective pacification of the Iberian peninsula and the elimination in 720 of the vestigial Visigothic kingdom based on Narbonne, the Arab and Berber conquerors of Spain had established themselves on the frontiers of the southern Frankish territories<sup>48</sup>. The Aquitanian duke Eudo's defeat of an Arab attack on Toulouse in the spring of 721 provided only a temporary respite rather than relief from further such raids on this region. Up to the time of the death of the Arab governor Anbasah in 725 southern Aquitaine, Provence and the Rhône valley suffered frequent attacks. Especially notable was a raid that led to the sack of Autun

42 He does, however, provide the additional detail of the location of the battle between Theudoald and the Neustrians (in *Cocia silva*): *Continuations* c. 8, ed. WALLACE-HADRILL (see n. 29) p. 87. This is entirely lacking in LHF.

43 Michel ROUCHE, *Les Aquitains ont-ils avant la bataille de Poitiers?* in: *Le Moyen Age* 1 (1968) pp. 5–26.

44 Roger COLLINS, *The Vaccae, the Vaceti, and the Rise of Vasconia*, in: *Studia Historica* 6 (1988) pp. 211–223.

45 The reference to unitary authorship of the *Continuations*, at least for the period c. 721–751, will make sense in the light of the arguments advanced later in this paper.

46 *Continuations* c. 13 and c. 20, ed. WALLACE-HADRILL (see n. 29) pp. 90 and 93–94.

47 See n. 40. Some scepticism has to be expressed over the value of the *Gesta Episcoporum Autissiodorensium*, to which he also turned, as a source for these events; especially if this has to depend on the survival of hypothetical 'poèmes épiques' (p. 14). See also Roger COLLINS, *The Arab Conquest of Spain 710–797*, Oxford 1989, pp. 88–91, and more generally Roy and Deviosse (see n. 18). The only recent historian to take the Continuator at face value is Patrick GEARY, *Aristocracy in Provence*, Philadelphia 1985, pp. 127–128.

48 COLLINS, *Arab Conquest* (see n. 47) pp. 36–51.

on 31<sup>st</sup> August 725; testimony to how deeply the Arab and Berber armies were able to penetrate into Francia at this time<sup>49</sup>. Despite the initial success in defeating the Arab army that attacked Toulouse in 721, Eudo of Aquitaine obviously found it expedient to come to terms with his enemies by a treaty that involved, amongst other things, giving his daughter to one of the leaders of the Berbers<sup>50</sup>. This cannot be dated precisely, but occurred at some point in the 720s. Just as the initial Arab attacks on the south may help to explain some aspects, at least, of Charles Martel's success in Neustria in 719/20, so the continuing raids on Provence, Aquitaine and Burgundy in the 720s should not be overlooked as a contributory factor in the ›softening up‹ of these provinces, making it easier for him both militarily and politically to impose his authority and supporters over them in the 730s<sup>51</sup>.

The later 720s were to be more tranquil, not least as the Arab governors were increasingly involved in internal developments within the Iberian peninsula. As in the preceding Visigothic period, Septimania in the 720s became the focus for garrisoning for offensive and defensive purposes. As in the other frontier regions of *Al-Andalus*, the majority of the garrisoning forces seem to have been drawn from the ranks of the Berbers, under their own tribal leaders. One of these was Munnus (sometimes erroneously called ›Uthman ibn Abu Nisah‹), who had married the daughter of Eudo. According to the Spanish Chronicle of 754 his residence was the ›oppidum Cerritanensis‹, which has been identified with either Llívia or Puigcerdà in the Catalan region of Cerdanya<sup>52</sup>.

Soon after the appointment of a new governor of *Al-Andalus*, in the person of ›Abd ar-Rahman ibn ›Abdallah al-Gafiqi, in 729 or 730 Munnus broke out into revolt, and entered into an alliance with ›the Franks‹. The causes of Munnus's revolt against the regime of the Arab governors of *Al-Andalus* are interesting, and relate to a major problem that the Arabs were to encounter in North Africa by the end of the decade, but do not have any immediate relevance to the questions being considered here<sup>53</sup>. As the Spanish chronicler does not distinguish between Franks and Aquitanians, and called Eudo ›the commander of the Franks‹ it seems almost certain that it was Aquitanian help which Munnus sought. It has been customary to identify this agreement with the treaty that led to Munnus' marriage to Eudo's daughter, but the precise wording of the text of the Chronicle of 754 appears to indicate that these were two separate episodes. Professor Rouche considers this alliance of c. 730 to be the cause of the Continuator of Fredegar's mistakenly accusing the Aquitanians of calling for Muslim help against Charles Martel, but this, as will be seen, is improbable.

49 COLLINS, *Arab Conquest* (see n. 47) pp. 87–88 and n. 22.

50 Estudio crítico sobre la Crónica Mozárabe de 754 c. 79, ed. José López PEREIRA, Zaragoza 1980, pp. 96–97.

51 It is conceivable, though not provable, that the Aquitanian withdrawal from the Neustrian coalition under Raganfred and Chilperic II was caused by the growth of the Arab threat on the southern borders of the duchy. Liber Historiae Francorum (see n. 16) c. 53.

52 M. DELCOR, Llívia, antiga capital de la Cerdanya, in his: *Estudis històrics sobre la Cerdanya*, Barcelona 1977, pp. 35–51. For this chronicle and its anonymous author see LÓPEZ PEREIRA (see n. 50) and COLLINS, *Arab Conquest* (see n. 47) pp. 26–41, 52–65.

53 Michael BRETT, The Arab conquest and the rise of Islam in North Africa, in: *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 2, ed. J. D. FAGE, Cambridge 1978, pp. 490–555 is the best introduction to this.

The Berber revolt in the Pyrenees proved short-lived, and was crushed by the new governor quite rapidly. The campaign against Munnus probably took place in the year 731, and may have had significant consequences for Aquitaine. Surprisingly perhaps, these were first felt on the Loire. The general need in this period to view events in the north of Francia in the light of the developments in the south is again reinforced by Charles Martel's actions at this time. Although there is no report of conflict between Charles and Eudo in the decade that followed the making of their agreement in 721, which led to the return of Chilperic II to Neustria, this state of affairs could hardly be prolonged. Charles was otherwise involved for much of the 720s, and only managed to establish himself in the western regions of Neustria by the end of the decade. From then on any opportunity to exploit weaknesses in Aquitaine would be welcome. Thus, the *Annales Sancti Amandi* and the other annals related to them, and also the distinct *Annales Laureshamenses* first record Charles conducting campaigns south of the Loire at this time: the Lorsch annals report him twice raiding Aquitaine in 731, while the *Annals of Saint Amand* record more generally that he was fighting against Eudo<sup>54</sup>. The former also notes that Raganfred, the former Neustrian Mayor of the Palace and ally of Eudo who had taken refuge in Aquitaine, died at the same time, though it does not provide any indication of how this occurred. It would seem hardly coincidental after a seven year period of apparent peace, between the war against Raganfred around Angers in 724 and the campaign of 731, that Charles's attack on Aquitaine should be launched at the very time when Eudo's attention was again concentrated on the south, with the army of 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Abdallah al-Gafiqi campaigning near his Pyrenean frontier.

It may also be, in the light of previous examples of the timing of large scale raids by the Arabs, that it was this outbreak of war between Charles and Eudo in 731 that led 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Abdallah al-Gafiqi to launch his subsequent attack on Aquitaine itself in 732 or 733<sup>55</sup>. This may have been intended as a reprisal for Eudo's dealings with the ill-fated Munnus, and it may also have been motivated by a personal desire for vengeance. 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Abdallah al-Gafiqi had previously briefly held the office of *Wali*, in the aftermath of As-Samh's death in the battle near Toulouse in the Spring of 721. He had been given this office by the leaders of the Arab army, and had in all probability fought in the battle. He and his companions were thus required by the obligations of blood feud to seek revenge for the death of As-Samh and other ›martyrs‹. In the event his appointment was not confirmed by the Caliph, and it was to be another ten years before he was in position to pursue the feud that the defeat at Toulouse imposed on him. Whatever the motivation, the timing of the attack can not have been fortuitous. The outbreak of conflict between Eudo and Charles Martel offered the kind of opportunities that the Arabs appear to have liked to exploit. It may have been that in 732/3 the Aquitanian duke was anticipating another threat from the north rather than one from the south. The Aquitanian army suffered a major reversal on the Garonne. It is perhaps worth noting that 'Abd ar-Rahman, by invading via Pamplona and the western Pyrenean

54 (See n. 6) pp. 8 and 24.

55 The first Arab attack on Byzantine Africa in 646 took place during a revolt by the exarch; the invasion of Spain in 711 coincided with a civil war in the peninsula etc. For arguments concerning the dating of the Poitiers campaign see COLLINS, *Arab Conquest* (see n. 47) pp. 90–91.

passes, was attacking via his opponent's traditional recruiting grounds, and this may have limited the strength of Eudo's response.

The speed of the Frankish reaction to Eudo's subsequent appeal for aid is also striking. Assuming that the Arab army did not linger in the vicinity of the Garonne, and even allowing for a possible sack of Bordeaux, it had only progressed some 120 miles – perhaps six days' march – further north before encountering Charles Martel's forces near Poitiers. The brief annals record no other Frankish campaign this year. Had Charles been in, for example, Frisia or Saxony, it is unlikely that he could have responded to Eudo's appeal with anything like the rapidity that was actually displayed. It is thus quite possible that he was or had recently been in Aquitaine, and had been campaigning against the very person who was now forced to turn to him for help: a rather dramatic change of role!

When this account of the relations between Aquitaine and the Arabs and between Eudo and Charles Martel in the 720s and early 730s, drawn from a variety of Frankish and Spanish sources, is compared with that offered by the Continuations of Fredegar, the latter emerges looking not only rather threadbare but also highly untrustworthy. The first claim of the Continuator is that Eudo broke the treaty (i.e. that of c. 721), and in consequence Charles invaded the duchy to punish him. Of this there is no evidence in any other source, and in 731, the year of the Frankish invasion, Eudo was preoccupied with events on his southern border. Secondly, the Continuator claims that, because of the defeat he suffered at the hands of Charles, the Aquitanian duke appealed for assistance to the Arabs<sup>56</sup>. This, however, took the form of an Arab army that burnt the churches of Bordeaux and then the basilica of St. Hilary at Poitiers, and was advancing to do the same to the abbey of St. Martin at Tours when it was intercepted by Charles Martel and his Frankish forces<sup>57</sup>. The implication of all of this is clear enough: Eudo had brought in a heathen ally, who destroyed the principal Christian shrines of Aquitaine and killed many of the duke's own subjects. Eudo was himself, therefore, to blame for the disasters that befell his duchy, from which only the intervention of Charles was to provide a relief. That this was hardly the behaviour of an ally is surely enough proof that the claimed alliance did not exist<sup>58</sup>. Aquitaine was the intended victim of the Arab raid, and the defeat of Eudo's army by the invaders, to which the Continuator makes of reference, was the cause of his having to turn to his former enemy, Charles Martel, for help.

Why, it must be asked, is the Continuator's version so much at variance with that to be constructed on the basis of all other extant sources? To believe, as Professor Rouche does, that he was confused by the existence of the previous alliance between Eudo and Munnus is probably too charitable. The accusation is very specific, and is put firmly in the context of Eudo being defeated by Charles. His action in then calling upon the *gens perfida Saracinatorum* is presented as having catastrophic consequences for his people, and for the Church in his duchy. The blame is thus placed squarely upon the shoulders of Duke Eudo, and it is not unreasonable to suspect that this story was part of a deliberate attempt to vilify the ducal line. Eudo's

56 Continuations of Fredegar c. 13, ed. WALLACE-HADRILL (see n. 29) pp. 90–91.

57 Continuations of Fredegar c. 13, ed. WALLACE-HADRILL (see n. 29) pp. 90–91. Chronicle of 754 ch. 80, ed. LÓPEZ PEREIRA (see n. 50) pp. 98–100.

58 ROUCHE (see n. 43) pp. 7–8.

heirs and their subjects were still putting up a spirited resistance to conquest by Charles's successors at the time that the *Continuations* were being written<sup>59</sup>. This story of Eudo's collaboration with the Arabs is a deliberate piece of invective. What might be questioned, though, is whether the Continuator invented or consciously perpetrated this piece of Carolingian propaganda or was himself the unwitting victim of disinformation. An inspection of other parts of his narrative relating to the events of the 730s can help clarify this.

In comparison with the charges made by the Continuator against Eudo of Aquitaine, the comparable accusations levelled against duke Maurontus of Marseille are harder to undermine, due to the absence in this case of alternative contemporary sources of information<sup>60</sup>. However, the paralleling of the cases of Eudo and Maurontus is at least suggestive. In 732 or 733 Charles Martel intervened in Aquitaine against an Arab attack. In 735, on the death of Eudo, he invaded the province and imposed his own supporters, trying to eliminate the family and followers of the ducal house. In 737 he campaigned in Provence in the aftermath of an Arab offensive that had given them control of a number of significant towns and fortresses. In 739 Charles invaded Provence again, but this time to oust duke Maurontus and his supporters, replacing them by those like Abbo who would be faithful to him<sup>61</sup>. In both instances the *Continuations* of Fredegar level accusations of collaboration with the Arabs against those who resisted Charles.

It is necessary to stress that no tangible examples of collaboration can be shown. The capture of Avignon by the Arabs in 737, with the consequential severing of the coast from the Rhône valley, was, like the defeat of Eudo's army and the sack of Bordeaux in 732/3, the cause of the appeal for help to Charles. That in the course of the Arab campaign in 737 the city of Arles had had to surrender to them, like so many others from the 630s onwards, is far from being the proof of collaboration as has been claimed; unless the word be given a new definition that would be sufficient to render it meaningless<sup>62</sup>. It is merely evidence of the city's inability to defend itself. Many other cities had been so placed in the course of the preceding hundred years, and the terms that the Arabs offered made submission tolerable but continued resistance highly unwise<sup>63</sup>.

In the case of the charge made by the Continuator against Eudo recourse to another substantial contemporary source is sufficient to provide a more acceptable and reasonable version of events. To this could be added elements of inherent improbability in the Continuator's own account. With Maurontus doubts can also be raised on the basis of the Continuator's narrative. For one thing this author clearly conflates the events of two years into one. The campaign against Maurontus is made to appear the continuation of the one initiated against the Arabs. It is quite

59 Michel ROUCHE, *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes*, 418–781, Paris 1979, pp. 111–132.

60 Other than for brief references in some of the minor annals: (see n. 6) pp. 10 and 24.

61 *Continuations* c. 20, ed. WALLACE-HADRILL (see n. 29) pp. 93–95; *Annales Petaviani* s. a. 737 and 739, *Annales Laureshamenses* s. a. 737 and 739: MGH SS vol. I pp. 10 and 24; *Chronicle of Moissac* s. a. 737: (see n. 6 and 7) p. 292.

62 GEARY (see n. 47) p. 128 n. 9, interprets it this way.

63 D. R. HILL, *The Termination of Hostilities in the Early Arab Conquests AD 634–656*, London 1971; see also the Spanish examples discussed in COLLINS (see n. 47) pp. 39–41.

clear, though, from the unanimous tradition of the minor annals and from the Chronicle of Moissac that there were two separate expeditions, divided by the space of a year<sup>64</sup>. This, at the very least, should raise serious doubts as to the Continuations being a contemporary record of these events. As will be suggested below, the chronological imprecision makes more sense if the narrative was being composed some fifteen years later.

If doubt can be cast on the truth of the accusations made against Maurontus, while those directed against the Aquitanians may be seen to be demonstrably false, it is obviously necessary in completing such a case to suggest why it is that such malicious charges were being levied. The source of the accusations of treason or collusion on the part of Eudo of Aquitaine and Maurontus of Marseille with the Arabs is, of course, the same in both cases: the Continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar. As previously mentioned, Professor Rouche distrusts the Continuator but is unwilling to call him a deliberate liar. Nor does he wish to challenge the Continuator's version of events in Provence. It is possible, however, to suspect that the anonymous author of this chronicle was being intentionally mendacious in his presentation of these, and perhaps other, episodes in Charles Martel's acquisition of power over the regions of Francia. The reasons lie in the nature and purpose of the work.

Relatively little attention has been paid to these questions. Although recognised as a major source for the period of Charles Martel and Pippin III, its brevity and the complexities of its internal structure have led to its being treated as a quarry for information, though not a significant piece of literary composition. What may be called current orthodoxy on the Continuations would see them as comprising several discrete sections. These include a revised version of the final portion of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* (chapters 1–10 of the Continuations), the first part of the Continuations proper (chapters 11 to 17), a second very brief continuation (chapters 18 to 21), a longer third one (chapters 22 to 33), and a final one (chapters 34 to 54). These are seen as being tacked on at generally unspecifiable periods to the mid-seventh century core collection that generally, if wrongly, goes by the name of Fredegar<sup>65</sup>.

In fact this latter perception is misleading, because all of the manuscripts that contain the Continuations are also notable for offering a completely revised and augmented version of the original Fredegar corpus. All of the Fredegar manuscripts have been divided into five distinct but related classes from the time of Bruno Krusch's MGH edition onwards, and it is the fourth of these classes that uniquely contains both the Continuations in full and the revised version of the whole Fredegar corpus<sup>66</sup>. It is clear enough that this does represent a genuine revision of the mid-

64 See the references in n. 54. In 738 Charles was in Saxony; a campaign ingored by the Continuator.

65 This pattern was first worked out by Krusch (see n. 16) pp. 8–9, and has since been followed by WALLACE-HADRILL and KUSTERNIG. See also Bruno KRUSCH, *Die Chronicae des sogenannten Fredegar*, in: *Neues Archiv* 7 (1882) pp. 247–351, 421–516. It should be remembered that the chapter divisions are modern and lack MS authority.

66 A truncated text of the Continuations may be found in the fifth class. This only extends up to the death of Charles Martel. This class was probably first put together in the early ninth century, when the text of the *Annales Regni Francorum*, which begins in 741, was substituted for the final part of the



seventh century original compilation: certain new items have been added to it and others are omitted<sup>67</sup>. Equally strikingly, a four or occasionally five book structure is here replaced by one of three books. The work as a whole also becomes more clearly and probably explicitly a ›Historia Francorum‹ than it was in its original form. In particular the reviser's decision to include ›Dares Phrygius‹, the pseudonymous Latin history of the Trojan war, makes a great deal of sense in the light of theme of the Trojan origins of the Franks, a prominent feature of the original compilation that is reinforced in the new version<sup>68</sup>.

Thus, to see this revised Fredegar only in the light of the appending of continuations is to miss the fact that at some point a single intelligence worked on the material and produced a revised and coherent corpus of texts that embraced Frankish history from its mythical Trojan origins right up to the compiler's own times. Rather than see the work as we now have it as a reorganised Fredegar with a series of continuations tacked on at various points over a number of decades, it would be more sensible to expect the entire revised corpus to have been put together at one point, thereafter receiving perhaps no more than a single continuation. The original Fredegar was a collection made up from the work of previous authors with a section of new material added to the end of it by its compiler; so too was the eighth-century revised version an independent creation of an author who took the work of his predecessors and adapted it to his own purposes, while adding a section of his own to it<sup>69</sup>.

The crucial point at which the new version was made is clearly represented by the colophon preserved in MS Vatican Reginensis 213, which is chapter 34 in the modern editions: *Usque nunc, inluster vir Childebrandus comes, avunculus praedicto rege Pippino hanc historiam vel gesta Francorum diligentissime scribere procuravit. Abhinc, ab inlustre viro Nibelungo, filium ipsius Childebrando itemque comite, succedat auctoritas*<sup>70</sup>. The particular importance of this division is also reinforced in MS British Library Harleian 3771, the earliest extant example of its class<sup>71</sup>. In this MS the third book, which contains what would have been books IV and V of the original Fredegar compilation together with all of the Continuations, has only one internal sub-division, which is marked by a blank line and the use of a coloured initial for the first word of the next section<sup>72</sup>. This division comes just where the colophon was

Fredegar continuations. See WALLACE-HADRILL's edition (n.29) p.LIII. It is worth noting the following correspondence: MSS 5c, 5f and 5x 1–3 of the Fredegar corpus are identical to MS C3, D1, C2, C1, C1a of the MGH SRG edition of the *Annales Regni Francorum* (see n.33).

67 For example, the deletion of the original first book of the compilation and its replacement by Julius Hilarian's *De Cursu Temporum* makes a better opening to what may be seen to be a synoptic history of the world and of the Franks in particular.

68 John Michael WALLACE-HADRILL, *Fredegar and the History of France*, in his: *The Long-haired Kings*, London 1962, pp. 71–94.

69 This is to pass over the still debatable question of single or multiple authorship of the final sections of the seventh century collection. Whatever view is taken, it is agreed that a single author made the actual compilation that goes under the name of ›Fredegar‹. On this question see Walter GOFFART, *The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered*, in: *Speculum* 38 (1963) pp. 206–241.

70 The chapter divisions are editorial impositions and not part of the authorial programme.

71 See the WALLACE-HADRILL edition (n.29 above) p. LI, citing a letter from Bernhard Bischoff, locating this MS in the ›mid-9th century, apparently written in western Germany, perhaps at Cologne‹.

72 Folio 135 recto of MS. London B. L. Harley 3771.

located in MS Vat. Reg. 213, and further indicates that this would have marked a significant break in the text. Simply put, all of the material of the Continuations up to this point was viewed by the scribe of the exemplar from which this MS derived as forming a whole, and the final sections that succeed this break represent a separate and additional part of the work.

What is the significance of all of this? The widely held view of this work that sees it as little more than a random series of continuations pays no special attention to the divide at the end of what in modern editions is called chapter 33<sup>73</sup>. This is reinforced by the tendency to see the work as what Professor Wallace-Hadrill called ›a family chronicle‹, kept up to date by monastic scribes in the employ of count Childebrand and his family<sup>74</sup>. One perverse consequence of all of this has been to interpret the aforementioned colophon or chapter 34 as implying that Count Childebrand must have died in 751. It would be better to suggest instead that what it does imply is that the compilation was put together on Childebrand's orders in 751, and that after a gap of seventeen years his son Nibelung had another copy made, with a continuation bringing it up to the current year of 768.

That these two versions, Childebrand's of 751 and Nibelung's of 768, were made in these particular years and end in both cases with the royal consecrations of Pippin and of Charles and Carloman respectively can hardly be coincidental. It is not perhaps being too imaginative to propose that the revised and extended ›Fredegar‹ was put together in 751, as a *Historia Francorum* on the orders of Childebrand to mark his nephew's inauguration as *Rex Francorum*. His son Nibelung may have found it appropriate to present another copy or copies, suitably brought up to date, to celebrate the coronations of Pippin's sons in 768. It is possible, indeed, to speculate a little further. The apparent lack of interest in the revised Fredegar compilation – or as perhaps it should be called Childebrand's *Historia Francorum* – in the time of Charlemagne may be better understood if the 768 version was only presented to Carloman, who ruled over the territories in which this family is known to have had estates<sup>75</sup>.

If this line of argument be accepted, the ideologically heightened interpretations of the events of the first half of the eighth century that can be found in the final sections of the revised Fredegar need to be interpreted in the light of the particular concerns of the Carolingian house at the time of Pippin's usurpation of royal authority in 751. The problems that he faced and the dangers attendant on his taking of the royal title have certainly been well brought out in recent work<sup>76</sup>. It may be suggested though, that Childebrand, who was a major participant in the events of the last years of Charles Martel, and not least the interventions in Provence in 737 and 739, wished his retelling of the history of that crucial decade to emphasise the supposed justifications for Charles's displacement of the established ruling houses in both

73 The very division into chapters, which has no MS authority, reinforces this way of seeing the continuations as a series of appended sections.

74 WALLACE-HADRILL (see n. 29) p. XXVI.

75 Little is known of the landholdings of the Nibelung family at this time, but those that have been identified were all in Carloman's kingdom. See LEVILLAIN, *Les Nibelungen historiques et leurs alliances de famille* (pt. 1), in: *Annales du Midi* 49 (1937) pp. 338–388.

76 Eg. ENRIGHT (see n. 9) pp. 108–119, with references.

Aquitaine and Provence. It is with an eye to the political messages that were necessary in the conditions of 751 that we should interpret this source's version of the events and motivations of the 730s.

If it be accepted that the creation of Childebrand's *Historia Francorum*, i.e. the revised and extended Fredegar corpus, took place around the time of the raising of Pippin to the Frankish throne, what is the value of this source's evidence for the preceding three decades? In other words, allowing for an act of compilation c. 751, might there not be components in the collection that are earlier in date, and thus more nearly contemporaneous with the events described? This question leads back to the analysis of the supposed earlier continuations. As mentioned above, the work when dissected by Krusch was supposed to consist of 1) a revised version of the final ten chapters (in his numeration) of the LHF 2) a continuation of this up to 735 3) a further possible separate section covering the years 736 to 739 and 4) the part that we would recognise as the work of the compiler of the new version, extending from 739 to 751. If this structure be allowed to stand, then it would seem that the information relating to most of the 730s might be of contemporary date and be the product of possibly two different authors.

The evidence adduced to support such a view is actually quite flimsy. That the opening section of the *Continuations* is largely copied from the LHF is incontrovertible. However, it is important to note that it is clearly using the ›B‹ version of that text. This is a slightly altered, probably Austrasian, recension of the text made later than the original ›A‹ version of c. 726/7. The significance of this is twofold. Firstly, the analysis of the textual tradition has shown that the ›B‹ version derived not from the archetype of ›A‹ but from a third generation copy of it. Moreover, it is possible to add a further factor to the relationship between the *Continuations* of Fredegar and the ›B‹ version of LHF. It seems clear that the author of the first section of the *Continuations* was using a MS related to the ›B2‹ family. In other words, a second generation copy of the original ›B‹. Thus, the Continuator was probably working four manuscript generations away from the time of the first writing of the LHF around the year 727. In so far as the LHF does not give the impression of having been widely copied at any stage in its existence, a greater rather than a lesser span of years should be allowed for the proliferation of such generations. Although it is impossible to be precise, dating the Continuator's activity to 751 is preferable to trying to locate it around 735.

The second point that needs to be noted in respect of the Continuator's use of the ›B‹ version of LHF concerns the ending. It has been argued that the Continuator must have been writing at some point before the end of the reign of Theuderic IV (d. 737), because he refers to the king as still ruling<sup>77</sup>. However, the phrase in question is taken verbatim from the ›B‹ text of LHF<sup>78</sup>. In other words the compiler just copied the text in front of him, in the same way that many subsequent generations of scribes copied his text irrespective of the fact that Theuderic IV was long dead and buried. This is not, therefore, chronological evidence relating to the Continuator's period of working, but textual evidence relating to his manner of

<sup>77</sup> WALLACE-HADRILL (see n. 29) p. XXV.

<sup>78</sup> (See n. 16) p. 328.

working. There is, thus, no overwhelming need to see the borrowing of the final section of the LHF by the Continuator as taking place at any time prior to the putting together of the whole compilation now identified as Childebrand's ›Historia Francorum‹, which is to say around the year 751.

If this be the case, it makes little sense to see the second section of the Continuations as representing an independent extension of the LHF borrowing, made c. 735/6. It would be better instead to see this as the work of the compiler of 751, seeking to link the point at which his source, the LHF, stopped and the time at which he himself was writing. Why, then, has it been believed that this section covering the years 721 to 735 does represent a separate continuation in its own right, and, moreover, one that itself received a further extension by another author writing about the years 736 to 739? The presence of a chronological summary, recording the number of years from Adam up to the year 735, might indicate the conclusion of a discrete section of the work at this point, but the text continues with the author taking up his narrative and referring to an episode that he had omitted earlier. The unusual authorial intrusion – *Itemque quod superius praetermissimus*.. immediately following the computational parenthesis indicates clearly that no change has occurred at this point<sup>79</sup>. Ultimately, suggestions relating to changes in author in these parts of the text have been made to rest on supposed stylistic variations, but these are far from secure<sup>80</sup>. More pertinent, and leading to the opposite conclusion, may be the ideological continuities to be found between supposedly different sections<sup>81</sup>.

Were there to have been a separate author contributing the material relating to the 720s and early 730s, what would be most striking would be the limited and confused nature of his knowledge, especially in relation to the period before 732. In comparison with the minor annals, none of which may have been being compiled contemporaneously at this time, the Continuations of Fredegar are surprisingly thin. Of Charles's campaigns, recorded in the annals for the years 720, 721, 722, 725, and 729, no trace may be found in the Continuations<sup>82</sup>. In that work after the making of the treaty between Charles and Eudo, with which the LHF ends, there follows a gap of three or four years in the narrative. Then come three episodes that are not given any chronological anchoring (but belong to the period 724–728) and which are described with minimal detail<sup>83</sup>. Another gap follows between the last of these and the outbreak of conflict in Aquitaine in 731/2.

For the 730s, although the scale of the narrative is substantially enhanced, it continues to exhibit a surprising lack of chronological precision. The conflict with Eudo, dateable from other sources to 731, is said to occur ›at the same time‹ (*Per idem tempus*) as the Bavarian campaign of 728. Charles's incursions into Aquitaine in

79 Continuations 16 and 17 in all editions. Note again that these chapter divisions are modern and not derived from the MSS.

80 GOFFART (see n. 69) pp. 331–332 for the dangers of placing too much emphasis on this. He is referring to the similar question of single or multiple authorship of the original Fredegar compilation.

81 COLLINS, The Vaccaei, the Vaceti and the Rise of Vasconia (see n. 44) pp. 211–223 on the application of the name ›Vascones‹ to the non-Basque population of Aquitaine. Some of the conclusions of the article would need to be modified in the light of what is written here.

82 (See n. 6) pp. 6–8 and 24.

83 Continuations (see n. 16) c. 11–12, probably relating to the years 724–728. The only detail given relates to the female hostages Charles brought back from Bavaria.

731 are not distinguished from the Poitiers campaign of 732 or 733. The author then continues with a narrative of events relating to Aquitaine and Burgundy, before jumping back to insert a section relating to Frisia, which he recognises to belong to an earlier period but without giving more precise chronological guidance<sup>84</sup>. When he comes to Provence, as has already been mentioned, he fails to distinguish between the events of two separate campaigns that were spread over three years. The general sense of chronological muddle hardly encourages belief that this was the work of a contemporary author. It is more reasonable to accept that this is the work of someone writing over a decade later, ie around 751, when the presentation of an ideologically heightened message was more important than the provision of detailed dating and the accurate ordering of events.

In conclusion it can be seen that the two most substantial narrative sources that historians have had to rely on for their narrative of the events of Charles Martel's rise to power over all of the components of Francia in the 720s and 730s are seriously flawed. Both the *Continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (or the *Historia Francorum of Childebrand* as it might better be called) and the *Annales Mettenses Priores* are conditioned in their intentions by the dictates of Carolingian dynastic myth-making. To some extent this has long been recognised. The *Annales Mettenses Priores* have been seen as the product of a Carolingian monastery, be it Chelles or Saint-Denis and the *Continuations* have been called the 'family chronicle' of a noble house closely related to the dynasty<sup>85</sup>. But the lessons of these and similar perceptions have not always been drawn. In particular, it has not been appreciated to what extent the authors of these works have been prepared to or were led by their patrons into falsifying their record. This, as has been discussed here, could take the forms of the premature historiographical elimination of a member of the dynasty with a stronger *de iure* claim to power than Charles, or of the deliberate vilification of those regional leaders who opposed him. These are merely examples, not the full indictment. How much else in these sources bears the marks of their authors' willingness to write history that conforms to their *a priori* ideological purpose?

#### SUMMARY

In conclusion it can be seen that the two most substantial narrative sources that historians have had to rely on for their narrative of the events of Charles Martel's rise to power over all of the components of Francia in the 720s and 730s are seriously flawed. Both the *Continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (or the *Historia Francorum of Childebrand* as it might better be called) and the *Annales Mettenses Priores* are

<sup>84</sup> *Continuations* (see n. 16) c. 17; the events may be dated by the annals to 733 and 734.

<sup>85</sup> For Chelles see HOFFMANN (n. 1) pp. 24, 29. Saint-Denis was the preferred choice of Professor Wallace-Hadrill: John Michael WALLACE-HADRILL, *The Frankish Church*, Oxford 1983, p. 141. It is, perhaps, worth noting that the story of the penitence of king Theuderic III, a distinctive feature of the *Annales'* account of the events surrounding the battle of Tertry, is referred to in three interrelated forged charters, two of which come from the monastery of Lobbes and the other from the church of St. Peter in Cambrai: PARDESSUS (ed.), *Diplomata, Chartae, Epistolae* (see n. 20) docs. CCCCXIX, CCCCXX, CCCCXLIII.

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#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Für eine Darstellung von Karl Martells Aufstieg zur Macht über alle Teile des Frankenreiches in den 20er und 30er Jahren des 8. Jahrhunderts sind Historiker bis heute vor allem auf zwei erzählende Quellen angewiesen, deren Aussagen eindeutig parteiisch sind. Sowohl die Fortsetzungen der Fredegar-Chronik (oder besser der ›*Historia Francorum* des Childebrand‹) als auch die *Annales Mettenses priores* wurden geschrieben, um dem Mythos der karolingischen Dynastie Vorschub zu leisten. Bis zu einem gewissen Grad ist dies seit langem bekannt: Die *Annales Mettenses priores* seien in einem karolingischen Kloster, Chelles oder St. Denis, verfaßt worden, und die Fortsetzungen Fredegars wurden als ›Familienchronik‹ eines Hauses bezeichnet, das eng mit der Dynastie verwandt war. Aus dieser Erkenntnis wurden jedoch nicht immer weiterführende Folgerungen gezogen. Insbesondere wurde nicht danach gefragt, inwieweit diese Autoren bereit waren oder von ihren Auftraggebern dazu gebracht wurden, ihre Berichte zu verfälschen. Dies konnte zum einen dazu führen, daß ein Mitglied der Dynastie, dessen Rechtsanspruch auf die Herrschaft besser begründet war als der Karl Martells, bereits frühzeitig übergangen wurde. Zum anderen wurden die Führer der Außendukate absichtlich verunglimpft. Dies sind jedoch nur Beispiele, und es muß offen bleiben, welche weiteren Berichte wohl noch durch die Bereitschaft der Autoren gekennzeichnet sind, Geschichte im Sinne ihrer von vornherein feststehenden ideologischen Ziele zu schreiben.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude a montré le caractère très imparfait des deux sources narratives majeures dont dispose l'historien sur l'établissement du pouvoir de Charles Martel sur toutes les parties de la *Francia* dans les années 720 et 730. Tant les *Continuations* de la chronique de Frédégaire (qu'il faudrait plutôt appeler *Historia Francorum* de Childebrand) que les *Annales Mettenses priores* sont marquées par la nécessité de construire le mythe de la dynastie carolingienne. Dans une certaine mesure, cette constatation a déjà été faite depuis longtemps: les *Annales Mettenses priores* ont été considérées comme produites dans un monastère carolingien (Chelles ou Saint-Denis) et les *Continuations* de Frédégaire ont été qualifiées de ›chronique familiale‹ d'une maison noble étroitement liée à la dynastie. Mais on n'a pas tiré toutes les conséquences de cette position. En particulier, on ne s'est pas demandé dans quelle mesure les auteurs de ces textes ont été préparés ou conduits par leurs patrons à falsifier leur récit. Cette falsification peut prendre la forme d'une élimination prématurée, dans l'historiographie, d'un membre de la dynastie qui avait *de iure* plus de raisons que Charles de revendiquer le pouvoir, ou encore celle de la diffamation délibérée des dirigeants régionaux qui s'étaient opposés à lui. Ces deux exemples ne constituent pas la totalité de l'argumentation; dans ces textes, il y a de nombreux autres éléments qui témoignent de la volonté de leurs auteurs d'écrire une histoire qui soit conforme à leurs objectifs idéologiques *a priori*.