Memorable crises: Carolingian historiography and the making of Pippin’s reign, 750-900

Goosmann, F.C.W.

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
CHAPTER TWO

Down the Rabbit Hole
The Continuations and the ARF

The modern perception of the reign of Pippin the Short is firmly grounded in the narratives of the Continuations to the Chronicle of Fredegar and the Annales Regni Francorum (ARF). Both texts, at least with regard to their description of Pippin’s reign, date to the second half of the eighth century. Their contemporaneity, detail and composition by authors who stood in close proximity to the king, gave these texts a distinct authority in the minds of a contemporary and younger readership. Of course, none of these qualities ensure that these texts offer a more reliable account of events. Quite the contrary, it would appear. The Continuations and the ARF were composed at a time when the Carolingian dynasty was still struggling to secure its footing. They were written by and for members of an elite whose fate was tied with that of the dynasty to which they had pledged their allegiance. Neither the Continuations nor the ARF were meant to provide their readers with an objective rendering of past events. Rather, these authors craftily shaped and reshaped the collective memory and identity of the Frankish literary elite and securely embedded it within the vast expanse of Frankish and Christian history.

Since it is not the aim of this study to reconstruct the history of Pippin’s reign, but to investigate how it was presented in Carolingian historiography, questions about the reception, adaptation and dissemination of these texts become as important as questions about their composition and the identity of their authors. Ample attention will go out to the manuscript transmission of the Continuations and the ARF, and to the formation of textual variations during this process. Rather than to dismiss such textual dissimilarities as inferior copies of an authoritative autograph text – of the kind that philologists have
traditionally sought to create – these textual dissimilarities will instead be accepted and considered as conscious recensions by intelligent scribes who actively engaged with their texts.¹

In recent decades, historians have become increasingly aware of the heavily biased outlook of Carolingian historiography in general and the Continuations and ARF in particular. This, in combination with their close association with the Carolingian court and their relatively profuse transmission across the Carolingian world, has led to the notion that these texts had an official character and may have been meant to broadcast the court view of the Frankish past to a literary elite in order to promote a common identity centred around Carolingian leadership. Although identity formation might be considered an important function of Carolingian historiography, there is, as Janet Nelson stated with regard to the ARF: ‘no sign of any central interest in disseminating an “official” view of the recent past, or of local concern to acquire “up-to-date” copies of the ongoing work.’²

Compared to most other Carolingian annals and chronicles, relatively many manuscripts of the Continuations and the ARF survive (See the list in appendix 1). The vast majority of these, however, date to the second quarter of the ninth century and beyond, and are therefore decades younger than the supposed original text. It must be assumed that vast quantities of Carolingian manuscripts did not survive, especially if we consider the possibility that these texts, in early stages of their transmission, circulated in frail libelli.³ With one possible exception, the ten textual witnesses from the Carolingian period are extant in robust codices, which have proven capable of withstanding the test of time.⁴

This chapter will not deal with what the Continuations or the ARF have to say about Pippin’s reign itself, but rather it explores some of the complexities that surround the historiographical medium, as a first and necessary step to problematize the sources on which historians traditionally have relied to reconstruct the events of Pippin’s reign. These accounts were far from the stable and uniform texts that the modern philologist has made them out to be. Historiographical narratives like the Continuations or the ARF circulated in a variety of different forms, recensions and compilations with other texts, which

¹ Spiegel, Past as text, chapter one; Pohl, ‘History in fragments’, 343-54; McKitterick, History and Memory, pp. 102, 111 and 129; Reimitz, ‘Social logic’, 17-21.
² Nelson, Annals of St-Bertin, pp. 4-5.
⁴ Cologne, Sankt Maria in Kapitol AII/18 is a fragment consisting of a single folio that contains ARF, s.a. 824. It is ascribed to the court scriptorium of Louis the Pious. It may originally have been part of a small libellus. See below, n. 57.
Further affected their meaning. The early medieval scribe, copyist or compiler appears to have been free to adapt existing historiographical narratives in order to adapt them to current norms, values and agendas. While this is true for all Carolingian historiography, I limited the scope of this chapter to the *Continuations* and the *ARF*, because these were probably the most widely disseminated accounts to contain the early history of the Carolingian dynasty and because these texts had, and still have, the greatest impact on how Pippin’s reign was remembered and perceived.

Exploring this topic will proceed in three sections. The first section is dedicated to the *Continuations* and explores their composition, the political context in which they were created and the message their original compilers wished to convey. The second section concerns the *Annales Regni Francorum*, a text that ever since it was first edited by Georg Pertz in 1826 has been the subject of intense debate. The *ARF* were not only composed in a different context compared to the *Continuations*, but they also presented Carolingian history in a new format and from a new perspective. Although these texts were composed within decades of each other, it might be argued that the *Continuations* and the *ARF* represent two different epochs: while the former, structured in the traditional form of the chronicle, presents Pippin’s reign as the successor to an ancient Frankish tradition, the latter, in the new form of annalistic genre, presents Pippin’s reign as the beginning of a new, Carolingian era. Finally, in the third section of this chapter, I turn to three ninth-century manuscripts that have been referred to as Carolingian composite history books, and explore the practical application of the *Continuations* and the *ARF* in their original codicological contexts. Neither text ended up being read as an isolated account; rather, they constituted literary building blocks with which medieval compilers were able to construct vast historiographical edifices, each offering a unique vision of the past.

### 2.1. The *Continuations* to the Chronicle of Fredegar

The *Continuations* are the most contemporary account of the reigns of Charles Martel and Pippin the Short. Its composition is generally associated with Childebrand, whom this chronicle presents as Charles’s half-brother and military strongman, and who later figures as Pippin’s mentor at the beginning of his reign.\(^5\) Because of the close personal bond between Childebrand and the Carolingian protagonists who stand at the heart of this chronicle, and because

---

\(^5\) *Continuations*, cc. 20, 24 and 34 [= colophon; extant only in Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213].
2. THE CONTINUATIONS AND THE ARF

the Continuations presents Carolingian history in a most favourable light, Wilhelm Levison understandably referred to this text as a Carolingian family chronicle. However, the main argument for this text's attribution to Childebrand is a colophon that is only extant in one tenth-century manuscript. It states that 'the illustrious Count Childebrand, uncle of the aforesaid king Pippin, has diligently administered to compose (scribere procuravit) this history or deeds of the Franks. From here on the authority should pass on to the illustrious Nibelung, son of Childebrand and likewise count.' I shall return to this colophon shortly, but for now let us assume that Childebrand and later Nibelung were indeed behind the composition of the Continuations.

The colophon (c. 34) was inserted into the text after the account of Pippin's royal inauguration in 751 (c. 33). It therefore leads us to believe that it was after this momentous event in his family's history that Childebrand reflected back on what had been a tumultuous past and had it committed to writing. The first decade of Pippin's reign certainly had been rife with conflict, in which Childebrand had actively participated. In 740, when Charles Martel's impending death loomed large over the realm and his succession needed to be arranged, Childebrand accompanied Pippin at the head of a military force into Burgundy to lay claim to Pippin's inheritance. He was probably involved in some of Pippin's other campaigns as well. As a family member and important military figure, Childebrand knew well that his family history was not one of unremitting success. There had been the occasional faltering, military defeat and certainly no shortage of internal rivalry. But that was not what Childebrand wanted to have spelled out in his Historia vel gesta Francorum, as the Continuations are called in the colophon. The Continuations give wide berth to the potholes on the Carolingian road to success: they were a triumphant eulogy on the successes of the reigns of Charles Martel and Pippin, which the author wished to present as the pinnacle of Frankish achievement.

Wattenbach, Levison and Löwe, Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen, 2, p. 162.
7 Continuations, c. 34: ‘Abhinc ab inlustre viro Nibelungo, ilium ipsius Childebrando itemque comite, succedat auctoritas. Usque nunc inlaeter vir Childebrandus comes avunculus praelicto rege Pippino hanc historiam vel Gesta Francorum diligentissime scribere procuravit.’
8 See the discussion in Wallace-Hadrill, Fredegar, pp.xxv-xxvii. Wallace-Hadrill points to the stylistic changes in the text of the Continuations, stating that Childebrand and Nibelung were merely the commissioners of the text; they had not written it themselves. However, assuming they were closely involved with its contents, I will refer to them as authors.
9 Continuations, c. 24; AMP, s.a. 741.
2.1.1. The composition of the Chronicle of Fredegar

The Continuations are famous for providing a highly original account of the early history of the Carolingian dynasty. However, as Roger Collins noted, its title accurately reflects how modern editors have perceived this text; it does little justice to the more complex reality of the medieval manuscript. The Continuations were designed to be part of a universal history of the Franks for which the author used and reworked a pre-existing and partly composite work known as the Chronicle of Fredegar, composed c. 660. In other words, the Continuations are more than an addendum to a pre-existing text; they rather constitute a new and original historiographical rendering of the Frankish past. To make the modern readership of this text aware of the integrated character of this eighth-century chronicle, Collins suggested we should use the title encountered in the colophon mentioned above, therefore calling it the Historia vel Gesta Francorum. If, for now, we leave aside the question of whether this unique colophon is authentic, Collins does have a point. Too often historians have mined this text for specific details, seemingly unaware that the actual message of the chronicle lay in composition as a whole, and not in its individual chapters. But although it cannot hurt to remind us that the seventh-century chronicle was extensively revised into a new text, it might be argued that Collins’s proposed alternative is perhaps no less misleading, as it in turn implies the existence of a uniform eighth-century redaction. This, however, is not the case. Childebrand had devised a specific compilation based on the Chronicle of Fredegar and his own testimony of the events he had experienced; later copyists and compilers were free to alter the compilation as they saw fit. In the remainder of this study, I shall retain the title Continuations, with which I refer specifically to the section that deals with the events from c. 660, where the account of the seventh-century Chronicle of Fredegar ended, to Pippin’s death in 768. It should be kept in mind, however, that this section of the text was integrated into a broader outlook on the past, which began with Creation and recalled the Trojan diaspora, from which the Franks, and ultimately the Carolingians, emerged triumphantly.

The Chronicle of Fredegar and its Continuations, in its various recensions, survive in thirty-four manuscripts. Of these, twenty-five date to the Merovingian and Carolingian periods (see the list in appendix 1). Our current understanding of this text continues to rest on the work of Bruno Krusch, who

11 The number becomes 26 if the manuscripts are counted that have become divided over time and are presently preserved at different institutions.
recognized five distinct recensions or manuscript groups. The first three manuscript groups do not contain the Continuations and are considered to derive from the oldest, seventh-century redaction of the Chronicle. In total, they are represented by no more than six Carolingian manuscripts and one pre-Carolingian manuscript. Groups four and five do contain the Continuations and are more numerous. Group four, the recension commonly associated with Childebrand and Nibelung, is represented by eight manuscripts and group five is extant in seven manuscripts. The three Carolingian manuscripts that remain each contain a unique compilation that includes part of the Continuations and are commonly grouped together only because they resemble none of the other categories. As this sixth group is evidence of, contemporaries did not view any of these compilations as particularly authoritative.

Let us first take a closer look at the different compilations of groups one to three, which are generally believed to predate Childebrand’s composition. They span the period from Creation up to c. 660, at which point the ‘original author’ whom we have come to call Fredegar completed his work. The autograph text is no longer extant, but the earliest copy, Paris, BnF lat. 10910, dates to 714/15 and it alone represents group one. The chronicle is a compilation that consists of five books, opening with the Liber generationis, a third-century world chronicle listing the great men of Biblical, Greek, Persian and Roman history, followed by extracts from the chronicles of Jerome and Hydatius and a résumé of the Histories of Gregory of Tours. Together, these first three books form, as Michael Wallace-Hadrill noted, ‘a hand-book of world chronology of a kind that commonly acts as preface to the chronicles of the early Middle Ages.’ To these were added an original Burgundian chronicle divided into ninety chapters (584-660) and, possibly at a later date, Isidore’s Chronicle. Isidore’s Chronicle is missing in the manuscripts of group two and the Burgundian chronicle consists of only the first nine chapters. The manuscripts of group three also leave out Isidore, but contain the full text of the Burgundian chronicle. In addition, they also contain a calculation of the end

12 Krusch, ‘Chronicae’, 249-50. This grouping was also used by Wallace-Hadrill (ed.), Fredegar, pp. xlvii-li.
14 There is no consensus on the number of authors that were involved with the composition of the Continuations. Opinions vary from single authorship (Gabriel Monod), to three (Bruno Krusch), back to one (Ferdinand Lot/Marcel Baudot/Léon Levillain). For an overview of the debate, see: Wallace-Hadrill, Fredegar, pp. xvi-xxi.
15 Wallace-Hadrill, Fredegar, p. xi.
16 Group two consists of the following manuscripts: London, British Library, Harley 5251 and Bern, Burgerbibliothek 318. The main difference between groups one and two is that the witnesses of the second group contain only the first nine chapters of the chronicle (= book four of the Chronicle of Fredegar).
time, known as the *De cursu temporum*, by Quintus Julius Hilarian, a late fourth-century bishop from Africa. The author of this recension of the *Chronicle of Fredegar* added various interpolations throughout the work. Also significant is that the manuscripts of group three all appear to originate from the Bodensee region.

Groups four and five constitute Carolingian redactions and both contain the *Continuations*. Group four is essentially a reworked version of group three, in which the five book structure had been reduced to three. The *Liber generationis* was left out and the compilation opens instead with Hilarian’s *De cursu temporum*. Also, the text known as the *Historia Daretis Phrygi de origine Francorum* — a history of the Trojan origins of the Franks, based on Dares Phrygius’ *De Excidio Troiae Historiae* — was grafted onto the Jerome/Hydatius epitome, giving voice to the claim that the Franks had descended from the Trojans. The third book in this recension consists of an integrated version of the shortened *Histories* by Gregory, to which the Burgundian chronicle and the *Continuations* were added. Lastly, group five contains a reworked version of Gregory’s *Histories* to which the *Continuations* are added.

The order of Krusch’s five groups reflect the order in which these recensions were believed to have been created, with group one being closest in time to the original and five the most distant. This is supported by the composition dates of the extant manuscripts, which reveal that the ‘Merovingian compilations’ (i.e. groups one to three) were mostly copied up to the beginning of the ninth century, and the ‘Carolingian compilations’ (i.e. groups four and five) become dominant from the mid ninth century onwards.

### 2.1.2. The composition of the *Continuations*

Having sketched the position of the *Continuations* within the larger compilations, let us now zoom in the better to understand how this eighth-century section, which is in itself a compilation of various texts, was composed. The *Continuations* consist of fifty-four chapters if we include the colophon (c. 34). The first ten chapters are a slightly augmented copy taken from the *Liber historiae Francorum*, a Neustrian chronicle composed c. 726, which served to bridge the gap that existed between the year 660, where ‘Fredegar’ had stopped, and 727, where the first continuator’s recollection presumably was

---

17 Frick (ed.), *Chronica Minora*, p. 151.
18 Collins, *Fredegar-Chroniken*, pp. 89-90, argues that the origins of the manuscripts of group three, from what presently is the region of southern Germany, could be a valuable clue for the geographical origins of group four.
able to take over. Not including this borrowed section, opinions vary whether the remainder of the *Continuations* consist of two or three distinct continuations. This number might increase further if we would take into account the various stylistic changes that occur in the text. Thierry Ruinart and Theodor Breysig, for example, recognized four different hands in the *Continuations* on the basis of stylistic changes in the text; others, like Gabriel Monod and Heinrich Hahn, argued for a single scribe on the basis of the same criteria. It would indeed seem, as McKitterick critically remarked, that arguments based on stylistic features are ‘inevitably somewhat subjective’. Most therefore now follow Wallace-Hadrill, who argued that it is more profitable to think in terms of continuations than of continuators in the post-Fredegarian section of the chronicle. In other words, to accept that someone like Childebrand acted as a commissioner who oversaw the production of this text by a succession of employed scribes allows for a better understanding of the compositional background of the *Continuations*.

Ignoring any stylistic changes therefore, two additional breaks in the narrative of the *Continuations* can be distinguished. The first is a computation (c. 16), counting the years from Creation to the present (i.e. 735), and from the present to the conclusion of the sixth Age (i.e. 6,000 *anno mundi* = 799 *anno domini*). The computation is somewhat messy, because the author based it on an older computation that used the fifth-century computistical system of Victorius, with which the author appears to have had little experience. By the eighth century, Francia had come under the influence of Bede’s computistical works, which were in turn based on the sixth-century computistical model of the Roman monk Dionysius Exiguus. To our author’s frustration, Victorius calculated on the basis of the year of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection, whereas Dionysius/Bede had opted for the year of the Incarnation. Not sure how to synchronize these two systems, the author simply chose to switch in mid-stride by changing *passionem domini* into *adventus domini*. But while this should then have amounted to the year 736, which would have confirmed the compiler’s conclusion that ‘63 years remain to complete this millennium’, the current year is instead said to have been 735, which Krusch ascribed to a later interpolator. The inclusion of this extraordinary computation certainly raises

---

19 For an overview of this debate, see: Wallace-Hadrill, *Fredegar*, pp. xxv-xxviii.
20 *Ibidem*.
21 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p. 102.
questions and is in and by itself not evidence that at this point one continuation ended and another began. Collins, moreover, refuted the idea that chapters 12-15 could have been written by a contemporary author, arguing instead that the computation had been copied into the Continuations from another source.26

A more obvious and also more problematic break in the narrative of the Continuations is the aforementioned colophon. It is problematic because the colophon is only extant in Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213, a late ninth- or possibly tenth-century manuscript from Rheims. As we have seen in the introduction to this chapter, the colophon ascribes the text up to Pippin’s royal inauguration (usque nunc) to Childebrand, and the remainder of the text (abhinc) to Childebrand’s son, Nibelung. The huge impact of this colophon on our interpretation of the compositional background of the Continuations begs the question whether we may rely on a piece of information that is only extant in a single manuscript of late date. However, even if we assume that the colophon itself was an interpolation by a late ninth-century scribe from Rheims, this does not mean that the information it contains is inaccurate. By then, knowledge of the authorship of a text that was already over a century old and not extensively copied may have been fleeting and the colophon could have been an attempt to fix this knowledge to the text being copied. However, a far from extraordinary alternative would be that this scribe from Rheims attempted to boost the authority of his text by connecting it to men known to be in close proximity to the text’s main protagonists, Charles Martel and Pippin.

I advocate the former scenario, if only because Childebrand and Nibelung are relatively obscure figures in Carolingian historiography and therefore perhaps not the most obvious candidates to have promote a text.27 Apart from a reference in a single charter of St-Germain-des-Prés, dating to 791, Nibelung’s name is only mentioned in the colophon.28 Childebrand, on the other hand, also plays a prominent role in the narrative of the Continuations, in which he is presented as a duke and member of the Carolingian family, who stood in close proximity to both Charles Martel and Pippin the Short.29 Had it not been for the Continuations, Childebrand would, like his son Nibelung, be just another name in a charter. This might have been an important motive for Childebrand to compose the Continuations: in promoting the Carolingian cause, Childebrand also immortalized himself.

29 Continuations, cc. 20 and 24. Cf. AMP, s.a. 741.
Collins added a third argument by noting that even though the colophon is extant in only one manuscript, several other copies of the Continuations also have a blank space between c. 33 and c. 35.\(^{30}\) However, this feature is not unique to the Continuations alone. Various copies of the ARF also contain a blank space after the entry for 750, the year in which according to these annals Pippin became king.\(^{31}\) The ARF offer no information of the events that occurred in the years surrounding Pippin’s coup. While the entry numbers for the years 751 and 752 are usually listed in the manuscript, they were intentionally left blank. This gap might owe to a lack of knowledge on the part of the original author, whose ignorance was then faithfully copied, hoping perhaps that someday the missing data would be recovered. But this never happened and, centuries later, scribes began to use these spaces to add short historical notes, genealogical tables, or other unrelated texts. A more likely scenario would be that the author and later copyists of both the Continuations and the ARF intentionally left the space that followed the account of Pippin’s coup blank, probably because they wished to present the dynastic transition as an uncontested event (which it might not have been), and perhaps to signal a historical, if not epochal, break between a Merovingian and a Carolingian period in Frankish history. The Continuations may well have inspired the authors of the ARF in this respect.\(^{32}\) Therefore, the likeliest scenario would be that the Rhemish scribe had added a colophon where his exemplar had shown a blank space.

Although the colophon may have been added at a later date, this does not necessarily mean that its content is untrue. According to this scribe, Childebrand was responsible for the Continuations up to c. 33 and Nibelung for the section from c. 35 to c. 54. I also accept Collins’s refutation of the computation that marked the break between two continuations.\(^{33}\) This means that Childebrand had overseen the reorganization of the Chronicle of Fredegar (in its third recension) and the production of the Continuations up to c. 33, after which Nibelung succeeded him. Although the stylistic changes in the text imply that several scribes worked on the text, I will nonetheless assume that Childebrand and Nibelung kept a close eye on the contents of their family

\(^{30}\) Collins, Fredegar-Chroniken, 87.
\(^{31}\) See below, n. 65.
\(^{32}\) I consider the Continuations to have been a source for the ARF. Though the precise composition dates of both accounts are unclear, the year 786 can be considered a *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the Continuations, as argued by Levillain (as in n. 28). Furthermore, I agree with Giesebricht, ‘Königannalen’, 194, that the likeliest date for the composition of the first section of the ARF is 793. The ARF can therefore not have been used as a source for the Continuations. Cf. McKitterick, History and Memory, p. 100.
\(^{33}\) See above, note 26.
chronicle, allowing me to refer to them in the following as the authors of the Continuations.

Having established (tentative) authorship, the question when these two continuations were composed remains. On the basis of the testimony of the colophon, it has often been presumed that Childebrand commissioned his section of the Continuations in 751. Some have even stated that he must have died at this point, though there is no evidence to substantiate such a claim.34 Collins argued that Childebrand composed his chronicle on the occasion of Pippin’s royal inauguration in 751 and suggested that Nibelung may have done the same in celebration of the inauguration of Pippin’s successors, Carloman and Charlemagne, in 768.35

However, the Latin of the colophon is difficult to decipher and open to multiple interpretations. As McKitterick has pointed out, the words *usque nunc* and *abhinc* might also refer to a specific point in the narrative, rather than to a specific point in (real) time.36 That these words often have been interpreted as referring to both at the same time can be attributed to then-current ideas on historiographical production, according to which historiography—annals especially—were written contemporaneously and on a year-by-year basis. As a consequence, the date of writing is near-identical to date of the events described.37 Today, historians tend to favour the idea that most year-entries were written in batches.38 At best, therefore, the year 751 can serve as a *terminus post quem* for the first continuation, though a date of composition after 768 might more easily explain why the Continuations only circulate in their complete form. The *terminus ante quem* is Childebrand’s and Nibelung’s death. The date of Childebrand’s death is unknown, but the above mentioned charter from St-Germain-des-Prés suggests that both Childebrand and Nibelung had died before 786.39 Thus, the Continuations can be dated to sometime between 751/68 and 786.40

---

37 Having abandoned the notion that Carolingian historiography is produced contemporaneously and chronologically, Collins, *Fredegar-Chroniken*, p. 4, argues that the different sections of the Continuations may not have been contemporary writings, composed in chronological order. By the same reasoning it can be argued, however, that the colophon might not have been contemporary to the text, but composed at a (much) later time and inserted retrospectively. Cf. Wallace-Hadrill, *Fredegar*, p. xxvi: ‘But in 751/2 we must suppose that Childebrand died, and the family-chronicle is continued for his son, Nibelung.’
38 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p. 102.
40 Various more specific dates have been proposed for the date of composition of Nibelung’s continuation. Collins, ‘Fredegar’, 116-17, proposes 768, associating its composition with the
2. THE CONTINUATIONS AND THE ARF

The Continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar: composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>Liber Historiae Francorum</td>
<td>c. 660-727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Austrasian/B-recension)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-33</td>
<td>First continuation (Childebrand)</td>
<td>728-751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Colophon (Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213, s. ix-xl)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>Second continuation (Nibelung)</td>
<td>c. 753-768</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1: The Continuations to the Chronicle of Fredegar: composition

2.1.3. Pippin, the son of Charles Martel

The first of the two Continuations is as much about Charles Martel as it is about Pippin, if not more so. Childebrand’s continuation celebrates the reign of Charles in epic tones. Hostile encounters with the Saracens, ‘that mighty race of Ishmael,’ inspired the author to employ a dramatic and biblically inspired language that is lacking in later sections of the Continuations.41 Childebrand was personally involved with routing the Saracens out of Gaul and, if perhaps not the highpoint of the Carolingian dynasty, this event may well have been the highpoint of Childebrand’s career, meriting the author’s special attention.42 As soon as Carloman and Pippin took over in 741, however, this triumphant tone was tempered as the dynasty entered into a difficult chapter in its history. As the subsequent chapters will argue, Childebrand tip-toed around the various internal and external crises that threatened Charles’s legacy and did his best to correct on parchment what in reality had brought the Carolingians to the brink of destruction. For instance, Childebrand did not hesitate to remove problematic figures, whom he believed stood at the root of the crises of the 740s, from his chronicle.43 Thus the Continuations do not mention Grifo, Childeric III and Drogo. As a consequence, the author struggled to maintain the integrity of his narrative, which now threatened to unravel into a series of seemingly unrelated and unexplained events.44

The stylistic and thematic differences between Childebrand’s continuation and that of Nibelung are striking. As soon as Nibelung takes over, the chapters increase in length and some of the jubilant tones that had earlier accompanied

---

41 Continuations, cc. 13 and 20.
42 Childebrand is mentioned in Continuations, c. 20.
43 See chapter 3, p. 103.

54
the deeds of Charles Martel are reintroduced. Grifo, though banned from the first continuation, made an appearance in the second, but only to report of his violent demise (c. 35). Nibelung is above all interested in the military exploits of the Franks, especially with regard to campaigns in Italy and southern Gaul. Unlike his father, Nibelung is not mentioned in the narrative apart from the reference in the colophon, and it is possible that he did not enjoy a similarly privileged status as his father had. Nevertheless, as count of Melun, Nibelung would have actively participated in the events mentioned in his continuation. The Frankish campaigns against the Lombards (cc. 36-9) and Aquitanians (cc. 41-53) were drawn up in hitherto unseen detail that reminds one of the later accounts in the ARF of Charlemagne’s wars against the Saxons.

Nibelung furthermore shows interest in the military feats of local counts, revealing something of the regional organization of Pippin’s realm that would otherwise have remained invisible in a historiographical tradition that revolves primarily around the figure of the ruler. But despite these differences, Nibelung is mindful of the themes that were already present in his father’s work. For example, while attention goes out to the adventus of Pope Stephen II in 753 (c. 36), Pippin’s reanointing the following year is not recorded, perhaps because this would have undermined the significance of his earlier inauguration in 751.45 There is also much attention to the division of Pippin’s realm, noting that the dying king assembled his leading men and publically divided his kingdom between his sons, Charlemagne and Carloman (c. 53). As will be discussed in the following chapter, the memory of the succession crisis of 741 would have been reason enough for king and history-writers to stress the nobility’s participation in matters of succession. On the other hand, Nibelung did not mention Neustria in his account of the division and he wrongly dated the inauguration of Pippin’s sons (c. 54) to 18 September, when Pippin was still alive.46

The Continuations offer a highly stylized account of the past. It eulogizes the Carolingian achievement and underlines the values shared by the ruler and his entourage. However, as will be argued below, in terms of manuscript diffusion the Continuations were not nearly as successful as the slightly later ARF. If the Continuations circulated at all in the eighth century – the earliest extant manuscript dates to c. 800 – it may have been limited to a small group of insiders. Nevertheless, texts like those aided these courtiers in forming a Carolingian aristocracy.47 The message that Childebrand and his son broad-

45 On this matter, see chapter 5.1.1.
46 ARF, s.a. 768; Dkar-I, nos. 25-27.
47 Airlie, ‘towards a Carolingian aristocracy’.
casted by revising, reordering and continuing the seventh-century *Chronicle of Fredegar* was integral to this development. It stated that although the Carolingians may have been new to their positions as leaders of the Franks, they were nonetheless presented as the heirs of a long and unbroken tradition that, via the Merovingian dynasty, could be traced all the way back to Classical and Biblical Antiquity.

It was this aspect of linking contemporary Carolingian history to a distant and authoritative past that set the *Continuations* apart from the *ARF*. The stress on continuity was a central aspect of the message the *Continuations* wished to convey, and would have been difficult to achieve if cast in the new annalistic format that appeared on the Continent in the course of the eighth century.\(^{48}\) Childebrand was probably the first to compose a history meant to justify Carolingian authority. In his pioneering work, he presented these Carolingian newcomers – despite their violent arrival, brutal ambition and blatant disregard for the almost three-century-old dynasty that they succeeded – not as a radical disruption from traditional norms, but as the product of the very time-honoured practices that their critics accused them of trampling.

### 2.2. The *Annales Regni Francorum*

The annals known as the *ARF* recount the history of the Carolingian dynasty from 741, when the reign of its founder, Pippin the Short, began, up to 829, when work on these annals was interrupted, presumably because of the conflict between Louis the Pious and his sons in the early 830s. Their scope and reputation as an ‘official’ history closely connected to the Carolingian court have made the *ARF* hugely influential in shaping the modern perception of Carolingian history.\(^{49}\) In terms of manuscript dissemination, the *ARF* were the most successful set of Carolingian annals, and they were readily used as a source for new historiographical texts or as a building block in historiographical compendia. That the *ARF* were often transmitted in the company of other historiographical narratives tends to be ignored in modern scholarship, which is probably the result of their ready availability in modern critical editions, in which these annals are presented as an isolated and uniform text. But this is not how the *ARF* was read by the Carolingian literary elite. Throughout the medieval period the *ARF* circulated in various textual

---

\(^{48}\) McCormick, *Annales*, p. 15; Story, ‘Frankish Annals’, 60-1. McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p. 97, argues for a later introduction of Frankish annal-writing, because she considers the late eighth-century *ARF* to be ‘the first to use the year of the Incarnation as the organising principle of the narrative on a yearly basis’. See chapter 1.5.

\(^{49}\) Ranke, ‘Kritik’, 434; McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, pp. 31-2.
recensions and selections, and were copied in combination with various other historiographical texts, from Einhard’s hugely popular *Vita Karoli* to local accounts such as the *Annalium Fragmentum Chesnii* composed at Lorsch.

The variations in style, language, and theme within these recensions suggest that the *ARF* were the product of several authors who wrote and revised at different intervals during the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. The annalistic structure of the genre, and the old notion that annals originated as a way to re-use Easter tables after the feast had passed, has for a long time misled historians into thinking that their entries contained contemporary testimonies of the events they recount. Most have now abandoned the idea that these entries were written on a year-by-year basis and it is generally accepted that the section 741-793, which covers Pippin’s reign, was written by a single person at one go. Overall, however, the *ARF* (and annals in general) offer very few clues about the text’s authorship, function and intended audience. This helps to explain why this text has enjoyed – and occasionally suffered from – a two centuries long debate.

Although the *Continuations* are significantly better represented in the extant Carolingian manuscripts, the *ARF* continued to be copied throughout the medieval period. What may have helped in this respect was that the *ARF* came to be connected to popular biographies of Charlemagne, in what have been called ‘Charlemagne compendia.’ But even within this limited corpus of Carolingian manuscripts, one might observe that the *ARF* is something of a late bloomer. This could merely owe to chance: there is no telling how many Carolingian manuscripts are now lost or in private hands and certainly statistical arguments based on a dataset as meagre as early medieval manuscripts will have little persuasive power. Still, it is worthwhile to contemplate the possibility that the *ARF* was not yet in circulation during the reign of Charlemagne, when the first sections of these annals were composed. It would have significant repercussions for the text’s original function and intended audiences. Also, what changed during the reign of Louis the Pious, to

---

50 See above, n. 36.
51 McKitterick, *Constructing the past*, 116.
52 Foot, ‘Finding the meaning of form’, Davis, ‘Conceptions’.
53 See appendix 1. McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p. 113, has suggested the possibility that the title *Gesta Francorum*, which occupies many ninth-century book catalogues, might point to a copy of the *ARF*. However, note that the tenth-century colophon in MS Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213 refers to the *Continuations* as ‘historia vel gesta Francorum’.

57
whose court scriptorium the earliest extant copy of the ARF has been traced.\footnote{MS Cologne, Sankt Maria in Kapitol All/18. See: McKitterick, History and Memory, pp. 21-2 and 130.}

Given that the ARF was created over a period of several decades, we should at least allow for the possibility of changes in what these annals were meant to relate and who they were meant to address. A sharper distinction between processes of composition and transmission might stimulate the debate on the ARF.

### 2.2.1. Recensions

None of the forty manuscripts and manuscript fragments that contain a copy or a partial copy of the ARF can be identified as the archetype. What is more, only ten of these manuscripts date to the Carolingian period.\footnote{Pertz argued that his manuscript 1 (Kurze’s A1) is the archetype. The text ‘survives’ in the form of a seventeenth-century transcription: Canisius, Antiquae Lectionis, 3, pp. 190-217. Kurze, ‘Reichsannalen, I’, 298-9, later refuted this assumption.}

Some of these textual witnesses contain the complete set of entries, from 741 to 829; others consist of no more than a single leaf of parchment containing a single entry.\footnote{Fragments: Sankt Maria in Kapitol All/18 contains the entry for 824 in the recension of ARF; Leiden, BPL 2391b contains the entries for 825-826 in the recension of ARF; Verdun, BM 3 contains traces of the ARF. In this manuscript, the text of the ARF was removed and replaced with Sigibert of Gembloux’ Chronicle. See: Collins, ‘Reviser’, 200, n. 37.}

To medieval compilers looking to compose a universal history through which they could link contemporary events back to Creation, the ARF were a formidable resource that covered almost ninety years, or three generations, of Carolingian history. Compilers fortunate enough to have access to a well-stocked library may even have had the luxury of choice. For instance, with regard to Pippin’s reign one might have been able to choose between the narratives of the ARF, the Continuations, or possibly even a combination of the two, such as the Annales Mettenses priores.\footnote{Kurze, ‘Reichsannalen, I’.}

Also, not every copy of the ARF is the same. While minor spelling variations will not have drastically affected the meaning of the text, other changes point to conscious reworkings with the intention of altering its meaning. On the basis of such textual dissimilarities, Friedrich Kurze has identified five distinct manuscript classes or recensions to which he assigned the letters A to E.\footnote{The Annales Mettenses priores are poorly attested in early medieval manuscripts.}

The first four of these recensions (ARF\textsubscript{A-D}), contain relatively minor variations and can be grouped together as recensions of essentially the same text, which is commonly referred to simply as ARF\textsubscript{AD}, on the other
hand, represents a more substantial revision of these annals and is more commonly known as the Revised ARF. Note furthermore that the letters A to E were not arbitrarily assigned: they reflect Kurze’s views on the chronology of the ARF’s composition. Apart from their textual dissimilarities, Kurze distinguished between the various recensions on the basis of their historical coverage. For example, ARF_A was considered the earliest stage in the evolution of the ARF because its extant copies do not reach beyond the entry for 788. Similarly, Kurze argued that ARF_B represented the second stage, because its extant witnesses would not go beyond the entry for 814. However, ARF_D-E are extant in manuscripts that contain the full range of entries, from 741 to 829. As we shall see, not everyone agrees with Kurze’s method and the significance of the entries for 788 and 814 as meaningful breaks in the compositional history of the ARF has come under attack.

Kurze’s A-recension is notoriously problematic. It consists of three textual witnesses, of which the most significant is a seventeenth-century transcription by Heinrich Canisius, containing ARF_A from 741-788. The other two manuscripts are short fragments that only contain the entries for 741-749, and of which one is a direct copy of the other. Canisius did not base his transcription on a medieval manuscript, but on a transcription that used to belong to the Bavarian Ducal Library, but now is lost. This transcription, in turn, was allegedly based on a manuscript from Lorsch that is also no longer extant. Canisius furthermore was unaware that his exemplar, which he gave the title Francicorum annalium fragmentum (741-793), had been a composite text. It was made up of two texts, the ARF_A (741-788) and the Annals of Lorsch (789-793), which it seamlessly connected, thus creating a single, coherent narrative from 741 to 793. This compilation was probably preceded by other historiographical accounts that traced Frankish history further back in time. The Continuations make for a likely candidate, but this must remain speculative. All that might be said is that if Canisius’s Francicorum annalium fragmentum used to be part of a bigger compilation, the break between the opening entry of 741 and the preceding text was obvious enough for Canisius to recognize. What is

---

60 Kurze, ’Reichsannalen, I,’ 298, was aware that the evidentiary basis for ARF_A was frail.
61 McKitterick, History and Memory, pp. 20 and 103.
62 Canisius, Antiquae Lectionis, 3, pp. 190-217 [= Kurze’s A1].
63 Florence, Bibliothecae Laurentianae LXV, 35 [= Kurze’s A2], and its copy Vienna, ÖNB cod. 3126 [= A2a].
64 Pertz, ’Annales Laurissenses’, 128.
65 Note how in other Carolingian historiographical compendia, such as Paris, BnF lat. 10911 and St Petersburg, NLR F v IV. 4, several folios were left blank between these texts. In the Paris codex, these folios occupied the end of a quire and might signify a compositional break. In the St
nevertheless clear, is that Canisius’s exemplar (i.e. the Bavarian transcription) or the original Lorsch manuscript ended abruptly, in mid-sentence, as Canisius added in cursive script that ‘the rest is missing’ (cetera desunt).

Given the limited and problematic evidence for ARF\(_A\), the impact of this recension on the current perceptions of the ARFs compositional background is, perhaps, disproportionate. For some reason, Georg Pertz, the first editor of the ARF, did not consider that the abrupt ending to Canisius’s transcription may have been the result of a damaged exemplar (whether the Bavarian transcription or the Lorsch manuscript). Instead, he concluded that 793 was the date of the Lorsch manuscript, which to his mind made it not just the earliest textual witness of the ARF, but the archetype text. This unfounded assumption was later corrected by Kurze, although he too consented to the view that ARF\(_A\) represented the earliest phase in the composition of these annals, based on the argument that the ARF in Canisius’s transcription did not go beyond the entry for 788.

More recently, McKitterick has questioned the significance of the year 788 as a break in the composition of the ARF and argued that the original text of ARF\(_A\) may well have reached beyond this point, possibly even all the way up to 829. She noted that in Canisius’s transcription the entry for 788 concludes with the words: et alios in Danubio flumine submerserunt. In the other recensions this entry is continued with a short summary of the remainder of Charlemagne’s campaign in Bavaria, followed by a note on where the king celebrated Christmas and Easter and concluded with the formula ‘et immutavitse numeros annorum in.’ The absence of these formulaic elements in the entry for 788, otherwise a common feature for section 758-808, constitutes a sharp stylistic break and might more easily be explained as the result of a damaged text that occurred at some point during its transmission. There are many scenarios that can account for this. For instance, the compiler may have deliberately sought to connect the narrative of ARF\(_A\) to that of the Annals of Lorsch. Alternatively, he may also have been forced to work with a limited, or damaged, exemplar of ARF\(_B\), which he patched up with another set of annals. Not every early medieval compiler may have had access to a vast library and

---

60 Petersburg manuscript, however, these empty folios occupy the middle leaves of the quire. See: Reimitz, ‘Social logic’, 23-5.
61 Canisius, Antiquae Lectionis, 3, p. 217.
64 See above, n. 61.
65 McKitterick, Charlemagne, pp. 34-5.
may need to have worked with the limited materials at his disposal. Of course, Kurze’s assumption that the compiler had an early version of the ARF at his disposal, copied in the early stages of their composition, remains a possibility, if perhaps not the likeliest one.

What the two fragments have in common with Canisius’s transcription is a unique rendering of the events of 748. In this year, Grifo, to Pippin’s great dismay, usurped the Bavarian ducal seat. Pippin responded by summoning an army with which he invaded Bavaria and arrested his half-brother Grifo, in whose place he installed his infant nephew, Tassilo. According to every recension except for ARF, Grifo received help from Swidger, a nobleman from the neighbouring Nordgau. Another accomplice appears to have been Lantfrid, a nobleman of Alemannian origins, who in every recension of the ARF is reported to have been arrested and escorted back to Francia along with Grifo. Whether Swidger was also made prisoner the ARF do not relate. However, in ARF, Swidger’s name is not mentioned at all, and instead replaced with that of Lantfrid (see: fig. 2). As Kurze argued, by naming Lantfrid both Grifo’s accomplice and the person receiving punishment by Pippin afterwards, the narrative of ARF gains greater coherence than that of the other recensions.

Swidger’s participation in Grifo’s rebellion is not unthinkable. Especially in the south-eastern regions of the Frankish world, Grifo had many supporters as well as a valid claim to the Bavarian duchy. But even if Swidger had sided with the wrong Carolingian, he was not without friends either. Swidger is mentioned most favourably in Huneberc of Heidenheim’s Life of Saint Willibald, composed

---

**Fig. 2: ARF, s.a. 748.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>748: ARFD</th>
<th>748: ARFA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Swidger</strong> ad eum venit in solatio superdicti Grifonis. Haec audiens Pippinus iter illuc arripiens cum exercitu suo, supra nominatos totos sibi subiugavit, Grifonem secum adduxit, <strong>Lantfridum</strong> similiter.</td>
<td><strong>Landfridus</strong> ad eum venit in solatio superdicti Grifonis. Hoc audiens Pippinus iter illuc arripiens cum exercitu suo, supra nominatos totos sibi subiugavit, Grifonem secum abduxit, <strong>Lantfridum</strong> similiter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

71 Kurze, ‘Reichsannalen, 1’, 297-300 and 307. A further characteristic of ARF, is the omission of two miracle accounts that occurred in Fitzlar (774) and Sgisburg (776). If Kurze is correct in his chronology of the five redactions, these miracle stories may have been added at a later date. Again, however, this assumption rests on the problematic transcription by Canisius (A1). In ARFC, the miracle at Fitzlar was added to the entry for 773.

72 Palmer, Anglo-Saxons, pp. 99-100, 105.

73 Kurze, ‘Reichsannalen, 1’, 299.
2. THE CONTINUATIONS AND THE ARF

c. 786, where he is presented in the company of Saints Willibald and Boniface. It is possible that such connections shielded his reputation from the stains of treason. Was Swidger’s absence in $ARF_A$ an attempt to repair an already sullied reputation, or was his inclusion in $ARF_{B-E}$ a sign that Swidger’s descendants no longer enjoyed such a privileged status?76

The evidence for Kurze’s B-recension is only slightly less problematic, as this version is represented by three independent textual witnesses.77 A fourth witness is the Chronicle by Regino of Prüm, finished in 908 and relying on $ARF_B$ as a source.78 Apart from minor spelling variations, the reading of $ARF_B$ is similar to that of $ARF_C$. Kurze grouped these manuscripts together because none of them – not even Regino’s exemplar – contained a copy of the $ARF$ that extended beyond the entry for 813. Of these, two manuscripts and Regino’s exemplar end with the words: ‘et multis suorum amissis recesserunt.’79 However, in the $ARF_{C-E}$ the entry for 813 does not stop at this point, but continues with an account on the political situation in the Byzantine Empire. The third independent witness of $ARF_B$ is the codex Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213, ends abruptly in 806, making it likely that this copy was damaged at some point during its transmission.80 Kurze thus concluded that the second compositional phase of the $ARF$ ended with the (partial) entry for the year 813. However, because $ARF_B$ is only extant in a very limited number of manuscripts, and because its narrative is almost identical to that of the $ARF_C$, McKitterick has argued instead that the three manuscripts of $ARF_B$ might simply be closely related copies, rather than constitute an independent recension. If these manuscripts shared a common ancestor that only contained the entries for 741-813, the ending of $ARF_B$ only informs us of this particular event and does not constitute a distinct break in the compositional history of the $ARF$ as a whole.81

74 AMP, s.a. 748. Grifo was the son of Charles Martel and Swanahild, who in turn was a cousin of Duke Odilo of Bavaria.
75 Huneberc, *Vita Willibaldi*, c. 5.
76 Note that the author of $ARF_E$ mentions Swidger as Grifo’s accomplice, but does not mention Landfrid’s arrest.
77 N.B. the term ‘independent’ is used to signify a textual witness that is not a direct derivative of any of the other extant manuscripts of a recension. The independent MSS of $ARF_B$: Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 617 [= Kurze’s B1]; Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213 [= B3]; and Paris, BnF lat. 5941 A [= B4].
78 Kurze, ‘Reichsannalen, 1’, 302.
79 This is the case in Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 617 [= B1] and Paris, BnF lat. 5941 A [= B4].
80 The entry for 806 ends on the final line of fol. 137v, in mid-sentence, which suggests that the final section of the manuscript is missing.
81 Cf. McKitterick, Charlemagne, p. 35.
2. THE CONTINUATIONS AND THE ARF

Kurze’s C- and D-recensions contain the full range of entries, from 741 to 829.\textsuperscript{82} The most significant distinction between the two is that ARF\textsubscript{D} mentions the rebellions that had been staged against Charlemagne in 785 and 792, whereas ARF\textsubscript{C} does not.\textsuperscript{83} ARF\textsubscript{A-B} also do not mention Hardrad’s rebellion in 785, nor does ARF\textsubscript{B} mention the Pippin the Hunchback’s revolt in 792. Both events, however, are mentioned in ARF\textsubscript{D}, which for this reason is believed to have been textually more akin to ARF\textsubscript{D}. In addition to these events, the burning of the bridge over the Rhine near Mainz in 813 might also be added to this list of setbacks for Charlemagne, since this calamitous event was also omitted from ARF\textsubscript{B} and ARF\textsubscript{C}, but again not from ARF\textsubscript{D} and ARF\textsubscript{E}. That some scribes chose to write down what others chose to ignore should not be seen as a sign of critique against the Carolingian leadership. Though it acknowledged the existence of Carolingian opposition during the reign of Charlemagne – something most contemporaries would surely have been aware of – it at least presented an opportunity to illustrate the royal wrath that was in store for those who resisted or opposed Carolingian authority.\textsuperscript{84}

One might question the extent to which Pippin’s revolt can be considered anti-Carolingian, as he was Charlemagne’s son and therefore very much a Carolingian himself.\textsuperscript{85} Still, for the purpose of this study, it should be noted that these and other distinctive features that distinguish ARF\textsubscript{C} from ARF\textsubscript{B} and ARF\textsubscript{D} do not pertain to events that occurred during Pippin’s reign and therefore did not affect the way his reign was perceived.\textsuperscript{86} The only exception is found in ARF\textsubscript{C}, which notes that Pippin celebrated the major liturgical feasts of 757 in the palace of Corbeny. In the other recensions, such information is only provided for the entries 758-808.\textsuperscript{87} We might conclude, therefore, that the scribes who, delicately or not, manipulated the contents of the ARF were more interested in tweaking their audience’s perception of the reign of Charlemagne than that of his father.

\textsuperscript{82} The independent MSS of ARF\textsubscript{C}: Paris, BnF lat. 10911 [= Kurze’s C1]; St Petersburg, NRL F.v.IV.4 [= C2]; St Omer, BM MS 706 [= C3]; Douai, n. 753 [= C4]. The independent MSS of ARF\textsubscript{D}: Vienna, ÖNB cod. 473 [= D1]; Vienna, ÖNB cod. 612 [= D3]. The Annals of Fulda constitute Kurze’s D2.
\textsuperscript{83} N.B. The rebellion of Pippin the Hunchback is also mentioned in Rome, BAV reg. lat. 213 [= B3], though not in the same words.
\textsuperscript{84} Collins, ‘Reviser’, 209; McKitterick, History and Memory, pp. 117-18.
\textsuperscript{85} Airlie, ‘Aristocracy’ uses a similar argument to account for the attention for Grifo in Carolingian historiography. With regard to Hardrad, who did not back any Carolingian, see: Airlie, ‘Aristocracy’, 127.
\textsuperscript{86} Kurze, ‘Reichsannalen, I’.
\textsuperscript{87} ARF, s.a. 757: ‘Eodem anno celebravit natalem Domini in Corbonaco et pascha. Et inmutavit se numerus annorum.’ MS Vienna, ÖNB cod. 473 [= D1] contains the same information, but formulates it differently: ‘Natalem Domini et pascha Corbonaco celebravit.’
2. The Continuations and the ARF

Assuming that the extant number of manuscripts of the various recensions of the ARF is proportional to their success as the dominant narrative of Carolingian history, Kurze’s E-recension must be considered the most successful. ARFE is extant in twelve, closely related manuscripts.⁸⁸ Kurze argued that all but one codex derived from the same exemplar.⁹⁹ However, at that point he had no knowledge of the fragment known as Cologne, Sankt Maria in Kapitol AII/18, which was discovered later by Bernhard Bischoff and survives as a single leaf that only contains the entry for 824. On palaeographic grounds, Bischoff associated this fragment with the court scriptorium of Louis the Pious; if he is correct, this fragment is not only the earliest extant witness of the ARF, but, as McKitterick argued, may have been part of Kurze’s suspected archetype (Ex), which would mean that Louis’s court was the source of distribution for ARFE.⁹⁰

Kurze established that ARFE is most closely related to ARFD.⁹¹ But unlike the minor changes in the narrative of these annals that we encountered in the other recensions, ARFE reveals a thorough revision of the entries 741–801 in terms of both style and content. A new and expanded rendition of Pippin’s reign is presented in this recension, written down in the classicized Latin suggestive of someone educated in the atmosphere of the Carolingian cultural renovatio. The vocabulary used perhaps recalls the language of the court of Louis the Pious more than it does that of Charlemagne.⁹² It reminded Pertz above all of Einhard’s highly praised Vita Karoli and it was initially argued that Einhard was also the author of ARFE.⁹³ In the course of the nineteenth century, however, a series of studies have pointed to a number of stylistic dissimilarities between

---

⁸⁸ Kurze found seventeen MSS. He concluded that eight MSS stood in an independent tradition, and argued that all except one (E9) derived from the same archetype (E.). This missing archetype, according to Kurze, must already have been attached to Einhard’s Vita Karoli. Listing only the independent MSS: Vienna, ÖNB cod. 510 [= Kurze’s E1]; Vienna, ÖNB cod. 9020 [= E2]; Trier, Stadtbibl. 1286/43 [= E3]; London, Bl. Add. 21, 109 [= E4]; Paris, BnF lat. 15, 425 [= E5]; MS Hanover n. 13, 858 [= E6]; Munich, BSB lat. 17736 [= E7]; Munich, BSB, Clm. Clm. 23618 [= E9]. Four additional manuscripts were later discovered: Cologne, Sankt Maria in Kapitol AII/18; Verdun, BM 3; Troyes, BM, Ms. 294; Montpellier, Bibliothéque de l’École Médecine Ms. 142.

⁹⁰ Bischoff, ‘Court library’, 90; McKitterick, History and Memory, p. 21, n. 45. McKitterick also points to St Petersburg, NRL F.v.IV.4 [= c2] and Vienna, ÖNB cod. 473 [= D1], both produced in direct connection to the Carolingian court of Charles the Bald. On the former, see: McKitterick, ‘Charles the Bald,’ 32; on the latter, see: Reimitz, ‘Karolingisches Geschichtsbuch; McKitterick, History and Memory, 121-3.

⁹¹ Kurze, ‘Reichsannalen, I,’ 323-3.

⁹² A comparative analysis of the language and vocabulary of ARF and the Revised ARF has recently been undertaken by Živkovic, ‘Annales Regni Francorum’. See also below, n. 105.

⁹³ Hence Pertz originally referred to this revision as the Annales Einhardi, which Kurze, due to growing doubts about Einhard’s authorship of this revision, altered in Annales qui dicuntur Einhardi.
ARF₁ and Einhard’s *Vita Karoli*, proving that Einhard is not the author of these annals.⁹⁴

It can be concluded from this brief survey that the basis for a classification of the forty manuscripts containing ARF into five distinct manuscript groups is not as solid as is sometimes suggested. In terms of extant manuscript witnesses, as the list in appendix 1 illustrates, both ARFₐ and ARFₖ are underrepresented when compared to ARFₖ, ARF₈ and especially ARF₁₆. In fact, the limited number of manuscripts containing ARFₐ and ARFₖ hardly allows us to conclude that these recensions had originally been limited to the entry for 788 and 813 respectively, let alone that these dates represent the earliest stages in the composition of the *ARF*. Of these five recensions of the *ARF*, only three offer an alternative reading of the history of Pippin’s reign. Of these, the alternatives presented in ARF₆ and ARF₇ are of minor significance: the first concerns Swidger’s history more than it does Pippin’s and the second adds only that Pippin celebrated Easter and Christmas at the royal villa of Corbeny in 757. For the purpose of this study on the changing representation of the events that occurred during Pippin’s reign, it will be sufficient to refer to ARFₐ₋₆ simply as the *ARF*; these four manuscript groups, keeping in mind the above-stated exceptions, offer an identical reading of Pippin’s reign. The big exception, however, is ARF₁₆, also known as the *Revised ARF*. This recension offers a significantly different reading for most of the events that occurred during Pippin’s reign. The effects thereof, and the motives that prompted these changes, will be analyzed further in the remainder of this study.

2.2.2. Composition

In addition to looking at the range of these annals in the extant manuscripts, philologists have also been looking for disruptions in style, syntax and grammar, searching for clues that might shed light on the texts’ origins.

---

⁹⁴ The question of authorship of the *ARF* was heavily debated throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Pertz, ‘Annales Laurisenses’ argued for a composition in Lorsch in 788. L. Giesebrecht, *Wendische Geschichte*, 2, pp. 282 ff. argued that the first section of the *ARF* did not run up to 768, as Pertze believed, but up to 788. Frese, *De Einhardi Vita*, argued against Einhard’s authorship of these annals. Ranke, ‘Erfahrt’, did not question Einhard’s authorship, but argued for the Frankish court rather than Lorsch as the place of composition. Waitz, *Lorscher und Einhards Annalen*, supported Ranke, but also argued against Einhard’s authorship of the section 789-795. Simson, *De statu quationis*, agreed with Frese and also argued against Einhard’s authorship of these annals. Manitius, ‘Einhards Werke’, argued that the court itinerary was the direct source for *ARF* and both he and Dorr, ‘Einhardsfrage’, argued for *ARF* as a source for Einhard’s *Vita Karoli*. Kurze, ‘Annales Einhardi’, argued that Einhard’s *Vita Karoli* was used as a source for ARF₁₆. Recently, McKitterick, ‘Constructing the past’, 116 has done away with 788 and argued that the first section, written in one effort by an anonymous scribe, spanned the entries 741-793.
compositional background and authorship. Especially with regard to style, there is no shortage of discontinuities. In fact, there are so many stylistic discontinuities that can be identified throughout the text that a consensus has yet to be reached on which discontinuities are meaningful with regard to the annals’ composition, and which are not. Pertz was the first to reconstruct how the ARF had been composed. His theory, which, as we have seen, rested on incorrect assumptions with regard to the edition by Canisius, quickly became outdated and replaced by others. As more scholars began to scrutinize the ARF and recognize different stylistic markers, new discontinuities were discovered. However, these rarely supported earlier conclusions. It goes beyond the scope of this study to track the subtle intricacies of this debate, but the short version of it is that, as new observations competed with older ones, the outcome was not one of a greater understanding of the compositional processes behind the ARF, but rather it has raised more questions and doubts with regard to the method used to study these annals’ background, up to the point where the myriad stylistic ‘discontinuities’ littering the debate has led to a general fatigue among scholars, making them reluctant to pursue this method any further. As McKitterick noted, there is an inherently subjective element to the perception and analysis of style.

Fortunately, for a study on the reign of Pippin the Short, the debate on authorship and composition becomes much easier, due to the by now consensus view that the section 741-793 was written by a single author, who wrote this section in one effort. For the purposes of this study, it is sufficient to know that the ARF present us with a late eighth-century perspective on Pippin’s reign. Wilhelm Giesebrecht has argued that this first section of the ARF was originally composed as a justification of the Carolingian annexation of Bavaria and in particular of Charlemagne’s deposition of his cousin Tassilo. Memories of the latter’s crimes were projected all the way back to Pippin’s reign.

---

95 Pertz, ‘Annales Laurissenses’.
96 See above, n. 86.
97 For an overview, see: Kurze, ‘Reichsannalen, 2’, 31; Wattenbach, Levison and Löwe, Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen, 2, pp. 245-66; McKitterick, ‘Constructing the past’, 115-29.
99 McKitterick, ‘Constructing the past’, 117.
101 Giesebrecht, Königsmalaten, 194-6. Giesebrecht argued for a composition in Bavaria rather than Lorsch or the Carolingian court. See also: Becher, Eid und Herrschaft. Becher accepts the view that the crisis with Tassilo/Bavaria of the late eighth-century was the main reason for the ARF’s composition.
102 ARF, s.a. 788.
If the $ARF_{A-D}$ (741-793) can be accepted as the view from the mid-790s, the relation between $ARF_{A-D}$ and $ARF_{E}$ still needs to be explored. While $ARF_{E}$ offers a heavily revised account for the section 741-801, the remaining section of these annals (802-829) is almost identical in terms of style and content to the entries encountered in $ARF_{C-D}$.\(^\text{103}\) Because of this, McKitterick has come to refer to this section as the ‘common continuation’ and argues that $ARF_{E}$ was initially composed in 802, after which the Reviser, as this author is commonly called, continued the narrative up to 829.\(^\text{104}\) It was at this point that the section 802-829 also came to be attached to an older version of the $ARF$ that originally ran from 741-801.\(^\text{105}\) It would also mean that the branching out of the $ARF$ into its various recensions would most likely have occurred after 829.

Other scenarios are also possible, since this model is founded on the assumption that the author revised the pre-802 section of the $ARF$ before continuing the work up to 829. But what if the Reviser did not work in a chronological order? This would mean that $ARF_{E}$ (741-801) could have been written at any point between 802 and 829. For now, I will follow De Jong, who argues that $ARF_{E}$ (741-801) was composed during the reign of Louis the Pious.\(^\text{106}\) The Reviser’s interest in penance, as will be discussed in chapter four, might further point to a date of composition after 822, when the emperor resorted to public penance as a strategy of reconciliation with the Frankish nobility.\(^\text{107}\) Under Louis, moreover, the Frankish-Bavarian conflict of the late eighth century had come to belong to a distant past. The political reality of Louis’s reign was that Bavaria was an integral part of the empire over which Louis could install his own son as king. As old wounds healed, gaps in the earlier narrative of these annals could be filled with information that was no longer able to hurt the polity.\(^\text{108}\) The $ARF_{E}$ was as much a revision of content, as it was one of style.\(^\text{109}\)

---

\(^\text{103}\) Note that where the contents of $ARF_{E}$ is different from that of $ARF_{C}$, $ARF_{E}$ follows the latter.

\(^\text{104}\) McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, p. 27.

\(^\text{105}\) Collins, ‘Reviser’, 202-3; McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, pp. 32-9. Cf. Živkovic, ‘Annales Regni Francorum’, argues that $ARF_{E}$ formed the basis for $ARF_{A-D}$. While this idea has some merit, if only to rethink old orthodoxies, Živkovic’s methodology and opening assumptions with regard to the $ARF$ are open to criticism.

\(^\text{106}\) De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 64. This assumption is based on the language of the text, which De Jong believes is more in tune with the vocabulary used during the reign of Louis the Pious, and the relation between Einhard’s *Vita Karoli* and the Revised $ARF$. Cf. McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, pp. 27-31.

\(^\text{107}\) See below, chapter 4, p. 133.


\(^\text{109}\) McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, p. 34, argues that $ARF_{E}$ (741-801) was written to replace the outdated original $ARF$. 67
With regard to the authorship of these annals in general, there is by now some consensus that they were not the product of a single scribe, but of several scribes, working at different intervals between 793 and c. 829. Yet the idea that each stylistic change points to a different author has proven to be unworkable, unless we are willing to concede that almost every entry had been written by a different scribe. That medieval scribes were not blind to notions of textual coherence and stylistic uniformity is evident from the overall thematic unity of the ARF.\footnote{McKitterick, ‘Constructing the past’, 117.} On the level of the manuscript, for instance in the case of Vienna ÖNB Cod. 473, one notices how the three scribes responsible for this historiographical compendium sought to create an optical harmony by synchronizing the layout of the various texts they copied and by mimicking each other’s handwriting.\footnote{Reimitz, ‘Karolingisches Geschichtsbuch’, pp. 42 and 47.} If aware of uniformity in layout and writing, why should they not also have pursued greater symmetry in style and language? Stylistic mimicry might offer a solution for the problem of the ARF’s stylistic pluralism. Though it maintained a sense of thematic continuity throughout the work, new cultural and political winds could, over the years, easily have affected stylistic changes or thematic reorientations. Even if authors worked years apart from each other, they might nonetheless have been aware that they worked within a tradition and tried to adapt their style and language accordingly. In other words, instead of recognizing a new author in every stylistic oddity, it might be more productive to widen the meshes of the net somewhat, and allow instead for zones of stylistic transition.

The homogeneous character of the ARF in combination with a phased composition points to these annals having been created in an institutional context. If this is the case, searching for individual authors might be less productive. Instead, we should shift our attention to the specific environment in which these individual scribes operated, namely the Carolingian court. Carolingian rulers not only featured prominently, and favourably, in these annals, but at least two of the extant manuscripts that contain the ARF have been associated with the royal court in its broader meaning: the script of the fragment known as Sankt Maria in Kapitol AII/18 has been identified as that of the palace scriptorium of Louis the Pious and the historiographical compendium known as Vienna ÖNB Cod. 473, though probably produced at St Amand in 869, was likely composed for the imperial coronation of Charles the Bald.\footnote{Reimitz, ‘Karolingisches Geschichtsbuch’, pp. 60-76.}
Production in the vicinity of the royal court does not automatically imply royal involvement, nor can this be excluded. The oft-heard argument for royal involvement is the prologue in Ardo’s *Life of Benedict*, stating that ‘no learned men would doubt, I think, that it is a most ancient practice, habitual for kings from then to now, to have their deeds and the events [of their reign] committed to annals for posterity to learn about.’ An obvious setting for the composition and upkeep of these annals within the infrastructure of the court is the royal chancellery, or possibly the palace chapel. This does not necessarily mean that the compilers, though they appear well-informed of the royal itinerary, also wrote in close physical proximity to the ruler. The final section of these annals, entries 820-829, is commonly associated with Abbot Hilduin of St Denis, who at the time also acted as Louis’s archchaplain. On the other hand, the earlier breaks in the narrative do not match the dates of Hilduin’s predecessors. However, if the upkeep and production of the royal annals was an institutional, rather than a personal, undertaking, its upkeep might have been able to withstand the occasional death, or banishment, of the head of the institute.

2.2.3. Function

According to Ardo, the king kept historical records for the instruction of his posterity. This posterity, we might imagine, consisted of the king’s sons, grandsons, and a select body of learned courtiers and advisors. The initial audience of the ARF may not have extended beyond this small circle of homines palatinus, and explains the lack of evidence for these annals having circulated widely during Charlemagne’s reign. But if not to instruct a realm-wide elite on the legitimacy of the ‘Carolingian identity’, why were the ARF composed?

In terms of historiographical production, Charlemagne’s court during the first half of the 790s was a fertile field. In the years 790-794, probably in anticipation of the Council of Frankfurt, the courtier Theodulf, who would later become bishop of Orléans, composed a response to the Second Council of Nicaea (787) known as the *Libri Carolini* or *Opus Caroli*. The notes in the margin of the autograph text, as are preserved in MS BAV lat. 7207, are thought to be Charlemagne’s own. The work has been regarded as the dogmatic

---

114 Manitius, ‘Annales Laurissenses Majores’, 423-5, argued that the ARF used an administratitative account of the court itinerary as its source.
117 Freeman, *Opus Caroli*, p. 3.
position of the Frankish court in the Iconoclasm controversy. Recently, however, Thomas Noble described it as ‘a metahistory that seeks to locate the Franks in their own time but also in all time.’\textsuperscript{118} As Theodulf was labouring on his treatise, Charlemagne ordered the compilation of a collection of papal letters that defined the special bond between the Carolingian rulers and the successors of Saint Peter. Its formation may have been triggered by the heresy of Adoptionism that was gaining influence in Francia at the time.\textsuperscript{119} The letter collection, known as the \textit{Codex epistolaris carolinus}, opens with a prologue stating Charlemagne’s intentions:

Because [Charlemagne] had observed that because of great age and carelessness [these letters] appeared partly destroyed and erased, he ordered to restore and rewrite them with great care onto parchment for [the purpose of] remembrance – beginning therefore (...) with the reign of the aforesaid ruler Charles, his grandfather, up to the present time, and so noting down everything, in order that no testimony whatsoever of the Holy Church should seem lacking to his future successors.\textsuperscript{120}

According to the prologue, this collection was not meant to flaunt a specific Carolingian ideology to outsiders, but to preserve a by then tattered group of letters that, in Carolingian eyes, contained a body of almost prophetic wisdom. Neither the \textit{Opus Caroli} nor the \textit{Codex carolinus} appear to have circulated much outside the court. In addition to the autograph text, the \textit{Opus Caroli} is extant in a copy made by Hincmar of Rheims and a fragment from the monastery of Corbie.\textsuperscript{121} The \textit{Codex carolinus} is only extant in a single, unadorned manuscript from the late ninth century that used to belong to Archbishop Willibert of Cologne (870-889).\textsuperscript{122} Like Theodulf’s \textit{Opus Caroli}, the \textit{Codex carolinus} therefore does not appear to have been designed to be distributed to the learned centres of the realm, and will have known limited readership.\textsuperscript{123} It should be noted, furthermore, that there is an obvious historical dimension to the \textit{Codex carolinus}, too, as its contents – comprising letters from Pope Gregory III (731-...
741) to Pope Hadrian (772-795) – covers roughly the same period as the earliest section of the *ARF*.\(^{124}\)

This was the climate in which the composition of the *ARF* was begun. It probably was not intended as a showcase for the triumphant history of the dynasty to be forced on the Frankish elite, but rather may have been an in-house project, its circulation confined to a small community working within the royal household. By keeping a record of events, these annals anchored Carolingian history within a broader historiographical framework that was both Frankish and Christian. The composition of a systematic historiographical account – and annals are nothing if not systematic in their organization of time – fitted contemporary notions on *correctio*, in which the collection and preservation of all forms of knowledge (whether canonical, liturgical, astronomical, computistical or historical) appears to have more important than its use as an instrument of indoctrination.\(^{125}\) As McKitterick noted, their ‘insistence on precise chronology according to the year of the Incarnation is a deliberate device to enhance a very determined expression of the Franks’ identity and cultural affiliations.’\(^{126}\) The intended readership of the *ARF* consisted of prominent members of the Carolingian polity; they did not need to be convinced of the legitimacy of Carolingian rule, but these self-reflective writings did help to form a firm sense of collective identity that was essential to withstand the internal and external crises, heresies and unorthodoxies that threatened to destabilize the realm and the order the Carolingian polity tried to impose on the world. Charlemagne’s court, rather than a propaganda machine working at full steam, served as a vault of (historical) knowledge in which prestigious narratives that defined the ideology of the polity – like the *Opus Caroli*, the *Codex Carolinus* and the *ARF* – were preserved for posterity.

This is not to say that the function of the *ARF* did not change over time. To return to the manuscript dissemination of the *ARF*: out of the forty extant manuscripts, only ten date to the Carolingian period. The earliest of these, a fragment containing a single entry, dates to the reign of Louis the Pious.\(^{127}\) Apart from the *ARF*\(_A\), each of the recensions of the *ARF* is represented in these Carolingian manuscripts, though none appears to be particularly dominant, which might argue against a single source of distribution. If we plot the provenance of these manuscripts (insofar as can be reconstructed) geographically, it would appear that the circulation of the recensions of the *ARF*.

\(^{124}\) McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, p. 38


\(^{126}\) McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p. 23.

\(^{127}\) Cologne, Sankt Maria in Kapitol AII/18.
was limited to specific regions in the Frankish realm: \(ARF_\text{A}, ARF_\text{D},\) and \(ARF_\text{E}\) circulated in the east, whereas \(ARF_\text{B}\) and \(ARF_\text{C}\) appear to have circulated in the west.\(^{128}\) Even if many manuscripts were lost, this geographical differentiation is significant and, in combination with the dates of the extant manuscripts, it can be used to argue that these various recensions of the \(ARF\) were created during the reigns of Charlemagne’s grandsons, when the empire was governed from three centres of power. After all, had the recensions been created before the Carolingian empire was divided between the sons of Louis the Pious, their dissemination would probably have resulted in a more evenly spread pattern.

The upkeep of the \(ARF\) came to a halt when Louis’s sons rebelled against their father in the early 830s.\(^{129}\) The triumphant narrative of the \(ARF\) ends with a reference to Louis’s celebration of Christmas at Aachen in 829. In 833, the emperor was forced to submit to public penance, resulting in his \textit{de facto} deposition, yet managed to regain his position the following year. Although Louis appears to have ruled vigorously in the years after this crisis, this episode had undoubtedly cast a shadow on the Carolingian reputation. The evident fallibility of Carolingian authority had in a profound sense corroded the foundation of Frankish identity; once emperors were seen to fall, it became difficult to feel particularly elect. The end of the political unity of the empire after Louis’s death in 840 is echoed in the separate continuations of the \(ARF\). In the west, the \(ARF\) was continued under supervision of Prudentius (d. 861), who, after becoming bishop of Troyes in 843, moved the upkeep of these annals away from the royal household. After Prudentius’s death, Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims (d. 882) took over.\(^{130}\) In the east, the \(ARF\) were also continued, though apparently by a number of authors who cannot be readily located. At some point this continuation was associated with the monastery of Fulda, and hence has become known as the \textit{Annals of Fulda}.\(^{131}\) The regional differentiation

---

\(^{128}\) Ascribing \(ARF_\text{B}\) to western Francia is problematic. Of the three MSS of \(ARF_\text{B}\) (Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 617 [= B1]; Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213 [= B3] and Paris, BnF lat. 5941 A [= B4]) only B3 can be securely located to Rheims. The provenance of B1 and B4 is unknown, but these MSS did come in the possession of French collectors, which makes a western provenance perhaps more likely, but can by no means be considered evidence. Regino of Prüm, working from Trier, also used \(ARF_\text{B}\).

There are also two exceptions: Rome, BAV, Reg. lat. 550 and its copy, Paris, BnF lat. 5925, both containing \(ARF_\text{D}\), originate from St Denis and date to the thirteenth century. The middle realm, or Lotharingia, which included Trier, may have been influenced by both eastern and western traditions.


\(^{130}\) Nelson, \textit{Annals of St-Bertin}, pp. 5-13. As Nelson notes on p. 2, the title of these annals is misleading as these annals were never produced at the monastery of St Bertin. These annals have derived their name from this monastery because the sole copy of this work, St Omer BM MS 706, was kept there.

of the various redactions of the ARF, combined with a gradual increase in their dissemination in the second and third quarters of the ninth century, based on the dates of the extant manuscript copies, might point to a change in their function: no longer a repository of historical knowledge to be preserved at the royal court, these annals came to be distributed to centres outside the court, possibly as an instrument to maintain, or perhaps redefine, the mental and political horizons of what now threatened to become a divided Frankish elite. It should be emphasized, however, that the limited number of manuscripts makes any such claims highly speculative. Nevertheless, in this later phase, the ARF may have adopted a function that can perhaps be called propagandistic after all. However, it should be emphasized that the dissemination of the ARF will not have been orchestrated by some high palace authority forcing its ideological outlook on the past on the wider body of the elite, but owed to the authority these annals had accumulated through their association with specific groups and persons that occupied the highest echelons of the elite, with whom the readership of this text wished to be associated.132

2.2.4. Pippin, the father of Charlemagne

Much like the Continuations, the first section of the ARF (741-788) also navigates around the obstacles that Pippin encountered during his reign.133 The annals open with a brief, but meaningful, statement that is characteristic of the annalistic genre: ‘In 741 Charles, mayor of the palace, died.’134 It is with this event that the history of the Carolingian royal dynasty – for that is what the ARF are – begins. In the entry for 742, Carloman and Pippin divide the realm between the two of them on their way back from a campaign in Aquitaine. This is of course something one would expect Charles to have already resolved during his lifetime, but, as we shall see in the next chapter, the succession of Charles Martel had proven to be a much more contested affair than the ARF wished to relate to their audience.

What follows are a series of year entries that report military campaigns being executed in the eastern regions of the Frankish world. However, where Childebrand had provided some kind of explanation why these alleged

132 De Jong, Penitential State, p. 66.
133 The date of composition for the first section of the ARF remains highly problematic and contested. With respect to the date of the first section of the ARF, I follow McKitterick, ‘Construction’, 116. The argument of Giesebruch, ‘Königsschnellen’, 194, remains a valid one: the first section of ARF had to have been written before the great Saxon rebellion of 793, otherwise the author would probably not have written in the entry of 785 that ‘tunc tota Saxonia subiugata est.’
134 ARF, s.a. 741: ‘Carolus maior domus defunctus est.’
rebellions sprung up, the annalist had contented himself with providing a rather detached record of the events. Carloman’s abdication – marking another major political crisis in Pippin’s reign – is related in a similar matter-of-fact tone. With Carloman gone, the annalist allowed Grifo to enter the scene, only to report of his rebellious flight into Saxony. Up to that point, the annalist had been as strict as Childebrand in refusing to acknowledge Grifo’s role in the succession of Charles Martel. Again, the author is not interested in what moved Grifo to take flight, treating us instead to a series of seemingly factual entries that relate how Pippin pursued Grifo through Thuringia, Saxony and finally Bavaria, where he was arrested. 135 Contrary to what one might expect after all this, Grifo was offered a position subordinate to his half-brother, yet spurned the offer and fled to Aquitaine. Later, in the entry for 753, the annalist invokes Grifo’s name one last time, to inform us of his demise. 136

In the meantime, the annalist recorded Pippin’s coup. The entry for 749 mentions the famous embassy to Rome, where in answer to the question ‘whether it was good or not’ that the kings in Francia at the time did not have royal power, Pope Zachary responded that “it would be better call him king who had the power, than him who was without royal power.” 137 This was all Pippin and his circle needed to hear. The following year, we are told, a powerless Childeric III received the tonsure and was sent to a monastery, and Pippin was inaugurated as king. The entries for 751 and 752, however, are left empty– the only blank entries in the entire account – which might either mean nothing happened in these years, which is doubtful, or, more likely, that this transfer of power was less clear-cut than the narrative suggests. Either the annalist and all who copied and amended his work had collectively forgotten these events, or they were collectively trying to forget them. The entry for the year 753 spells again ‘business as usual,’ as Pippin set out to fight Saxons. On his way back, the new king received two encouraging messages: the first concerned his rebellious brother’s death (it is only at this point that the ARF identify Grifo as Pippin’s germanus); the second stated that Pope Stephen II was on his way to meet the Frankish king. That winter, the pope petitioned Pippin for help, to which Pippin consented, despite an attempt by Carloman – now a monk at Monte Cassino – to prevent this. Not coincidently, Stephen confirmed Pippin and his sons as kings the next year through the rite of anointing (inungere).

135 ARF, s.a. 747-748.
136 ARF, s.a. 753. This is also mentioned in Nibelung’s Continuations, c. 35.
137 ARF, s.a. 749: ‘interrogando de regibus in Francia, quibus temporibus non habentes regalem potestatem, si bene fuisse an non’ and ‘ut melius esset illum regem vocari, qui potestatem haberet, quam illum, qui sine regali potestate manebat.’
In 755, *per apostolicam invitationem*, we are reminded, Pippin set out for Italy. The annalist did not share Nibelung’s enthusiasm for – or possibly his experience with Pippin’s Italian wars (755-757), nor for the Aquitanian wars (760-768) that succeeded them. Although the annalist may not have participated in Pippin’s campaigns, he had recently witnessed a tribunal at which Charlemagne disposed of his cousin Tassilo. According to the *ARF*, the charges listed against Tassilo in 788 dated back to the 750s, when he is accused of having abandoned his Pippin, his lord and uncle, on the battlefield.\(^{138}\) It is to these events, more than to Pippin’s military exploits, that the author’s interest was devoted. With regard to the Frankish assembly in Compiègne of 757, the annalist noted two events: Emperor Constantine V (r. 741-775) had sent an exotic Greek organ as a sign of friendship (or at least that was how the Franks interpreted it),\(^{139}\) and Tassilo, whom Pippin had installed as duke over the Bavarians in 748, had come solemnly to pledge himself to Pippin in vassalage. In some detail and invoking a host of saints, Tassilo is described as having pledged his oath to Pippin and his sons, unwittingly setting the stage for his ultimate downfall. In 763, Tassilo is said to have abandoned Pippin on the battlefield, a particular shameful act referred to as *harisliz* in the native Frankish language.\(^{140}\) Although Tassilo’s treachery did not affect the outcome of Pippin’s campaign, the war effort was put on hold the following year to deliberate on the matter. Apparently no immediate action was taken against Tassilo, busy as Pippin was subduing Aquitaine, but Tassilo’s betrayal was not forgotten either. According to the *ARF*, twenty-five years later those who attended the assembly of Ingelheim (788) still remembered Tassilo’s betrayal.\(^{141}\)

Despite the absence of the Bavarian contingent, Pippin managed to conquer Aquitaine. In 768 the Aquitanian duke Waifar was killed, though Pippin would soon follow him to the grave. That same year, or so the *ARF* reports, Pippin became ill and hurriedly travelled to St Denis, stopping only at Tours to pray at Saint Martin’s shrine. Having arrived in St Denis, Pippin is said to have died on 24 September and buried close to the same martyrs who had witnessed his inauguration as king in 754, and on whose relics Tassilo had...
sworn his oaths of loyalty. Unlike the Continuations, the ARF are not very concerned with the matter of the division of Pippin's reign and only state that Charlemagne and Carloman succeeded their father in the kingship.

While both the Continuations and the ARF focus on the leading members of the dynasty, in other respects their narratives tend to be very dissimilar. Three general distinctions should be pointed out: first, the different style and form of these genres helps to explain why the ARF seems so much more concise in its presentation of events – although, as the narrative progresses and the events become more contemporary, its entries become significantly longer.¹⁴²

Second, the political context in which these two accounts were composed was very different. Childebrand stood at the centre of his nephew's polity; Nibelung appears only to have operated on the periphery, as a military commander in southern Gaul. The author of the ARF, as Ranke famously argued, gives off the impression that at least he stood in close proximity to the court. Also, he wrote with a specific purpose in mind, namely to write a history of the dynasty that at the same time acted as a justification for Charlemagne's ousting of Tassilo. The Continuations did not yet recognize Tassilo as a threat – another signal, perhaps that they were composed before 788.¹⁴³ Each author therefore responded to a different set of threats and challenges. By the time the ARF was composed, some of these had already come to belong to a distant past, as did the men who had been involved in these events. This was not the case with Tassilo, however, who is carefully set up in the ARF as a traitor to his uncle and benefactor. The first section of the ARF may therefore well have been composed in connection with the Council of Frankfurt in 794, at which Tassilo was condemned to a monastery in order to atone for his crimes.¹⁴⁴

Last, the Continuations and the ARF present us with different outlooks on Frankish history and the position the Carolingian dynasty therein. As noted, Childebrand and, perhaps to a lesser extent, Nibelung presented Pippin's reign as the apex of a long Frankish struggle that had begun with the destruction of Troy and concluded with the triumphant rule of the Carolingians. For the annalist, however, Pippin's reign marked but the beginning of a new era – one that we have come to recognize as Carolingian. It was written by someone who knew that the great experiment that had been Pippin's reign had, in the end, turned out to be a success. The main difference between these two texts is,

¹⁴² On the effects of form on the narrative, see: Guenée, 'Genres historiques'; Foot, 'Meaning of form'; Dumville, 'Chronicle'.
¹⁴³ Continuations, c. 38 names Tassilo as Pippin's associate in the second Lombard campaign of 756.
therefore, one of perspective: in the Continuations Pippin is presented as Charles Martel’s son, whereas the ARF present him as Charlemagne’s father.

In the early ninth century, a scribe unimpressed with what he read in the ARF rewrote the history of Pippin’s reign. Not only did he update the rustic Latin of his original to meet the latest standards among the Carolingian literary elites, but he also made significant alterations to the content of the account. Nowhere is this more evident than at the beginning of the text, where the Reviser openly admits to the succession crisis which the Continuations and the ARF sought so desperately to hide. This will be discussed in detail in chapter four. Other changes made to the original narrative of the ARF may not have been as spectacular, but they are nonetheless meaningful. They inform us that the sometimes dramatic events that occurred during Pippin’s reign continued to be of interest to a younger generation, and that the perception of this formative phase in Carolingian history was not static, but continued to develop over time.

2.3. Historiographical compendia

What authors write and a readership reads rarely amounts to the same thing. A variety of obstacles stands between the once so revered author and his oft-neglected audience. Unfortunately, the historian is only capable of circumventing very few of these obstacles. While we may not, for example, be able to share in the thought-processes of a contemporary readership of a text, we are at least able to share in this readership’s observation by taking the extant manuscripts to hand. Having discussed the formation of the Continuations and the ARF from the perspective of their respective authors, it now needs to be assessed how, and why, these texts came to be transformed from independent libelli, circulating among the core members of the court elite, into components of larger historical compendia – the form in which most textual witnesses survive up to this day. What is certain, though, is that placing these historiographical texts in conjunction with others affects their meaning. In this section, the perspective therefore changes from the original text the modern philologist has sought to re-establish, to the specific medieval witness.

Historiographical compendia are characteristic of the Carolingian period, in which historiographers ‘tried to integrate these older competing histories [i.e. Merovingian historiography like Gregory of Tours’s Histories, the Chronicle of Fredegar or the Liber Historiae Francorum] into one common vision of

---

145 See chapter 3.5.3.
Frankish history and future.' They consist of an assortment of historiographical texts that, taken together, form meta-histories in which contemporary events become part of a much broader historical framework. Moreover, these compendia were seldom random collections and often contained interpolations. They were specifically designed to cater to the political and ideological needs of their intended audiences.

Although there might be no point in searching for a single authoritative version of a historiographical narrative, the patterns in their transmission reveal important clues about the reception and use of these texts by a contemporary audience. For now, I shall focus on the combination of the Continuations and the ARF, and begin by briefly reiterating the main characteristics of various recensions, or manuscript groups, of the Continuations. All but one of the manuscripts of what Krusch had called the fourth group (and which Collins identified as the Historia vel gesta Francorum), contain the complete Continuations up to c. 54. An almost equal amount of Carolingian manuscripts survive of the fifth group, which combines the Continuations with a reworked version of Gregory’s Histories, using an interpolated account of the Liber historiae Francorum as a bridge. The sixth manuscript group is a residual group that, while being less true to form, uses the Continuations as an extension to the narrative of the Liber historiae Francorum.

St Omer, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 706, a codex written at St Bertin in the late tenth century, contains a copy of the Continuations of group five. Originally, this manuscript of 223 fols. was attached to St Omer BM, 697 (44
The continuations and the ARF

The original tenth-century compendium therefore contained the following texts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 697 (44 fols.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eutropius, <em>Breviarium ab urbe condita</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul the Deacon, <em>Historia romana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcellinus Comes, <em>Chronicle</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous, <em>Notitia Galliarum</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 706 (223 fols.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gregory of Tours, <em>Histories</em> (in a Carolingian redaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chronicle of Fredegar</em> (IV), including the <em>Continuations</em> (cc.1-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARF (741-829)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annals of St Bertin (830-882)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brussel, Bibliothèque Royale 15835 (16 fols.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bede, <em>Chronica</em> (excerpt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chronicle of Lorsch</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Annals of St Vaast</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The compendium has been described as ‘a continuous history from the foundation of Rome to the Carolingians’, which casts some doubt on the idea that the Brussels manuscript was part of its original design. Its historical outlook is one in which Frankish society evolved from classical, rather than biblical, antiquity. The part of the collection that later came to be isolated as St Omer, BM 706 consists of two sections, of which one can be described as a pre-Carolingian, and the other as a Carolingian history of the Franks. The first, Merovingian section consists of a reworked version of Gregory’s *Histories*, with interpolations borrowed from the *Liber Historiae Francorum* and the *Continuations*. It is an example of what Krusch had identified as the fifth manuscript group of the *Chronicle of Fredegar*. However, the compiler did not use the complete *Continuations*, but only the section up to c. 24, thus ending the narrative with the death of Charles Martel in 741. Not coincidentally, this is precisely where the narrative of the ARF begins.

---

151 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, pp. 50-1; Collins, *Fredegar-Chroniken*, pp. 119-20. McKitterick is more reserved than Collins with regard to the likelihood that Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 15835 used to be a part of the compilation.

152 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p. 51.

Another historiographical compendium, codex Namur, Bibliothèque Communale 11, also contained a copy of the Continuations belonging to group five. It was composed in the third quarter of the ninth century at the monastery of St Hubert in the Ardennes. It is the only copy of the Continuations that ends with c. 21, which means that concludes with the statement that Charles’s health was in decline, but omits the fruitless papal embassies, Charles Martel’s plans for the division of his realm, Pippin’s armed entry into Burgundy and Charles’s death. It is possible that these chapters were omitted on account of some accident (a study of the manuscript is needed to exclude this notion), yet it is equally possible that their exclusion was intentional, as these events all relate to highly controversial matters, as we will come to see in chapters three to five. What is more, by omitting the reference to Charles’s death in the Continuations, ending instead with the statement that ‘Charles health was in decline,’ the compiler allowed for an even more seamless connection to the narrative of the ARF, which begins by reporting Charles’s death. A similar attempt to create a smooth transition between the narratives of the Continuations and the ARF can be witnessed in the codex Vienna, ÖNB lat. 473. In this case, however, the compiler chose the opposite solution: he left the narrative of the Continuations up to c. 24 intact and omitted instead the first entry of the ARF. What these compendia therefore reveal is that these texts were not slavishly copied and collated; copyists, or those who directed their work, made very conscious decisions about what they wanted to preserve in their histories and how these various ‘textual building blocks’ should be connected.

These three examples are hardly exceptional. In fact, each of the manuscripts that contain a copy of the Continuations belonging to either group five or six, end at c. 24, i.e. with the death of Charles Martel. Most of these compilations are then continued by the ARF. It would thus appear that, on the whole, Carolingian compilers preferred the narrative of the ARF over that of the Continuations to recount Pippin’s reign, even though the narrative of the former offers a much fuller account. Pippin’s reign stood at the crossroads of Frankish dynastic history and forced compilers who wished to connect the Continuations to the ARF to make a choice: either continue the narrative of the Continuations up to 768 (c. 54), or cut it short at 741 (c. 24) and continue with the ARF from the beginning. In virtually every case, the compiler opted for the

---

154 Bischoff, Katalog, 2, nr. 3560, p. 305.
155 See below, chapter 2.3.3.
156 An alternative would be that the compiler used an incomplete exemplar of the Continuations, though I consider this highly unlikely.
latter. The *ARF* thus presented the dominant view on Pippin’s reign.\(^{157}\) Apparently, a line could be drawn between rulers who belonged to an older, Merovingian past and those who belonged to a new dynastic age in Frankish history, one which we have come to call Carolingian. That line was quite systematically drawn between the reigns of Charles Martel and Pippin the Short, which meant that Carolingian history began in 741 with the succession of Charles Martel.

In the minds of historiographical compilers, working in the ninth and tenth centuries, the reign of Pippin the Short, that witnessed the end of the Merovingian dynasty, was recognized as a new beginning. This notion found expression in the conscious way these compilers cut and pasted their various sources with which they fashioned their meta-histories. Three additional examples of composite Carolingian history books, that benefit from having been studied in more detail, elucidate Pippin’s position within the wider framework of Frankish history and reveal the diversity with which that history could be given shape in Carolingian historiographical compendia. These examples are: Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213 (c. 900), Paris, BnF lat. 10911 (c. 830) and Vienna, ÖNB cod. 473 (869).

### 2.3.1. Example 1: Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213

Rome, BAV, Reg. lat. 213 consists of 157 fols. and was produced in late ninth-century Rheims.\(^ {158}\) The compilation, consisting of three sections, was written in two hands. The manuscript opens with a copy of the complete *Continuations* (cc. 1-54; fols. 1-148) and is followed by a set of annals known as the *Fragmentum annalium Chesnii* (768-791; fol. 149r-v).\(^ {159}\) These annals are in turn continued by a section from *ARF*\(^ B\) (792-806; fols. 149v-157v).\(^ {160}\) It has been argued that this manuscript is a copy of a damaged exemplar, because the changes of the hand do not match the stylistic breaks in the narrative, and because the narrative ends in mid-sentence on fol. 157v, on the middle of the page. After the prologue of the *Chronicle of Fredegar* (fol. 109v), all titles and headings were removed from the text, nor were there any other markers that allowed the reader to distinguish between the three texts that make up this compilation. The layout is uniform throughout the manuscript. An unsuspecting

\(^{157}\) Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213 (group 4) contains the complete version of the *Continuations* and connects it to the annals known as the *Fragmentum Chesnii*, in turn followed by a copy of *ARF*\(^ B\). See below, chapter 2.3.1.


\(^{159}\) This is the only extant manuscript containing the *Fragmentum annalium Chesnii*.

reader might therefore easily be led into thinking that he was reading a single
history, instead of a compilation of three distinct texts.161

An important, if perhaps unanswerable, question concerns the compiler’s
motivation behind this selection. It is possible that the compiler simply had to
work with what he had, and what he had may not have had much. And if he had
the luxury of choice, what made him choose these specific components? Why
were the entries of the Fragmentum annalium Chesnii preferred over those of
\( \text{ARF}_\text{B} \)? What is its effect on the meaning of the compilation as a whole?

A significant difference between the Fragmentum Chesnii and \( \text{ARF}_\text{B} \) is that
the former, like \( \text{ARF}_\text{D} \), mentions Hardrad’s rebellion against Charlemagne in
786, whereas \( \text{ARF}_\text{D} \) does not. If we were to assume that the compiler’s preferred
choice for his compilation had been to copy \( \text{ARF}_\text{D} \), but did not have access to an
exemplar, a combination of the Fragmentum Chesniium and an interpolated copy
of \( \text{ARF}_\text{B} \) would have created a similar effect. That this may have been the
compiler’s intention finds support in the unique reference to Pippin the
Hunchback’s rebellion in the entry of 792 of \( \text{ARF}_\text{B} \). This reference, moreover,
was not a direct copy from an \( \text{ARF}_\text{D} \) manuscript, as it occupies a different
position in the entry and uses a different vocabulary.162 Another important
theme that we find altered in this composition is the history of Tassilo. While
the Fragmentum Chesnii mentions Tassilo’s fate, as well as that of his wife and
children, it does not go into the causes of his downfall. These remain obscure
due to the compiler’s preference for the narrative of the Continuations over that
of the ARF. In using the Continuations, moreover, the compilation promotes
more continuity with the pre-Carolingian past than other compilations do that
use the ARF to describe Pippin’s reign. What this compilation originally looked
like is unknown, since it was damaged at the entry for 806. However, as noted
above, Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 213 is famous for its colophon (c. 33), which
identifies Childerbrand and Nibelung as the patrons of the Continuations. The
unconventional character of this compilation may have given the compiler from
Rheims additional incentive to include a colophon that reassured their
readership that what they were reading might not stem from the ARF, but it
was from an authoritative source, namely Pippin’s own uncle and cousin.

---

161 Collins, ‘Fredegar’, 199, n. 133. The Continuations end on the final line of fol. 148, the
Fragmentum starts on a new page. The ARF continues this text at the middle of folio 149 without
any visible break, either in the text itself or the page layout.

162 Kurze, ‘Reichsannalen’, 1, 301-2.
2.3.2. Example 2: Paris, BnF lat. 10911

Paris, BnF lat. 10911 is the earliest extant Carolingian history compendium to contain a copy of the ARF. The manuscript consists of 121 fols. and was written by a single scribe who worked in the vicinity of Paris around 830. The compilation is made up of three texts: it opens with the Liber Historiae Francorum (in the Neustrian or A-recension), to which a full copy of ARF (741-829) was attached. The compiler used the Continuations (cc. 10-24) to bridge the gap between the two accounts, from 727-741. With regard to the Continuations, the Paris manuscript is therefore a representative of group six. The end result is a continuous history of the Franks, from the Trojan King Priamus to the reign of Emperor Louis the Pious (see fig. 3).

Unlike the uniform structure of the Vatican manuscript, the textual components of Paris, BnF lat. 10911 were not made to appear as a uniform text. As McKitterick has shown, the compiler thoroughly reorganized the narrative of the Continuations, for which he used different script types, capitals and elaborate headings. It is nevertheless clear that the compiler tried to integrate the Continuations into the Liber historiae Francorum, by assigning the two texts with a continuous list of chapter numbers. The chapters of the Liber historiae Francorum were assigned the numbers 1-51, to which the abridgment from the Continuations were added as cc. 52-55. These texts were therefore organized to form a single historiographical narrative, even though they remained visibly distinct.

An even sharper transition exists between the first section of the compilation, containing the Liber historiae Francorum and the Continuations, and the second section containing the ARF. The ARF begin on a new quire, leaving the remaining pages of the last quire of the Continuations unused, until in the twelfth, or early thirteenth, century a scribe decided to use the empty space to copy a (seemingly unrelated) text. In the annalistic fashion, each entry of the ARF begins with a year number in relation to the Incarnation of Christ. However, in addition to this the scribe also added another number to the entries 741-813, from 1 (=741) to 73 (=813).

Following the entry for 750/10, the scribe again left 1½ pages empty. As is customary for all versions of the ARF, the entries for the years 751 and 752 were left empty. Because the scribe took this hiatus into account when he

163 McKitterick, History and Memory, p. 15.
164 For my description of the manuscript I rely on McKitterick, History and Memory, pp. 16-19.
165 McKitterick, History and Memory, p. 17. The text contains a letter claimed to be from Alexander the Great to Aristotle.
numbered his entries, assigning the number 13 to the entry for the year 753, it is clear that the copyist was aware of these empty entries. It is nonetheless unlikely that the blank space was reserved to fill in the missing information at a later time, when the supposedly forgotten information was recovered, as the space reserved in the manuscript is disproportionate to the average length of the entries in this section of the ARF.166 Alternatively, could the compiler have intended to incorporate another short text – Einhard’s introduction to the Vita Karoli, perhaps? Paris, BnF lat. 10911 is not the only historiographical compendium that reserves an empty space at precisely this point in the narrative. Perhaps a more likely scenario is that the empty space was meant to signal an important historical break, or what Helmut Reimitz called an ‘optische Erinnerungslücke’, namely one that marked the end of Pippin’s reign as mayor of the palace and the beginning of his reign as king of the Franks.167

The numbers assigned to the entries of the ARF (741-813) appear not to have been intended as chapter numbers, even though this is the case in the section containing the Liber historiae Francorum and the Continuations. In relation to the ARF, these numbers may instead have been year numbers, similar to those encountered in contemporary chronicles, such as the Chronicle of Lorsch or the Chronicle of Moissac. Both chronicles were organized according to regnal years. Of course, in this case the numbering does not start anew when Pippin’s reign ends and that of his sons begins; it ends in 813, as Charlemagne is about to die and Louis takes over. McKitterick has argued ‘that one exemplar may have offered the text either only as far as 814 or distinguished it in some way with special headings.’168 Perhaps another possibility would be that this is the work of a compiler who wished to distinguish specific epochs in Frankish history: the first epoch, captured in 55 chapters, told of a pre-Carolingian past; the second epoch consisted of the reigns of Pippin the Short and Charlemagne and lasted 73 years; and the third epoch, which the compiler and his intended audience inhabited themselves, begun with the elevation of Emperor Louis the Pious.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I-LI</th>
<th>LHF</th>
<th>Continuations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LI</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LII</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIII</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapters 11 (final section), 12, 13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIIII</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapters 14-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapters 20-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

168 McKitterick, History and Memory, p. 17.
2. The continuations and the ARF

| I-X | ARF | 741-750: Reign of Pippin as maior domus |
| III-LXXIII | ARF | 753-814: Reigns of Pippin (as king) and Charlemagne |
| - | ARF | 814-829: Reign of Louis the Pious |

Fig. 4: Paris, BnF lat. 10911: composition

2.3.3. Example 3: Vienna, ÖNB lat. 473

The combination of the Liber historiae Francorum, continuations and the ARF is also found in Vienna, ÖNB lat. 473. According to Helmut Reimitz, this manuscript was written by several hands that can be linked to the scriptorium of St Amand, where it was probably composed c. 869 for the occasion of the imperial inauguration of Charles the Bald. The manuscript’s 177 fols. provide its audience with a distinctly West-Frankish outlook on the past. It consists of the following texts:

| Fols. 1v-85v | Liber Pontificalis | Up to Pope Stephen II (752-757) |
| Fols. 85r-88v | Epistola de revelatio Sancti Stephani | |
| Fols. 90r-107v | Liber historiae Francorum, Continuations | Chapters 1-43 |
| Fols. 108r-114v | ARF0 | Chapters 1-24 |
| Fols. 116r-120v | - | 742-750 |
| Fols. 144r-151v | Einhard, Vita Karoli | Chapters 18-33 |
| Fols. 169v-170r | - | 814-829 |
| Fols. 171v-172r | Carolingian genealogy of Metz | |
| | Catalogus regum Francorum | |

Fig. 5: Vienna, ÖNB lat. 473: composition

The introduction of the Liber pontificalis up to the pontificate of Pope Stephen II, who had personally confirmed Pippin’s royal authority in 754, added a new ideological strand to the identity of the Carolingian dynasty. In addition to being the successor of King Priamus and a new David, the dynasty could also boast an apostolic sanction of their authority. Like the Paris manuscript, the core section of this historiographical compendium also begins with the Neustrian redaction of the Liber historiae Francorum, which opens with a brief

---

169 Reimitz, ‘Karolingisches Geschichtsbuch’, 63. I rely on Reimitz’s description of the manuscript.
reckoning of the years since Creation, before continuing with the history of the Trojans. The historical foundations of the Franks were therefore biblical as well as classical. However, unlike the Paris manuscript the Liber historiae Francorum ends in chapter 43, where it blends in with the narrative of the Continuations.\footnote{For the facsimile, see: Reimitz, ‘Karolinigsches Geschichtsbuch’, 81.} The result of this is, as Reimitz noted, that in doing so the scribe subtly avoided having to recall the painful memory of Grimoald’s failed coup and its aftermath.\footnote{See above, chapter one, n. 2.}

The compendium’s Carolingian history is predominantly ordered according to generation, as is indicated with various ‘incipits’ and ‘explicit’ that decorate the beginnings and endings of the reigns of most Carolingian rulers. For example, the Continuations (c. 24) conclude with an explicit written in a formal half-uncial that reads: ‘here ends the history of the deeds of Charles, mayor of the palace, who during the battle of Vincy put the defeated Ragamfred to flight, and achieved many other great and profitable things.’\footnote{MS Vienna, ÖNB lat. 473, fol. 114v: ‘Explicit historia rerum gestarum Carli maioris domus. Qui bello vincivaco habit Ragemfredum victum fugavit. Et alia quam plurima fortiter et utiliter gessit.’} This explicit is followed by a blank folio, after which ARF\textsubscript{D} starts on a new quire with the entry for 742 – the entry for 741, which merely announces Charles’s death, may have been omitted to avoid an overlap in the narrative. In addition to a rubricated year number in relation to the Incarnation of Christ and an enlarged capital, another number is added in the margin that is reminiscent of Paris, BnF lat. 10911. Because the opening entry (742) is numbered two, we might even consider the possibility that were are dealing with regnal numbers, as this was the second year of Pippin’s reign. However, no incipit or explicit adorns the section of Pippin’s reign, nor is the entry for 750 followed by an empty space. The numbering in the margins of the text also does not take into account that the entries for 751 and 752 are missing. Unlike in the Paris manuscript, it would therefore seem that the numbers in the margins of the Vienna manuscript were chapter numbers, though this does not explain why the compiler did not begin with the number 1 for his opening entry.

Because this compendium presumably was dedicated to Charles the Bald, the compiler took care to give special attention to historical namesakes, Charles Martel and Charlemagne especially. An incipit in the entry for 768 reads: ‘here begin the deeds of King Charlemagne and his brother Carloman’ and, in 814, it is written in a large half-uncial: ‘here end the deeds of Lord Charles the Great, the most exalted emperor of the Franks.’\footnote{MS Vienna, ÖNB lat. 473, fol. 120v: ‘Incipit gesta Caroli magni regis et Carlomanni fratri eius’ and on fol. 143v.: ‘Finiunt gesta domni Karoli Magni et praecellentissimi Francorum imperatoris.’} The ARF are then interrupted with a

\footnote{MS Vienna, ÖNB lat. 473, fol. 114v: ‘Explicit historia rerum gestarum Carli maioris domus. Qui bello vincivaco habit Ragemfredum victum fugavit. Et alia quam plurima fortiter et utiliter gessit.’}
selection taken from Einhard’s *Vita Karoli* that passes over the opening chapters on the formation of the Carolingian dynasty as well as the accounts of Charlemagne’s great wars, since this was already covered in the *ARF*. Instead, the compiler copied Einhard’s account of Charlemagne’s domestic life. Afterwards, a truly monumental *incipit* announces the continuation of the *ARF* with the reign of Louis the Pious, the father of Charles the Bald.

The genealogy and catalogue of kings that conclude the Vienna manuscript can be understood as a summary of the manuscript’s narrative as a whole: it establishes a long and unbroken chain of Neustrian rulers, for which the author was willing to cut a few corners and manipulate the past to some extent. A specifically Neustrian identity, which had fallen into disuse after four successive generations of a unified Carolingian realm, was dusted off and reintroduced. After partition of the realm in 843, the unity that had once been a hallmark of Carolingian success became a thing of the past. The emphasis on Neustria meant creating a new vision of the past, and one that left little room for the earlier triumphs of unity, of which Pippin’s elevation to the kingship was a prime example. Hence Pippin was neither announced with an *incipit* nor commemorated with an *explicit*. The coup of 751, which an earlier generation had hailed as the beginning of a new era, was largely ignored by a compiler who looked longingly back to a more distant past, to which he attempted to reconnect the present.

Pippin’s reign, which had come to be perceived as a watershed moment in Frankish history, now became an obstacle for the message that this historiographical compendium meant to convey. While it could not ignore the coup, the event was no longer considered something to which a compiler needed to direct his readership’s attention. Thus, no more blank spaces were inserted. Likewise, there was no more room for Einhard’s polarizing introduction in the *Vita Karoli*, in which the Merovingians are cast aside as do-nothing kings, to be replaced by the vigorous rule of Pippin the Short. In the Vienna manuscript, Pippin’s reign is reduced to an abridgement, linking the reign of Charles Martel to Charles the Great, all in anticipation of the glorious rule of their namesake and successor, Charles the Bald. Such restrictions and sensitivities might not have existed in the east, where the Carolingians had been the first to wield a royal sceptre and Merovingian rule never more than a distant reality.

---

175 Note that a different tradition formed in East Francia, where Pippin could be remembered as ‘the first king of the Eastern Franks’, see: Passio Kiliani, c. 15.
176 Reimitz, ‘Weg zum Königtum’, 305.
2.4. Conclusion

What this chapter above all sought to illustrate, is that historical knowledge is not stable after it is set in writing. Neither the content of the Continuations nor that of the ARF remained fixed after their initial composition by Childebrand, Nibelung and the annalist who worked between 793 and 795. Together, these accounts, which owe their success to their close association with the Carolingian court, form the literary basis of the Carolingian perception of Pippin’s reign. While it is possible that these texts were in circulation shortly after their composition, possibly in the form of frail libelli, none has survived; the earliest witnesses of these important historiographical narratives date to the reign of Louis the Pious and later, when they come to be incorporated in historiographical compendia.

The meaning of these texts was affected when they became incorporated into larger historiographical compendia. The context of these compilations influenced the interpretation of its individual textual components, and the narratives of the latter were often reduced to what the compiler needed. The Continuations are an especially good example of the importance of distinguishing between the initial composition of a text and its later dissemination and reception. The Continuations as originally composed by Childebrand and Nibelung, is what has been recreated in the modern critical edition and consists of 54 chapters that recount the history of the Franks up to Pippin’s death in 768. The extant manuscripts, on the other hand, are all of a later date and reveal the reception of this chronicle. They reflect a different state of affairs, as in most manuscripts the Continuations were not copied beyond c. 24, and therefore do not inform their readership of the events of Pippin’s reign. In ninth-century practice, the Continuations were used to recount the deeds of Charles Martel; for those of Pippin most compilers preferred to switch to the narrative of the ARF. The complete version of the Continuations is important, for it allows us to study the social logic of its original design in the second half of the eighth century. However, we have to keep in mind that its impact on the perception of Pippin’s reign in the ninth century was small. For that, we need to turn to the ARF.

For many ninth-century compilers, creating a historiographical compendium ideally meant having to choose between the narratives of the Continuations and the ARF to recount the deeds of Pippin’s reign. The majority opted for the latter and, as argued in this chapter, they did so because from a ninth-century perspective a dynastic divide could be made between rulers of the Carolingian and a pre-Carolingian age. That line ran between the reigns of
Charles Martel and Pippin the Short; Pippin was presented by most compilers not as his father’s son, but as his son’s father. The preference for the ARF, which, compared to the Continuations, offers a very minimalistic account of Pippin’s reign, also owed to its form. While the Continuations captured past events in the traditional form of the chronicle, the ARF cast contemporary history in a new annalistic format. A significant difference was that it dated events in relation to the Incarnation of Christ, and in doing so linked the history of the Carolingians to that of the history of Salvation – something that tied in neatly with the religious aspirations of the new dynasty.177

As Hans-Werner Goetz observed, this divide was not dated to 751/754, the year of Pippin’s inauguration and confirmation as king of the Franks, but in 741, when Charles Martel died and Pippin succeeded him as mayor of the palace.178 However, this does not necessarily mean that later generations were not impressed by Pippin’s royal inauguration, or that 751/4 was not considered the apex of Pippin’s reign. Frankish historiography, like the historical books of the Bible, was simply organized into generations, and Pippin’s began in 741. The weight of the events of 751/4 was expressed through visual breaks: in many of the extant manuscripts of both the ARF and the Continuations a blank space on the page followed the account of Pippin’s royal inauguration.

A second aspect that greatly affected the meaning of a text was its manipulation at the hands of later scribes and their patrons. As the apparatus of the modern critical edition reveals, the textual witnesses to the Continuations and the ARF contained a plethora of variations, not all of which can be ascribed to scribal ‘error’. Of these variations, only the successful adaptations endured in the copying process, while the unsuccessful ones disappeared, ultimately resulting in the distinct textual recensions, or manuscript groups, that we recognize today. These recensions allow for some degree of regional differentiation, on the basis of which we might make tentative observations about the dissemination and reception of these texts. The complete Continuations survive in five Carolingian manuscripts that are said to have originated from the middle and eastern parts of the empire. Compilations that combine the Continuations and the ARF mostly originate from the middle and western regions of the empire.179 The geographical differentiation of the ARF suggests that an important stage in their dissemination also occurred after Louis’s empire had been divided into three. ARFb+c appear to have mostly circulated in the west,

177 McKitterick, History and Memory, p. 99.
178 Goetz, ‘Dynastiewechsel’.
179 It should be emphasized that the determined origins of a manuscript, unless based on explicit references in the MS itself, remains highly speculative.
2. THE CONTINUATIONS AND THE ARF

whereas ARF_{D+E} circulated in the east. However, not every recension is relevant to the purpose of this study. The textual variations in ARF_{A-D} (741-768), with regard to the events of Pippin’s reign, are very small, hence there is little need to distinguish between these recensions. The ARF_{E}, or the Revised ARF, are a different matter, though. This recension of the ARF, which was probably composed during the reign of Louis the Pious, offers a very different reading of Pippin’s reign. In the remainder of this study, I shall therefore distinguish between the ARF and the Revised ARF.