Means, motives and opportunities: The architecture of monasteries during the reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)
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chapter 4
Novel Foundations
4.1 INTRODUCTION

As Ratger, Eigil and Hrabanus were busy shaping Fulda and its environs, their fellow abbots as well as bishops and secular rulers were equally active on their own construction sites. The aim of this chapter is to complement the picture sketched so far with two final case-studies, a male and a female monastery: Corvey and Herford. These differ from the buildings that were discussed above because they were founded relatively late and in a borderland of the Carolingian empire. Both monasteries’ building histories have been reconstructed in relative detail, yet their various phases are less obviously connected with individual (abbots’) personalities than those in Fulda, which is why the role of individuals will not be highlighted in this chapter.

There are, however, two personalities worth introducing: the half-brothers Adal(h)ard and Wala, grandsons of Charles Martel, cousins of Charlemagne. Adalhard, the eldest, was born ca. 750 as the son of Bernard and his first (Frankish) wife. His brother Wala was the offspring of Bernard’s second, Saxon wife. He was considerably younger than Adalhard, perhaps by more than twenty years. Both brothers, as members of the ruling family, received a good education and were entrusted with diplomatic and other assignments. Adalhard was the first to enter a monastery, that of Corbie, when he was ca. twenty years old. Wala followed in his brother’s footsteps much later and not entirely voluntarily. After leading a secular life in which he was one of Charlemagne’s most important courtiers, he was exiled to Corbie at the start of Louis the Pious’ reign. It did not take too long, however, before the brothers again held prominent positions at court, and after the death of Benedict of Aniane, Adalhard succeeded him as Louis’ senior advisor. Together, the brothers instigated the founding of the monastery of Corvey or ‘new Corbie’,

1 Weinrich, Wala, pp. 11-14.
2 Weinrich, Wala, pp. 18-33. About Louis’ take-over of Aachen, see also De Jong, The penitential state, pp. 19-22.
which was facilitated by Wala’s Saxon descent and his connections in the region.
In the time leading up to the foundation of Corvey in 822, the brothers had already been through a lot; they were so influential that Louis could not live with, but also not without them, which resulted in a number of exilings and reconciliations. Wala’s adventures continued after Adalhard’s death in 826. He succeeded his brother as abbot of Corbie, but Wala’s abbacy did not last long: between 830 and 833 he was exiled as a result of his role in the scandal over the empress Judith and the chamberlain Bernard and the subsequent rebellion. He spent his final years, between 834 and 836, as abbot of Bobbio.4

Corvey’s foundation from Corbie had a considerable impact. The new foundation was partly populated with monks from Corbie; it received property and support from its mother house and adopted Corbie’s liturgical practices. This, as well as its position on the outskirts of the empire, distinguished Corvey from other monasteries east of the Rhine. Moreover, through its relationship with Adalhard and Wala, the monastery was tied up in imperial politics. The convent of Herford, entrusted to Corvey a few decades after its foundation, maintained close contacts not only with Corvey but also with Notre-Dame in Soissons. Its abbess, Theodrada, was Adalhard and Wala’s sister and Herford was modelled after her convent.5 Moreover, she sent a group of nuns from Soissons to Herford, who, similar to the monks from Corbie in Corvey, brought with them a West-Frankish influence.6

One would expect this influence to extend into the realm of architecture. It is however difficult to put this assumption to the test since we know hardly anything about the building history of Corbie and Notre-Dame in Soissons. The approach chosen in this chapter is to focus almost exclusively on the (reconstruct-

4 Weinrich, Wala, pp. 70-89. Lives of Adalhard and Wala were written by their trusted follower Paschasius Radbertus, who also played a part in the foundation of Corvey. Paschasius Radbertus, Vita s. Adalhardi, ed. Migne, PL 120; Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium Arsenii, ed. Dümmler, Radbert’s Epitaphium Arsenii. Translations in Allen Cabaniss, Charlemagne’s cousins. Cabaniss’ translations as well as his historical introduction should be treated with caution. A new study on the Epitaphium Arsenii as well as novel translations of both texts by Mayke de Jong are forthcoming.
5 Wigandus presbyter, Vita s. Waltgeri c. 26, ed. and transl. Raddatz, Vita sancti Waltgeri, pp. 78-79.
6 Semmler, “Corvey und Herford”, p. 299 and below.
ed) buildings in Corvey and Herford themselves. Few direct connections with the written sources or events recorded in them are visible and these will therefore only be looked at where relevant. To begin with, we will cast a brief look at Corbie. Next, we will survey Corvey’s built history, for which we must largely depend on reconstructions since not much of the original finds has been published. This survey is followed by an analysis of the reconstructions and the reasons behind the rapid rebuilding of parts of the abbey church and the rest of the complex. Herford, which has already been studied in detail elsewhere, makes up the final case to be examined in this study. This nunnery will demonstrate yet again that each Carolingian monastic complex was unique and that we must be extremely careful about generalising.

4.2 CORBIE

The abbey of Corbie, situated close to Amiens in the north of present-day France, owes its fame partly to its many early medieval manuscripts that have survived and have been amply studied. The buildings in which these manuscripts were written or used are however less well-known. Only a few precautionary excavations (‘fouilles de sauvetage’) have been undertaken in the thirteenth-century cloister in the 1970s, which have resulted in the discovery of some Merovingian or Carolingian material, but have not led to any further knowledge of the building

\[^7\] Ganz, Corbie.
history of the monastery.\footnote{The excavations were led by François Doubliez. A very brief report is given in Doubliez, “Corbie”. For knowledge about the buildings before then, see Héliot, \textit{L’abbaye de Corbie}.}

The monastery was founded between 657 and 661 by Queen Bathild, the widow of the Merovingian king of Neustria and Austrasia Clovis II, and their son Chlotar III.\footnote{References in Cousin, “Les origines” p. 19, note 8; Ganz, \textit{Corbie}, pp. 14-15.} Corbie was thus a royal foundation, unlike most other Merovingian monasteries.\footnote{Ganz, \textit{Corbie}, p 14.} It was located between the rivers Somme and Corbie at the site of the ‘castle of Guntland’, and was very richly endowed.\footnote{References in to the documentary sources in Cousin, “Les origines” p. 19, note 8; see also Ganz, \textit{Corbie}, pp. 14-15; Levillain, \textit{Examen critique}, pp. 26-59. The land had formerly belonged to Guntland, the mayor of the palace who died in 641. I have encountered several references in the literature to a house or castle of his situated at this site, but have so far not been able to find the source for this idea. However, considering the central location of the site, it seems implausible that it was not previously inhabited.} The strong relationship with the royal court was continued by the Carolingians and maintained throughout the eighth and ninth centuries, although it did suffer from some conflicts. At its inception, the monastery was populated with monks from Luxueil, a Columbanian foundation and one of the most influential abbeys in Gaul.\footnote{Ganz, \textit{Corbie}, p 15.} For many reasons therefore – such as its location, its founders, its heritage – Corbie stood in a very different tradition than the monasteries scrutinized so far. The same probably holds true for its architecture.

The sources not only credit Bathild in the mid-seventh century with the official foundation of the monastery of Corbie; the use of words like ‘construxit’ implies that she played a role in the actual construction of the abbey as well.\footnote{\textit{Vita S. Bathildis}, ed. Krusch, \textit{MGH SS rer. Merov.} 2, pp 490-91; Héliot, \textit{L’abbaye de Corbie}, p. 19. It remains doubtful, however, how much influence such royal or imperial founders actually had on the architecture of their foundation.} Mention is made of three churches, dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul (the abbey church), Etienne, and John the Evangelist. The former two are associated with Bathild and mentioned in the foundation charter and thus seem to be seventh-cen-
tury, whereas the latter must have existed at the very latest by the 860s, when Paschasius Radbertus was buried there, in the centre, in front of the priest’s choir. Radbert’s description of the burial place of his predecessor provides us with some information about the abbey church, by the ninth century named solely after St. Peter. Adalhard was buried ‘sub fastigio, inter ejusdem medioximae quatuor ecclesiae centra, tectus polito lapide’. The interpretation of this passage is debatable. It seems most likely that the abbot was put to rest underneath a stone slab in the central church (i.e. located between the choir and the nave), underneath the highest point of the church (the *fastigium*), between the four arches (*quatuor centra*). Taken together, this description seems to refer to the crossing, the existence of which implies that the church had three aisles and/or a transept or other spaces that met at the crossing.

In addition to these three churches, the abbey disposed of at least two chapels, dedicated to St. Martin (close to the infirmary) and John the Baptist (located outside of the *claustrum*; perhaps functioning as a baptismal church for the laity).

15 Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita S. Adalhardi* c. 87, ed. Migne, *PL* 120, coll. 1552B.
16 Cf. Héliot, *L’abbaye de Corbie*, p. 23-24; Cabaniss, *Charlemagne’s cousins*, p. 77; Lewis & Short, *Latin dictionary*; Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus*. It seems that *fastigium* is used differently here than in the *Liber Pontificalis*, where it refers to a specific monument erected by Constantine in the Lateran, which has been more extensively discussed in the literature. See De Blaauw, *Cultus et decor*, pp. 53-57; Geertman, "Il fastigium lateranense".
17 Héliot however exaggerates in my opinion when he calls the reconstruction of a nave with transept and choir and a central bell tower a ‘quasi-certitude’, *L’abbaye de Corbie*, p. 24. I concur with him though that we cannot draw any conclusions about Corbie from reconstructions of Corvey, because there is no hard evidence suggesting that there was a wish to emulate Corvey in Corbie. More importantly, Corvey itself is still largely a mystery to us, as we will see later on. Cf. Heitz, *L’architecture religieuse carolingienne*, p. 50.
18 Paschasius Radbertus was at first buried in the church of St. John, see Mabillon, "Ad opera Sancti Paschasii Radberti prolegomena", *PL* 120, Col. 0016B: "Corbeia monasterio transitus sancti Radberti abbatis et confessoris. Sepultus est in ecclesia sancti Joannis Evangelistae; medio loco ante introitum presbyterii"; his predecessor Adalhard visited the church of St. Martin as a sick man: "quotidie tamen ad oratorium beati Martini veniens", Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita Adalardi*, ed. *PL* 120, Col. 1547B. Héliot, *L’abbaye de Corbie*, pp 26-27 also mentions two more chapels (as does Heitz), dedicated to
Adalhard’s Statutes for Corbie provide us with a glimpse of the other structures making up the abbey complex, although no particular information about the appearance of these buildings is given.\textsuperscript{19} Corbie’s set-up with several churches inside the monastery is not unusual for the time and place of its foundation, as are the dedications of these churches. It is possible that these are some of the characteristics of Corbie which were transported to Corvey. Corbie itself was not only subjected to local influences, but also part of a supra-regional monastic network through its connections with Luxeuil and the British Isles.\textsuperscript{20}

I will not elaborate further on Corbie, not only because there is little left to say about its architecture in the early ninth century, but more importantly because it is Corvey we were interested in in the first place. As will become clear though, Corvey, although geographically closer to the likes of Fulda and Reichenau, was also shaped by the lineage in which it stood.

\textbf{4.3 CORBIA NOVA: A MONASTERY FOR THE SAXONS}

The abbey of Corvey was founded as \textit{Corbeia nova} in 822 by the controversial brothers Wala and Adalhard, cousins of Charlemagne and monks of Corbie. A previous attempt to found a monastery in Saxony, undertaken in 815, had proved unsuccessful due to an unfortunate choice of site.\textsuperscript{21} One of the reasons for the success of the second try, besides a better location, may also have been the involvement of Adalhard and Wala, recently restored to favour.\textsuperscript{22} The plan to found an imperial ab-

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\item Laurence and Andrew respectively, the existence of which has apparently been suggested by P.-N. Grenier, \textit{Histoire de l’abbaye royale de St.-Pierre de Corbie} (Bibl. Nat., Collect. De Picardie, ms. 32).
\item Adalhard of Corbie, Consuetudines Corbeienses, ed. Semmler, CCM 1, pp. 365-418; transl. Horn & Born, Plan of St. Gall 3, pp. 103-123.
\item Ganz, \textit{Corbie}, p 19.
\item The relocation of a monastery shortly after its foundation seems to happen more often. A comparison of the two sites in some of these cases may lead to new insights on the requirements that sites for monastic settlement needed to meet.
\item The brothers, grandsons of Charles Martel, had been banned from the court after Louis’ take-over
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bey in this region had existed since Charlemagne’s conquest of Saxony, and Louis embraced the project by granting Corvey immunity and royal protection as well as rights of free election and rights over the Saxon property transferred from Corbie.\textsuperscript{23} Adalhard was abbot of both monasteries until his death in 826, when he was succeeded by his brother Wala in Corbie. Corvey then received its own abbot, Warin, of noble Franco-Saxon lineage.\textsuperscript{24} The monastery soon rose to a position of prominence due to its close contacts with the court, amongst others through the empress Judith who was of Saxon origin and donated a precious cross to the monastery, as well as its powerful economic position, for example having been granted market and minting rights in 833.\textsuperscript{25}

Being one of the few ecclesiastical institutions in the region, Corvey was actively involved in missionary activities.

Luckily, Corvey provides us with more extant material than its mother house Corbie (figs. 4.2-4.3).\textsuperscript{26} We have some archaeological evidence and the

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\item of Aachen in 814. Adalhard was sent to Noirmoutier, Wala to Corbie. They were recalled at the Council of Attigny in 821. De Jong, \textit{The penitential state}, pp. 23-24; Prinz, “Wala”, in: \textit{Lexikon des Mittelalters online}; Kasten, \textit{Adalhard}.
\item There has been some discussion about the succession of the abbots of Corvey. Wala may have held the abbacy of both houses until his exile in 830.
\item There are several narrative sources shedding light on Corvey’s early (building) history, yet Stephan’s triumphant remark about them is rather misleading: most of them are not really sources from Corvey, but from Corbie. Stephan, “Die Reichsabtei”, p. 98; \textit{Studien zur Siedlungsentwicklung} 1, p. 139. A glimpse of the library of Corvey can be gained through its digital reconstruction: see http://nova-corbeia.uni-paderborn.de.
\end{itemize}
late ninth-century ‘Westwork’ is even still extant. The rest of the church was, in a situation similar to that of Fulda, destructed in 1667 in favour of a new baroque church, the construction of which also severely damaged parts of the foundation of the old church. Nevertheless, several excavation campaigns uncovered parts of the abbey church. Although a complete excavation report of the last major campaign (1974-1976) has unfortunately not been published, Uwe Lobbedey has published reconstructions based on his finds.\textsuperscript{27} Moreover, Hans-Georg Stephan’s three-volume book on the development of the settlement Corvey attempts to collect all available evidence, some of which never before published and acquired by Stephan through conversations with those involved.\textsuperscript{28} Unfortunately many uncertainties about the outcome of the excavations remain, and Stephan moreover does not come to a reappraisal of Lobbedey’s reconstructions of the abbey church. This is a shame because these reconstructions are based on a very limited number of finds, some of which are open to several interpretations.\textsuperscript{29} Lobbedey has identified two ninth-century building phases, which I will briefly discuss along with relevant documentary sources, followed by a more encompassing analysis of the building history of Corvey’s first century.

The first phase, presumably built immediately after the second foundation of the monastery, consisted of a relatively long, broad nave flanked by narrow aisles, ending in an equally wide, almost square choir, partially closed off from the nave. The length of the nave was ca. 26 m, its middle-aisle ca. 10 m, its side-aisles ca. 2 m wide. The choir measured approximately 10 x 9.5 m. The choir was elevat-

\textsuperscript{27} Lobbedey, “Neue Grabungsergebnisse” (1978); “Corvey, ancienne abbaye bénédictine” (1999); “Die Klosterkirche in Corvey. VIII.43” (1999). Lobbedey has also led several later, smaller campaigns.

\textsuperscript{28} Stephan, Studien zur Siedlungsentwicklung 2 (2000), p. 421. Hans-Georg Stephan published an overview of the written and archaeological sources pertaining to the abbey of Corvey. In general he seems to agree with Lobbedey’s interpretations and although Stephan’s work has been highly valuable to me, I do not concur with some of his analyses, e.g. with regard to the atrium and its possible predecessors, or with the extent to which he uses later evidence to draw conclusions about the Carolingian monastery. Studien zur Siedlungsentwicklung 1, p. 171.

\textsuperscript{29} For previous campaigns, see also Lobbedey, “Neue Grabungsergebnisse”, pp. 30-31. A new publication on the building history is however expected in the not yet published first volume of Skriver & Claussen, Die Klosterkirche Corvey.
ed over a 'Winkelgangkrypta', which gave access to a small outer crypt ending in an apse. Whether or not these parts should in fact be designated as crypts may be called into question considering the limited extent to which they were actually subterranean: the difference in height between the nave and the western part of the crypt corridor was a mere 22 cm. Its level sloped down to the east, making the outer 'crypt' 1.08 m lower than the nave and thus largely above ground. The choir, raised over the crypt corridor, therefore had a much higher floor-level than the nave. If Lobbedey’s assertion that the crypt walls as well as the inner walls of the choir ambulatory are contemporary with the rest of the church but not connected to them is correct, the decision to add a crypt was taken as an afterthought. The appearance of the western end of the church is unknown; the nave continued at least until the eastern end of the Westwork.

The church was the first structure on the site, yet its size and finish suggest that it was built with an eye toward the future. Fragments of painted plaster found both in the nave and the outer crypt as well as pieces of marble, porphyry and coloured glass indicate that the church was luxuriously furnished. Remarkably, the walls themselves are at ca. 50 cm much less thick than we would expect. It seems unlikely that this was a measure taken to cut costs, considering the favourable circumstances in which construction took place as well as the lavish decoration, but another explanation does not immediately present itself.

The most extensive source describing the foundation of the monastery is the *Translatio sancti Viti martyris*, written in Corvey, probably in the 840s. It

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30 Lobbedey has even considered the possibility of the crypt having 2 storeys, "Neue Grabungsergebnisse", p. 35.
31 Lobbedey, "Neue Grabungsergebnisse", pp. 33-35.
32 Lobbedey, "Die Klosterkirche in Corvey. VIII.43 Corvey, ehem. Klosterkirche". Guilded letters, supposedly used for inscriptions, have also been found.
33 Lobbedey, "Neue Grabungsergebnisse", p. 34.
34 It seems that the church was structurally sound nevertheless, so perhaps it is simply a result of careful planning by experienced builders.
sketches how, after the first settlement in Hethis had proven unsuccessful, Adalhard and Wala found a new site for the monastery near the villa Höxter. They returned to the site on 6 August 822 and after the appropriate prayers had been said the monks demarcated the area with measuring cord and posts and estimated first the church and then the monk’s living quarters.\textsuperscript{36} While the rest returned home, some of them stayed behind to start work on the accommodations. But first the bishop of Paderborn was invited to visit the site, sanctify it and erect a cross at the place of the altar. They must have proceeded apace, for merely a month later (on 26 September) the other monks were able to relocate to Corvey permanently.\textsuperscript{37} The year 822 for the foundation is corroborated by the ‘small’ Annals of Corvey, also known as the ‘Osterannalen’.\textsuperscript{38} The following year, the abbot visited the new monastery, along with some monks from the old one, and the community of Corvey received instructions.\textsuperscript{39}

In his description of the following years the author of the \textit{Translatio} has to navigate carefully.\textsuperscript{40} He tells us how, after Wala was exiled from Corbie and Hilduin was sent to Corvey in 830, abbot Warin of Corvey attempted to procure the relics of Victorius from Amiens for his monastery. The locals were not too cooperative,

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\item Translatio Sancti Viti c. 3, 4; Schmale-Ott, \textit{Translatio Sancti Viti}, pp. 40-43. There is debate about the interpretation of this sentence: “Et postquam compleverunt litaniam et orationem, iactaverunt lineam et infixerunt paxillos et ceperunt mensurare, prius quidem templum, deinde habitaciones fratrum”. \textit{Linea} (translated here as measuring cord) has for example been taken to refer to a floor plan or blueprint. See Krüger, \textit{Studien}, p. 109, n. 208. The account of the foundation from the \textit{Translatio Sancti Viti} is supplemented by Paschasius Radbertus’ \textit{Life of Adalhard}. Paschasius Radbertus, \textit{Vita S. Adalhardi}, ed. Migne, \textit{PL} 120.
\item Translatio Sancti Viti c. 4, ed. Schmale-Ott, \textit{Translatio Sancti Viti}, pp. 42-45. Despite the short time (7 years) during which the monks had lived at Hethis, it had apparently become a very complete monastery, considering that ‘senes et pueri’, but also the monks’ furniture is mentioned explicitly.
\item Annales Corbeienses, ed. Prinz, \textit{Die Corveyer Annalen}. See below. The \textit{Annales Corbeiensis maiores} only start in the 11th century. See ed. Schmale, \textit{Die größeren Annalen von Corvey}.
\item Translatio Sancti Viti c. 4, ed. Schmale-Ott, \textit{Translatio Sancti Viti}, pp. 44-45. This is also the time when the abbot warns against excessive wealth, stressed more in the \textit{Life of Adalhard}, chapter 68; Paschasius Radbertus, \textit{Vita S. Adalhardi} c. 68, ed. Migne, \textit{PL} 120, col. 1542B-1543A.
\item There is some discussion about the year Warin became abbot. Krüger for example supposes a later date than Depreux. Krüger, \textit{Studien}, pp. 115-117; Depreux, \textit{Prospographie}, p. 395.
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but he did return home with the relics of many other saints. A few years later, Warin made another attempt, this time through Hilduin, who was restored to favour and again abbot of St. Denis. Hilduin, along with the emperor and the bishop of Paris, agreed to grant the monks the relics of St. Vitus, a martyred Italian youth whose relics were kept in the Parisian diocese. A delegation from Corvey collected the relics in St. Denis and returned home after a journey full of miraculous healings – and a brief stop along the way in Aachen – on 13 June 836, the day before Vitus’ feast day. As in other Translations discussed in the foregoing, the author is very careful to stress that the miracles were performed by God, induced by the saint’s intercession. The text does not tell us much about the design of the church in which the relics were placed, nor about their exact position.

By 836, the phase I church was presumably not yet finished, for the Easter Annals only mention a dedication in 844. The text makes it clear though that the relics were accessible, at least on feast days and Sundays, for lay people of both sexes and all ages.

The second ninth-century building phase identified by Lobbedey was preceded by some smaller construction activities, judging by the existence of structures at the site of the new transept arms. These minor construction works on the living quarters, amongst others, continued throughout the ninth century. The second major building phase of the abbey church entailed a remodelling of the entire choir area. The old crypts were torn down, the area levelled and the choir level lowered. According to Lobbedey’s reconstruction, the choir was extended with a slightly narrower eastern room ending in an equally wide apse that was demarcated by short transverse walls. Annexes ending in apsidioles (which may alternatively be viewed as transept arms) were added to the north and south of the old choir.

41 This year is also mentioned in the Annals of Corvey: “aduentus sancti uiti”, Annales Corbeienses, ed. Prinz, Die Corveyer Annalen, p. 103.
42 Translatio Sancti Viti c. 4-27, ed. Schmale-Ott, Translatio Sancti Viti, pp. 46-63.
44 Translatio Sancti Viti c. 28, ed. Schmale-Ott, Translatio Sancti Viti, pp. 62-63: a man, a woman and a child are healed during the celebration of mass.
and the old northern and southern walls were broken through, thereby turning the old choir into a sort of crossing.\textsuperscript{45} Lobbedey is positive that a continuous transept was not created, since both the floor level and the height of the central space and the annexes was different. The annexes were accessible through arches both from the crossing and from the nave aisles and in turn offered access to an elaborate outer crypt. The crypt consisted of two arms enveloping the new high choir, leading towards a cross-shaped central chapel.\textsuperscript{46} To the north and south of the central chapel, the corridor leading around the choir led to two long and narrow corridors ending in straight walls.

A somewhat disquieting aspect of this reconstruction is that it is remarkably similar to a drawing made of the old church in 1665, shortly before its destruction. We should reckon with the possibility that for the archaeologists of Corvey, as was the case for Fulda, the wish was father to the thought. Perhaps the belief that they knew what they were looking for made it slightly too easy to find it, to date whatever they found to the ninth century, or to connect the dots made up by the finds to end up with a complete reconstruction. Lobbedey admits that the drawing was one of the sources used for his reconstruction, yet it is hard to establish how much influence it had, since the finds themselves were hardly published.\textsuperscript{47} To my knowledge, Lobbedey has only partially indicated which parts of his reconstructions are based on actual finds, and in his later work he pays hardly any attention to the abbey church and focuses almost solely on the Westwork. I wonder if this is a sign that he himself is not confident enough of the reconstruction, as he

\textsuperscript{45} At the eastern end of the crossing, Lobbedey found a row of burials, some in sarcophagi, of which two were opened. Inside were largely decayed remains and some textiles. Lobbedey does not provide additional information, which seems to indicate that the burials could not be dated.

\textsuperscript{46} Lobbedey, "Neue Grabungsergebnisse", p. 35.

\textsuperscript{47} Lobbedey, "Neue Grabungsergebnisse", p. 35. The first ground plan on p. 29 (Grabungsbefunde 1951-1975) seems to indicate that he did not find any remains of the apses of the transept arms, for example, yet in the reconstruction even the southern transept has an apse even though one is not visible on the 17\textsuperscript{th}-century drawing. It is unclear what this reconstruction is based on – perhaps solely the assumption that it was a symmetrical lay out? The presence of only one apse on the older drawing may be an indication that it was a later remodelling.
hesitates to give an in-depth analysis of it.\textsuperscript{48} We should therefore treat Lobbedey’s reconstruction with due caution.

Equally problematic is the dating of the phase II choir. Before pursuing this question further, let us first look at a building phase which also took place in the second half of the ninth century but on the opposite side of the abbey church, and entailed the construction of a ‘Westwork’.\textsuperscript{49} It was probably finished by 885 and a large part of it still exists today, although severely altered by later interventions. The late-ninth-century Westbau has been reconstructed as a central-plan multi-storey building with a square central space surrounded by galleries, resting on a groin-vaulted space of 3 x 3 bays. The protruding western porch opened up towards the west through three arches and was flanked by two towers. The uppermost part of the porch and towers is largely twelfth-century. Behind the porch and over the central room rose a lantern tower, providing light to the interior. The central room on the first floor, accessible through staircases in the north- and southwest corners of the building, was flanked on the north, south and west by vaulted aisles with galleries above. The room to the east of the central space connected the Westbau with the nave of the church and rose without an intermediate floor.

Corvey has, more or less since Effmann and Fuchs’ identification of a group of Carolingian ‘Westwerke’, figured prominently in a heated debate over the function and use of the ‘Westwork’ in general. Central to this debate is the question whether a group of ‘Westbauten’ sharing certain characteristics, such as their central-plan character, the existence of towers and of several spaces on different levels, including galleries, as well as their impressive western facades, should be viewed as a specific type: the Westwork.\textsuperscript{50} In fact, Corvey had the only proper or

\textsuperscript{48} Considering Lobbedey’s other work, however, it is also very well possible that this just did not have priority.

\textsuperscript{49} The legitimacy of the use of the term ‘Westwork’ will be discussed below.

\textsuperscript{50} Möbius, Westwerkstudien; Effmann, Die karolingisch-ottonischen Bauten zu Werden ; Centula, St.
'Vollwestwerk' in the eyes of many, and others were therefore assumed to be descended from Corvey. Dagmar von Schönfeld de Reyes has recently, in one of the first extensive publications devoted to the Westwork-problem since Möbius' *Westwerkstudien*, argued that this type or group of buildings cannot be traced in the available evidence, and suggests therefore that we stop using the term ‘Westwork’ altogether. That would be too rigorous for my liking, but we should be careful of the connotations that come with the term. These include assumptions about the structure’s believed function and meaning, most of which have been connected to the imperial rule.

It is not relevant here to enter too far into this lengthy discussion because the debate is more concerned with the connections between the buildings identified as ‘Westworks’ than with the detailed study of each one individually, but also because Corvey’s Westwerk is relatively late in date compared with the other material discussed in this study. However, it is important to say a few words about Corvey’s Westbau because it constitutes the final stage in the development of the full-blown early medieval abbey church of Corvey, which was in function until the twelfth century, and because it is, contrary to popular belief, closely connected with the rest of the abbey church instead of being an isolated structure pasted onto the finished church. The construction of the Westwork was instigated by abbot Adalgar (856-877), who however did not live to see it finished. In fact, it took

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Riquier, *Die Kirche der Abtei Corvey*. One of the major obstacles in the debate is the almost complete lack of attention paid to the subject of the Westbau in contemporary sources.


Von Schönfeld de Reyes’ view has not (yet?) found universal approval, as the reviews by Oswald and Beuckers indicate. Friedrich Oswald has rightly pointed out that if we view the term Westwerk as originating from *opus*, which is frequently used with respect to art and architecture in de Middle Ages, we can use it ‘mit entsprechender Bandbreite’. Oswald, Review of Von Schönfeld de Reyes, *Westwerkprobleme*, p. 62. Since the Middle Ages, however, the phrase has been polluted by its recurrent identification with a specific type of western structure and their suggested functions. See also Beuckers, Review of Von Schönfeld de Reyes, *Westwerkprobleme*.

three more abbacies before the Westbau was dedicated under Bovo (879-890) – the others being Thankmar (877) and Avo (877-879). Bovo has been credited with the interior decoration of the Westbau, fragments of which have been rediscovered in the course of the twentieth century. Among these are plaster relief figures and underdrawings for them as well as murals including a scene from the Odyssey among other marine motifs. Unplanned decorations include graffiti that were scratched into the wall, including sequences of minuscule letters which may be early musical notations.

These musical notations have given rise to the theory that the structure was used to accommodate a choir, perhaps consisting of the younger novices. Another recurring idea is that of the ‘Westwork’ as the seat of the emperor or king. Although this theory has proven extremely influential, there is very little evidence for it, apart from the fact that Charlemagne is believed to have sat on the western gallery in Aachen. The palatine chapel, however, is very different ideologically, functionally and architecturally from the ‘Westwork’ of an abbey church. Other proposed uses of Corvey’s western structure are that of baptistery and parish

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54 The dating of the Westwork will be discussed in more detail below.
55 See various articles in Poeschke (ed.), *Sinopien und Stuck*. Although a very useful book nevertheless, it is a shame that the authors writing in this collection obviously did not talk to each other beforehand, or could not reach agreement on certain crucial matters such as the function of the Westwork; see e.g. the discrepancies between the articles of Brenk and Staubach. Brenk’s article is printed first. He concludes, after a careful historiography and analysis, that Corvey’s Westwork primarily fulfilled a liturgical function and that there is no evidence for a throne for the emperor on the Empore. Brenk, “Wer sitzt auf der Empore?” Staubach, whose article on the decorative program of the Westwork comes immediately after Brenk’s, is apparently oblivious to his arguments and goes on to assume a ‘Thronfunction’, ‘Herrschaftssymbolik’ and a relationship with the Palatine Chapel. Staubach, “Das Corveyer Dekorationsprogramm und die Spätkarolingische Herrschaftsikonographie”. See also McClendon’s overview of this discussion and his analysis of the Westwork of Corvey: *Origins*, pp. 184-193.
56 Kreusch, *Beobachtungen an der Westanlage*.
57 Fuchs, ”Entstehung und Zweckbestimmung der Westwerke”; Von Schönfeld de Reyes, *Westwerkstudien*, pp. 55-61.
58 Brenk, ”Wer sitzt auf der Empore?”. Möbius, *Westwerkstudien*. Nevertheless, Aachen may of course have been a source of inspiration.
church. These uses are not necessarily mutually exclusive and a multifunctional purpose would also be possible in the case of Corvey. The sheer monumentality of the structure – its size, the quality of the design and decorations, the way the space is perceived upon entering – however clearly points towards representational purposes, which must have been at least one of the reasons for its construction.

In some of Lobbedey’s plans a predecessor to the Westwork, a freestanding structure in the shape of a sort of gatehouse or triumphal arch appears. Due to the limited – practically non-existent – information on this discovery, it is impossible to evaluate this building. It has been claimed that the inscription now visible on the exterior facade of the Westwork belonged to it. The plaque is now believed to be in secondary usage, but there are no indications for its previous location. The phase I church was already preceded by an atrium (at the eastern end of which this freestanding arch or gatehouse may or may not have stood), which was renewed after the construction of the later Westwork. Both atria were apparently at least 34 m long and as wide as the church and Westwork respectively. The existence of a gatehouse similar to the one in Lorsch at the other, western end of the atrium has also been suggested.

Little is known of the other buildings that were part of the monastic complex. The location of the baroque cloister, to the north of the church, seems to re-

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59 Von Schönfeld de Reyes, *Westwerkstudien*, p. 52, with references. The main problem with theories about the Westbau functioning as a baptistery or parish church is that these interpretations do not explain the Corvey’s upper storeys or their luxurious decorations.

60 Von Schönfeld de Reyes has rightfully pointed out that the multifunctionality-card has often been played as a last resort, masking the fact that no single function can be substantiated. Yet as she has also herself admitted, one of the major problems in the ‘Westwerkforschung’ is the idea that we must identify a single building type with a single function, whereas reality is much more complex. The Westwork comes in many shapes, and I see no reason why it cannot also have housed many functions.

61 Lobbedey is careful not to stress this; only in one instance does he refer to the western end of the church. The position of the western nave wall is indicated by a find that was uncovered immediately to the west of the Westwork’s easternmost wall. Lobbedey, “Neue Grabungsergebnisse”, p. 33.

fect an earlier situation.63 There is evidence for buildings at this site that precede the construction of the Westwork, and as we have seen, the phase II transept arms were also preceded by earlier buildings. In the eastern end of the baroque cloister the remains of underfloor heating have been found, indicating that the warming room was situated here.64 This points towards the presence of a (square) cloister with buildings arranged around a central open space, located to the north of the abbey church. The presence of doors on the first floor of the Westwork indicate that it was surrounded by buildings that were at least two storeys high.65 This suggests that the monastic buildings were not confined to the area around the cloister. Stephan is convinced that the entire complex was surround by a wall, a fortification, even, but I do not necessarily share his conviction that this was a standard component of Carolingian monasteries in border regions.66

Several other churches and chapels are mentioned by later sources, such as Johannes Letzner, Corvey’s late-sixteenth-century historian.67 The existence of these in the early Middle Ages is uncertain, although for example the dedication of a church to St. Martin points to a West-Frankish source of inspiration that was most present shortly after the foundation of the monastery.68 Moreover, as we have seen, Corvey’s mother house Corbie also disposed of a church for St. Martin. In 867 another church, located a short distance from the monastery, was dedicated to St. Paul. This church has been located to the south-west of the abbey church, next to the river, but that is as far as our knowledge of it stretches.69 The nearby village of

63 There seems to have been no necessity to place the claustral buildings on the north of the church. The decision to place them here after all (as opposed to the allegedly ‘standard’ or preferred position to the south of the church) has been seen as being inspired by Corbie, despite the lack of evidence for the architecture of the mother convent. Cf. Stephan, *Studien zur Siedlungsentwicklung* 1, p. 175.
68 The church in Hethis (the first attempt at a Saxon monastery by the monks of Corbie) was also dedicated to St. Martin.
Höxter had already disposed of a church, later dedicated to St. Kilian, before the foundation of the monastery.\textsuperscript{70} The existence of these two churches in the vicinity of the monastery makes it unlikely that the abbey church functioned as the main (parish) church for the \textit{familia} of the monastery and other lay people living in the area, for they had churches of their own.

The written evidence for both the second phase of the abbey church and for the Westwork is extremely limited. The only source that really tells us anything about construction works in the second half of the ninth century are the so-called Easter Annals. These were started, probably in the 860’s, by a writer ‘A’ in the margins of an Anglo-Saxon Easter table, hence their name. The Annals’ editor Friedrich Prinz has distinguished four ninth-century hands, A-D. Each writer has a distinct agenda of his own, and C seems to be the only one who is really interested in the commemoration of Corvey’s building history. Unfortunately, C edited the Annals so rigorously that modern editors deemed him untrustworthy. He has erased some of his precursor’s remarks in order to create space for information he deemed more important, and replaced these remarks elsewhere. Some of his own notes, however, have also been erased, either by himself (for example the first mention of the dedication of the church of St. Paul in 861, which he then placed at 863 instead), or by one of the later writers.\textsuperscript{71}

The Easter Annals offer unambiguous information about a fire that broke out in the abbey church after it was hit by lightning in 870: ‘basilica ictu tonitrui fulmine percussa ad orientem exarsit’, and the start of construction works on the ‘trium turrium’ three years later.\textsuperscript{72} These ‘three towers’ are generally believed to refer to the Westwork, and its dedication – which suggests the presence of an altar – is recorded for 885.\textsuperscript{73} Both the fire and the dating of the Westwork are difficult

\textsuperscript{70} König, Rabe & Streich (eds.), \textit{Höxter: Geschichte einer westfälischen Stadt}, pp. 48-54.
\textsuperscript{71} Prinz explains some of C’s ‘mistakes’ (I wonder if we should really see them all as such) by suggesting he had trouble reading Roman numerals. Prinz, \textit{Die Corveyer Annalen}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Annales Corbeienses}, ed. Prinz, \textit{Die Corveyer Annalen}, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{73} Prinz, \textit{Die Corveyer Annalen}.
to reconcile with the construction of the phase II choir and Lobbedey’s insistence that it was built before the Westwork. This assertion is based on the discovery of a nave floor which was disrupted by the construction of the Westwork. According to Lobbedey, the floor of the nave was renewed along with the rebuilding of the choir and crypt (phase II). If this floor was disrupted by the construction of the Westwork, this would place phase II – again according to Lobbedey – without a doubt prior to the building of the Westwork. This is where the fire becomes problematic, for if it did in fact burn down the eastern end of the church, as the Easter Annals claim, this would have been the impetus for the rebuilding. Although it may be theoretically possible that the choir was rebuilt in the three years between the fire and the start of the Westwork, it seems not only very fast, but also rather illogical not to combine both in one construction phase if they were both built within three years. The new floor would in this scenario almost immediately after it was finished have been damaged by the Westwork, which would make it more likely that phase II came about well before 870. This however presents us with another problem: in that case we would have no indications of rebuilding after the fire of 870, despite the explicit reference to the burning of the eastern end of the church. From this and the lack of archaeological evidence for the fire we should perhaps conclude that it was not as devastating as the Annals suggest, and that it had little effect on the building history of the abbey church.

Until now, no written source has been found which refers to the start of the rebuilding or the dedication of the new choir and crypt (phase II). This is remarkable considering the importance of this part of the church, which probably remained in use until the twelfth century. The absence of a textual reference to a building phase would of course not be unprecedented and need not be disquieting per se, but there is one possibility that has so far not been included in the discus-

74 Lobbedey, “Neue Grabungsergebnisse”, p. 36.
75 Lobbedey glosses over the fire. He hardly mentions it, and does not reflect on the conflict between his dating of phase II and the fire; nor does he mention any material traces of the fire he may have come across.
76 Stephan, Studien zur Siedlungsentwicklung, p. 169.
sion. For the year 867, a ‘Dedicatio Novae ecclesiae’ was entered into the Annals, but it was later deleted. According to the editor of the Annals, Prinz, the remark should therefore be disregarded, for he assumes it was another failed attempt at writing down the dedication of St. Paul’s church (which writer ‘C’ moved from 861 to 863). However, if Prinz’s assessment is not correct, this may be a hint at the dedication of the phase II choir. It is possible that writer C was not confused with the church of St. Paul at all, and that he did in fact record the second dedication of the (new) abbey church for 867. This would date the phase II choir roughly to the 860s, which fits in well with Lobbedey’s assertion that it precedes the Westwork.

Even if we disregard the possible damage done by the fire, it still seems remarkable that the phase II rebuilding, which also entailed the renovation of the nave floor, and the Westwork are chronologically close yet unrelated to each other. This could be explained by a change of plan or the becoming available of more resources. However, it seems slightly odd if the floor of the nave was indeed damaged by the construction of the Westwork when it was still brand-new. This seems especially unlikely if both were initiated by the same abbot, Adalgar (856-877). Yet attributing the phase II choir to Warin (831-856) would have him build a new choir within twelve years of the dedication of the former one, which is very quick.

On the basis of the available evidence, the most likely options for the dating of phase II seems to be the following. Either it was built during the abbacy of Adalgar, but before the 870 fire, and perhaps dedicated in 867. Or – in which case we must ignore Lobbedey’s analysis of the nave flooring – it was built after the Westwork, in the late ninth or early tenth century. This concludes our overview of the available material and textual evidence. We now turn to an analysis of this material.

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Prinz, Die Corveyer Annalen.
SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL PROGRESS

Corvey’s built environment was throughout the ninth century more or less constantly in motion. In this sense, its development in the first century of its existence was similar to that of other monasteries that we have seen, such as Reichenau. The interpretation of the various phases and of the early building history of Corvey in its entirety is severely hampered on the one hand by the problems concerning the dating of the various phases and on the other by the limited reliability of the reconstructions. Despite these problems, a more thorough analysis of the site’s architecture than has so far been undertaken is possible. This section is dedicated to such an analysis, in which the various building phases are reviewed both independently and as parts of a bigger picture: the genesis of a monastery in the first century of its existence.

As has been said, building work in Corvey officially started in 822, but it is possible that the first monks found temporary shelter in older buildings at the site, which would explain the rapid succession of events in the Translatio sancti Viti. While the abbey church was still under construction, the relics of Vitus arrived. These came to Corvey in 836 through the efforts of Hilduin of Saint-Denis. The arrival of the relics presumably prompted the change of plan that resulted in the addition of the first crypt, consisting of a small, partially subterranean, apsidal space. The church in its entirety was dedicated in 844, when the Annals of Corvey reference the ‘dedicatio ecclesiae nouae corbeia’. The church was, notwithstanding the presence of the relics of Vitus, dedicated to Stephen. This is demonstrated by several charters as well as a later addition to the dedication notice in the Annals, which mentions Stephen. His relics, formerly kept at the palatine chapel in Aachen, had been granted to the monastery by the emperor at its foundation. The relics of Vi-
tus would then presumably have been placed in the crypt independently, instead of being connected to the main altar. That the crypt in which the relics of Vitus were placed was accessible only through a single entrance which was a mere 70 cm wide begs the question of its function. It is highly unlikely that it was built to facilitate access to the relics for large groups of lay people, and its dimensions (5.5 x 2.35m) even exclude the possibility of the whole congregation gathering here. This makes one wonder, however, why the two corridors offered access to the crypt chamber from the nave. Their construction had considerable implications, since it elevated the choir far beyond the floor-level of the crypt. The tentative nature of the reconstruction does not allow for the drawing of far-reaching conclusions. It is possible that there were for example structural reasons or other circumstances leading to the choice in favour of this set-up, which are not discernible at the moment; it is equally possible that the reconstruction is not entirely correct. For now, this unusual shape may serve as a reminder that we should take care not to link the presence of these kinds of entrance corridors with large numbers of (expected) pilgrims too directly.

The design of the church is relatively simple, which is what we would expect from the first building phase of a monastery. Most remarkable are its dimensions and proportions. The choir space was relatively large, suitable to accommodate the entire community, which may be reconstructed anywhere between 60 and 90 monks. And although it was nothing compared to contemporary Fulda, the nave was also of a decent size. As we have seen before, it is dangerous to draw too many conclusions from the dimensions of a church, since its size could be the outcome of a number of factors such as the availability of resources, the size of the community, the available terrain and the expected number of visitors. This being the case, we should be cautious not to overestimate the significance of the church's dimensions.


81 This is a rough estimation based on the monks’ lists. It is difficult to determine at when the monks listed here entered the monastery and when they died. Moreover, the size of the community fluctuated during the time the phase I church was in use. See also Stephan, Studien zur Siedlungsentwicklung, pp. 321-322; Honselmann, "Alte Corveyer Mönchslisten"; Honselmann & Schütte, Die alten Mönchslisten und die Traditionen von Corvey.
said, Covery’s phase I stands out among other first-phase abbey churches because it is relatively big, luxuriously furnished and well-planned. This may be due to its relatively late date – most abbeys went through their first major building phase in the eighth century – but also to its high-ranking sponsors. The only part of the abbey church that is relatively small are its side-aisles: at 2 m they are quite narrow in comparison to the nave which was ca. 10 m wide.

In light of the ideal circumstances surrounding the foundation of the monastery, with the economic and political support of the emperor and its powerful mother house, the time it took to finish this phase of the abbey church – twenty-two years – may be viewed as relatively long. This has led Hans-Georg Stephan to argue that the church dedicated in 844 might have been the phase II choir. In that case, we would have no dedication notice for the first church. Although it is appealing to attribute the rebuilding to the arrival of the relics of Vitus in 836, this would leave us with no explanation for the construction of the first crypt. The fact that it was initiated shortly after the construction of the rest of the choir makes it especially likely that this happened for a specific reason, in this case the advent of relics. Moreover, I do not agree with Stephan’s assertion that a building period of twenty-two years is extraordinarily long and would be undesirable. For one, the monastery was in its initial stages and was thus lacking infrastructure, resources etc. Secondly, along with the decision to richly decorate the church with mural paintings, inlaid floors and incrustations right from the start must have come the realisation that this could delay the headway in building, which was apparently not seen as an objection. The unstable political situation may also have played a part in the prolonged building period of the church. Moreover, it could already be used before the official dedication; a cross had already been set up at the site of the altar by the bishop of Paderborn in 822 – a situation similar to Boniface’s dedication of the first altar in Fulda before the construction of Sturmi’s church.82

Between the two building phases of the choir, the living quarters and other buildings surrounding the church gradually took shape, and were from time to

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82 See chapter 3.
time expanded or rebuilt. There are indications for the presence of graves in the first atrium, but later on a monastic cemetery and accompanying church of St. Martin existed elsewhere. Outside of the monastery itself the church of St. Paul and the village church of Höxter were to be found.

Corvey’s phase I church attests a need for an abbey church in which the monks could celebrate the liturgy together, thereby strengthening their sense of community, but that also had more than enough space for others. The costly furnishings show that the abbey church was from the very start more than a functional gathering place meant only for the monks themselves: it should also propagate that the monastery was here to stay as well as express the success of the Christian faith in Saxony. Within the next few decades, however, the church was in need of a makeover. This is not surprising given the development the monastery had, in the meantime, gone through. After the fall of Wala in 830, the new abbot Warin had succeeded in making the monastery increasingly wealthy and independent as well as in giving it an important role in the northern mission, not to mention the rapidly increasing fame and importance of the monastic school.

Presumably twenty to forty years (or more) after the dedication of the first church, a new crypt and choir were therefore built. One of the reasons for the rebuilding may have been a lack of space: the choir area and crypt are markedly bigger, and the monks’ lists attest to a growing community. As we have seen before, however, lack of space is hardly ever the sole reason for a rebuilding. Moreover, the phase I nave, which continued to be in use, apparently still met the demands and the new choir proper was not bigger but smaller than the old one. The most obvious major change with regard to the old situation is an increasing differentiation. The choir area was subdivided and depending on the position of the altar, either the old or the new choir room functioned as the monk’s choir. If Lobbedey is right to reconstruct apses for the transept arms, these would also house altars.

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84 See above.
85 Wiesemeyer, "Corbie und die Entwicklung der Corveyer Klosterschule"; Stüwer, "Corvey".
as would all eastern extensions of the crypt. This multiplication of the number of altars is in line with a development we have seen earlier, for example in Reichenau and Fulda, although Corvey is rather late. Again, this may be due to the growth of the community or the number of donations, which would presumably lead to a growth in the number of private masses.\textsuperscript{86}

The most obvious explanation for the extension of the crypt would be the increase of the veneration of relics in Corvey. Stephan and Vitus have already been discussed. In 864, they were accompanied by the virgin Liutrud, and in 891 also by Justinus.\textsuperscript{87} Despite of or due to the continuous supply of relics, none of these saints gained the upper hand. Even in the \textit{Translation} of Vitus there is room for other relics which people came to venerate on Vitus’ feast day.\textsuperscript{88} A single relic cult does not seem to form in Corvey, instead, more emphasis is placed on the presence of a variety of important relics.\textsuperscript{89} Both the phase I and phase II crypts also do not betray a singular focus on one individual saint, for example by connecting a grave to the main altar. Instead, both crypts form a holy space that was separated from the abbey church, where a multitude of relics could find appropriate accommodation and attest to the presence of the divine in Saxony.

That the attitude towards relics in Corvey was different from that in other, Frankish, monasteries, is corroborated by the \textit{Translationes} of Vitus and Pusinna.\textsuperscript{90} The \textit{Translatio sancti Viti}, discussed above, may have served as a source of inspiration for the \textit{Translatio sanctae Pusinnae}, written in Herford, possibly by a nun, between 862 and 875. The relics were brought from Châlons-sur-Marne to the monastery in Herford in 860. In both texts, the conversion of the Saxons is an important theme. They present this in the context of the coming of the Christian faith to oth-

\textsuperscript{86} Corvey reached a peak in its economic growth in the second half of the ninth century. Stephan, \textit{Studien zur Siedlungsentwicklung} 2, p. 333.
\textsuperscript{87} Honselmann, "Reliquientranslationen nach Sachsen".
\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Translatio s. Viti} c. 27, ed. Schmale-Ott, \textit{Translatio sancti Viti}, pp. 62.
\textsuperscript{89} Krüger, "Die Corveyer Patronen".
er nations. Although Charlemagne played an important part in the conversion, and the violence involved is not downplayed, the Saxon nobility is portrayed as being rightfully proud of their heritage and noble in their sponsorship of the new faith once it was accepted. They were, according to both Lives, not simply coerced into the new faith by the Franks. This is corroborated by modern-day historians, who point towards Charlemagne’s double strategy: on the one hand preaching with ‘iron tongue’, resulting in the Verden massacre in which 4500 Saxons were killed, on the other slowly incorporating the Saxon nobility into the administration. Following the baptism of Widukind, sponsored by Charlemagne, in 785, rebellions were restricted to the Northern part of Saxony; a sign of the waning resistance against the Franks and perhaps also against their beliefs. Charlemagne further stimulated the admission of Saxons in the church by sending Saxon hostages and prisoners of war to West-Frankish monasteries. The presence of Saxon monks, eager to assist in the foundation of a monastery in their homeland, in Corbie is attested by the Translatio Sancti Viti.

Due to the speedy and perhaps partly involuntary submission to Christianity in Saxony— at least among the lower classes – it is understandable that the faith may at first have been somewhat superficial and that there was a strong desire for the tangible presence of the sacred. Relics were therefore imported into Saxony in great numbers, many of them coming not from Rome, but from (Western) Francia, as did the new faith. The wave of relic exports to Saxony was a physical, tangible expression of the spread of the faith. The Translatio sancti Viti and the Translatio sanctae Pusinnae present the advent of the relics and the working of miracles as signs that Saxony was now an integral part of christianitas. Although they are valuable sources providing information about the attitudes towards relics that existed in Corvey and Herford, we must not forget that the texts’ goal was also to

91 Lampen, “Sachsenkriege”.
92 Translatio s. Viti c. 3, ed. Schmale-Ott, Translatio sancti Viti, p. 36. Also Semmler, “Corvey und Herford”, p. 291.
93 Although I have not done a comparative study on the origins of imported relics, it seems to me that in Saxony we see significantly more imports from especially northern Gaul than in other regions.
contribute to a wider debate on Saxon identity and that they also had a political part to play.\textsuperscript{94}

A comparison of both texts, as has been undertaken by David Appleby, illustrates the spiritual progress made by the Saxons in the three decades that separate them: the author of the \textit{Translatio} of Pusinna no longer deems it necessary to recount the miracles worked by the relics, for the faith of her audience was sufficiently strong to no longer need proof of the sacred at work in Saxony.\textsuperscript{95} These Translations present the view from within Saxony; a different picture is sketched for example by the \textit{Translatio S. Alexandri}, an account of a translation from Rome to Wildeshausen which happened in 851, written in Fulda in the 860s. Here, the relics are expressly requested so that through their signs and virtues the Saxons would be converted from pagan rite and superstition to the true religion.\textsuperscript{96}

The audience of the Translations of Vitus and Pussina consisted mainly of the religious of Corvey and Herford. The advanced level of Christianity present in the Saxon monasteries shortly after their foundation has been explained, in the case of Corvey at least, through its connections with Corbie.\textsuperscript{97} Not only was the mother house always present in the background; many Corvey monks were also trained there. That they reached a high theological level of understanding so quickly may also have to do with the monks’ family background: the vast majority of them came from the Saxon nobility, which had, generally speaking, adopted the Christian faith sooner than the lower strata of society.

Charlemagne had placed a number of young Saxons in Corbie, and once they had returned to their homeland, they formed a personal bond between both abbeys. This close connection with Corbie was an important factor in Corvey’s development, which facilitated its maturation. The mother house provided eco-

\textsuperscript{94} Shuler, "The Saxons within Carolingian Christendom".

\textsuperscript{95} Appleby, \textit{Spiritual progress}. Other factors were at play as well, these will be discussed below in the section on Herford.

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Translatio S. Alexandri}; ed. Pertz, MGH SS II, p 674-681, c. 4; Honselmann, "Die Annahme des Christentums", p. 214.

\textsuperscript{97} Appleby, "Spiritual progress", pp. 609-610.
nomic and intellectual backing and put its valuable contacts to use for the new foundation. At the same time, however, Corvey could, from its inception, count on local support, amongst others thanks to the Saxon monks who were trained in Corbie. The family of one of the oblates in Corbie, Thiodradus, for example made available the site on which the monastery was founded. These local contacts were with the higher strata of Saxon society and although Corvey would eventually be an important point of support for missionaries, it was not founded as a missionary outpost itself. The relics in Corvey were therefore not in the first place intended to inspire the average Saxon through visits to the grave, the recounting of miracle stories etc. What mattered was simply the relic’s presence: they were physical proof of Saxony’s being a part of the Christian empire, and at the same time they made the monastery, like Fulda, a centre of holiness, thus sanctifying the surrounding area.

The *Translations* testify to this attitude towards relics, but so does the architecture of the abbey church. The phase I crypt, which can, as we have seen, not be explained functionally, may have been intended as a sort of reliquary. Something similar has been argued for the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris – a building of an entirely different time and function. Sainte-Chapelle was built in the 1240s as both a palace chapel and a place to house the Crown of Thorns, which Louis IX had procured from the emperor of Constantinople. Its identification as a monumental reliquary (turned inside-out, if you will) is, apart from its function, based primarily on the similarities between the chapel and goldsmith’s work, which are acknowledged by contemporary sources. Something similar is visible in Corvey. The first crypt consisted of a small yet lavishly decorated ‘box’ added to the abbey church, more

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98 Corvey also adopted Corbie’s liturgical uses for a large part. Stüwer, “Corvey”, p. 244.
99 *Translatio s. Viti* c. 3, ed. Schmale-Ott, *Translatio sancti Viti*, pp. 36.
100 Saxon society and the distribution of wealth and power were of course in motion in the period after the Frankish conquest, as witnesses e.g. the Stellinga uprising. Röckelein, *Reliquientranslationen nach Sachsen*, pp. 72-76; Semmler, “Corvey und Herford”, p. 305-307.

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or less separate from it. It was meant to house relics and was only accessible to a small audience (the monks and perhaps religious and secular dignitaries).

The second building phase is more difficult to analyse in this vein since its reconstruction is uncertain. Apparently, only the crypt and choir area were in need of a renovation; the nave still sufficed. The phase II crypt has been studied by Charles McClendon in the light of the so-called apse échelon that emerged around the same time in e.g. Saint-Philibert-de-Grandlieu (836-847) and Saint-Germain in Auxerre (841-859). Although the simultaneous appearance of these elaborate outer crypts certainly points towards a general trend, there are many differences between these examples and Corvey, both architecturally and in terms of context. A crucial difference is the absence of a single (founder) saint in Corvey. Here, the crypt is not working towards a culmination in the shape of the grave of the founder. The design does not attempt to present the saints whose relics were present in a hierarchical order, but rather places them side by side. The whole crypt breathes the presence of the divine here. Yet for whom was this message intended? Cynthia Hahn has claimed that access to crypts was very much restricted. Although I do not agree with her assumption that this was the case for Carolingian crypts in general, I think she is right when it comes to these elaborate outer crypts. The point of the creation of separate spaces in the crypt was not only to have multiple rooms to showcase relics, but also to place altars, where the monks could celebrate masses and halt during processions. As in Steinbach and Soissons, the crypt was in the first place meant for the community itself, not for lay visitors. The extension of the choir also indicates that the focus of this building phase was to ameliorate those parts of the church that were liturgically most important. Yet other than in Steinbach and Soissons, the crypt was also a tool to impress the happy few who were allowed to enter it. In the crypt, they would presumably be treated to a spectacle appealing to all the senses: reliquaries embellished with gold and silver, figurative

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102 Incidentally, St. Germain also makes an extremely interesting case-study for ninth-century architecture. See Saint-Germain d’Auxerre.
103 See also Hahn, "Seeing and believing", pp. 1101-1104.
wall paintings, precious textiles, chanting and incense. That it was important for the abbey to impress high-ranking visitors becomes clear from the subsequent construction of the Westwork. Even though we cannot be sure of the exact uses of this structure, upon first sight it is clear that it is meant to make an impression through its height and towers, the juxtaposition of low and dark spaces with the high central room filled with light as well as its decorations. The atrium preceding the Westwork, surrounded with double-storey buildings, fulfilled a similar function: it was less a gathering place than a grand reception space.

This function of the atrium ties in with the exclusive character of the monastery that the sources evoke. The monks’ lists tell us that the majority of monks came from the Saxon upper classes, and it is assumed that prospective monks needed at least to be free men. In the 840s, Paschasius Radbertus, raised by Adalhard and Wala’s sister and their successor as abbot in Corbie, felt compelled to defend the monastery’s selective admission policy as well as its riches. The monks were allowed to keep most of their property, which entailed a closer connection with the outside world than was the case in most other monasteries. Due to the strong relationship with the court, the abbot’s involvement in politics as well as the mission, the monastery already displayed a certain openness to the world. This openness, however, was limited to those in high positions.

Considering the fact that most of Corvey’s initial population came from Corbie, it seems logical that they would continue the old abbey’s traditions and set-up of the monastery. Stüwer has claimed that the Gallican liturgy was celebrated in Corvey, and that West-Frankish influences prevailed over Roman traditions, which he sees e.g. in litanies. Even if Corvey’s liturgical uses betrayed distinct influences from Corbie, this is not to say that the same goes for its architecture.

104 Stephan, Studien zur Siedlungsentwicklung, p. 320-321, with references. See also Kasten, Adalhard, pp. 155-158. Also Sudhoff, “Geschichte des Klosters”.

105 Stüwer, “Corvey”, p. 244.

A more penetrating inquiry into Corvey’s liturgical practices could offer material that is also interesting with regard to the architecture of the abbey church, especially in the light of the idea that there were three choirs, one of whom stood in the Westwork. See above. This idea originally stems from Effmann, Die Kirche der Abtei Corvey, p. 130.
This has however been claimed regularly, most recently by Stephan who states that for the phase II rebuilding ‘westfränkische Bauideen und Vorbilder bestimmend waren’.\textsuperscript{106} There are indeed aspects of the architecture of the complex that indicate influences from West-Frankish monasteries, such as the establishment of various cult sites from the very beginning of the monastery’s history as well as the dedications of one of these churches to St. Martin.\textsuperscript{107} It is however by no means certain how long these influences lasted and how much impact they had on issues that could less easily be transmitted from one place to another, such as the design of (parts of) a church.

Although Corvey’s early abbots and monks may have come from this sphere of influence, the craftsmen employed on the site would more likely have been shaped by the local context. This influence is however difficult to reconstruct as we have far too little contemporary material for comparison, both local and from northern Gaul. As we have seen before, it is a challenge to find out anything about matters such as the division of labour, the training of craftsmen and design practices on the early medieval building site. Not just the artisans may have been local, so were many of the monks. Even those that were trained in Corbie must have been proud of their heritage, as the \textit{Translationes} discussed above make clear. Moreover, the monastery was located in Saxony, sponsored by local families and provided support to the mission among the Saxons; it also grew and went through a development of its own since its foundation. All of this does not make it self-evident that the monks in Corvey blindly followed West-Frankish examples. Rather, it was torn two ways.

The gradual development of the monastery also becomes visible if we compare the two building phases and note the changes made to the complex over the course of the ninth century. The first church was of a considerable size and was luxuriously furnished. Right from the start, the monastery disposed of substantial

\textsuperscript{106} Stephan, \textit{Studien zur Siedlungsentwicklung} 1, p. 170.

\textsuperscript{107} That West-Frankish monasteries generally had more than one church, whereas East-Frankish communities focused mainly on the abbey church is not only a geographic, but also a chronologic matter: the western communities were generally founded earlier.
means and decided to employ these for the construction of an impressive abbey church. In this sense, Corvey differed from other monasteries, most of which were founded in the eighth century, which started with a more modest abbey church. Corvey’s phase I did however have few differentiated spaces: nave and side-aisles, choir, which suggests a limited number of functions and possibly also of user-groups. In a second stage of the building works of phase I, a small outer crypt was added, which added a function: the veneration of relics.

Lobbedey’s reconstruction of the phase II rebuilding suggests that the requirements for the abbey church changed relatively soon after the dedication of the first church. That is, if the cross-shaped central chapel and the extending arms were in fact built in the ninth century. Whatever its date, the new church evinces an increasing specialisation. The new and elaborate outer crypt fulfilled a dual function, both creating additional altar spaces and a spectacular entourage for the presentation of relics in Saxony, in which holy places were sparse. After the demolition of the phase I crypt corridors, it was possible to lower the level of the choir considerably, which tied nave and choir more closely together.108

Like the other monasteries we have scrutinized in the foregoing, Corvey gradually expanded, rather than being entirely planned from the start. Like the church, the atrium was also rebuilt within a few decades, another indication that the built environment developed along with the rest of the monastery, and that it could be adapted relatively soon after construction if changing circumstances demanded it. If the rebuilding of the choir did in fact take place before the construction of the Westwork, which seems most likely, than this indicates were the priorities lay: first the choir, then the Westwork, and eventually the atrium. At the centre of attention were those parts of the complex that were liturgically most important. We encountered a similar sequence of events in other monasteries such as Fulda and Reichenau, where the rebuilding of the (eastern parts of) the abbey church preceded other building activities.

One might presume that along with their consuetudines and liturgical tra-

108 Lobbedey, "Neue Grabungsergebnisse", p. 35.
ditions, the monks from Corbie brought their architectural traditions to Corvey. Apart from the existence of more than one church and some of the dedications, we have however encountered little indications for this. The next section of this chapter revolves around the convent of Herford, which maintained close ties with both Corvey and Notre-Dame in Soissons. Let us see if an architectural connection between a novel foundation and its established examples is visible in this case.

4.4 HERFORD: DEGENDERING MONASTIC ARCHITECTURE

Adalhard and Wala were also closely involved in the foundation of the convent of Herford, which offers me an opportunity, by way of exception, to cast a brief look at the architecture of a community of women. The foundation history of the convent of Herford is contested. Tradition has it that it was founded around 789 by a Saxon nobleman. The nobleman, Waltger, equipped the convent from his own possessions and put one of his relatives, Suala, in charge. This situation is said to have lasted for roughly three decades, after which Waltger granted the monastery to the emperor, who in turn entrusted it to Wala and Adalhard. Alternatively, Herford may have been founded directly by the emperor in 823. The latter scenario is nowadays thought less likely. After its conveyance to Corvey, Herford was reformed after the model of Notre-Dame in Soissons, led by Wala and Adalhard’s

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109 The most important source for Waltger’s foundation of Herford is the thirteenth-century Vita Waltgeri. Wigandus presbyter, Vita s. Waltgeri, ed. and transl. Raddatz, Vita sancti Waltgeri.
111 The Waltger-tradition is certainly lacking a solid underpinning, but so does the theory that Louis the Pious founded the convent. For one, it seems very odd that the local historiography remembers Waltger instead of the emperor as the founder. Cf. Lobbedey, “Zur archäologischen Erforschung westfälischer Frauenklöster”, pp. 335-6.
sister, from which a number of nuns was also sent to Saxony.\textsuperscript{113}

Herford’s early building history cannot, despite wide-ranging excavations, be determined with certainty.\textsuperscript{114} The earliest phase (phase II) consists of a Christian cemetery in which the remains of men, women and children were found, along with unidentified wooden buildings, which have all been dated in the second half of the eighth and first half of the ninth century.\textsuperscript{115} Thereupon stone buildings were put up (phase IIIa), one of which forms the first building phase at the site of the present church. It is a hall ca. 10 m wide and at least 41 m long. The axis of this structure was preserved in its successors. The place and orientation of the building presuppose that it should be identified as a church, whereas its dating (before 840) suggests that this is the first church of the convent, built either before or shortly after 823, either by Waltger or as commissioned by Louis the Pious.\textsuperscript{116} The long and narrow space was subdivided by walls that stood square on the longitudinal axis, perhaps demarcating areas for lay people and nuns, or even entirely separating two churches placed behind each other on an east-west axis.\textsuperscript{117} Only the central part of the building has been uncovered; its eastern and western ending are unknown. The same period saw the construction of the eastern block of what became


\textsuperscript{114} An extensive survey of all finds is given by Matthias Wemhoff, who was in charge of the three campaigns undertaken in 1988-90; \textit{Das Damenstift Herford} (1993). Previous work had been done by Uwe Lobbedey, in 1965-66, 1972 and 1975. Lobbedey does not concur with the way in which Wemhoff reproduced and interpreted his finds: Lobbedey, review of Matthias Wemhoff, \textit{Das Damenstift Herford}, pp. 131-136. I will nevertheless rely on Wemhoff in the following.

\textsuperscript{115} Wemhoff, \textit{Das Damenstift Herford} 1, pp. 12-17.

\textsuperscript{116} Wemhoff, \textit{Das Damenstift Herford} 1, p. 19. Wemhoff also suggests an alternative, which is to interpret the eastern part of the building as part of a church: ”als westlichen Raumteil einer mit einem Emporenbau versehenen Kirche”. The western part of the structures would then serve profane purposes. This option seems to me much less likely.

\textsuperscript{117} NB The reconstruction presented here is very different from Uwe Lobbedey’s earlier reconstruction, see Lobbedey, ”Zur archäologischen Erforschung westfälischer Frauenklöster”, p. 338.
a fully-fledged, if somewhat irregular, cloister during the next building phase (phase IIIb).

This later stage entailed the rebuilding of both church and living quarters (fig. 4.4). On the basis of relatively limited evidence, these have been reconstructed by Matthias Wemhoff, who warns us that his reconstruction 'bildet, darauf sei ausdrücklich hingewiesen, einen Diskussionsvorschlag, der erst bei Kenntnis einer größeren Zahl von Kirchenbauten des 9. Jahrhunderts richtig eingeordnet werden kann'.\textsuperscript{118} Wemhoff’s warning should be taken to heart when looking at his ground plans, which sometimes seem to suggest more certainty than the finds allow.\textsuperscript{119}

Phase IIIb has been tentatively reconstructed as a basilica, partly built on the foundations of the old church. It seems to have been encompassed by an eastern and a western transept which did not protrude beyond the outer nave walls.\textsuperscript{120} The eastern end of the church is again unknown, but a ‘Westanlage’ has been revealed.\textsuperscript{121} The foundations of the old church came to support the southern outer wall and the northern nave wall of the church. The width of the old, single-aisled nave, was thus filled up by the new nave and southern side-aisle, whereas the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{118} Wemhoff, \textit{Das Damenstift Herford} 1, p. 26.
\item \textsuperscript{119} I believe we should be extremely cautious about reconstructing buildings on the basis of their peer, so it is doubtful if knowledge of other ninth-century churches would indeed allow us to create a better reconstruction of Herford, as Wemhoff more or less implies.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Evidence for the transepts consists of the absence of foundations for the southern wall of nave in these areas. Wemhoff, \textit{Das Damenstift Herford} 1, p. 26.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Wemhoff presupposes that the Westanlage continued further West, but I cannot see what he bases this idea on. Perhaps on the Ottonian Westwork in Herford?
\end{itemize}
new northern aisle was added beyond the old nave wall. The new middle aisle was therefore more narrow than the old nave, which would suggest that the rebuilding was brought about by considerations other than a general lack of space. The side-aisles are moreover unequal: the southern one is ca. 1 m narrower than the northern one. Once again, this shows that regularity or symmetry was apparently deemed of less importance than we tend to assume. Herford is one of the cases in which relatively much is known about the 'Klosteranlage', but nevertheless the exact building history of the claustral buildings as well as their shape and use cannot be reconstructed. The easternmost building mentioned above has been attested by several, albeit fragmentary, remains. Its floor level was lower than that of the cloister walk to its east, and it may have had an upper floor. Wemhoff suggests that the dormitory and perhaps refectory were located here. The western equivalent of this building – whose exact floorplan is unknown – was at first made of wattle and daub, which may nevertheless have given the appearance of stone. The cloister walks were made of wooden posts, yet the evidence for them is quite limited, as is the case for the northern building that would close off the garth.

It has proven difficult to date phase IIIb. A burned layer covering the phase IIIb finds, which has been connected to Norman attack of 926, indicates that the buildings existed before that time. Wemhoff therefore keeps to a broad dating between phase IIIa (which was dated pre-840) and 926. The convent fared well in the 850s and 860, when it enjoyed the patronage of among others Louis the

122 Wemhoff, Das Damenstift Herford 1, pp. 21, 117-118.
123 Wemhoff, Das Damenstift Herford 1, p. 20.
124 Closely wound up with the early stages of the cloister is the predecessor of the so-called 'Wolderus chapel'. During phase II a small square structure with an eastern entrance was built immediately to the east of the western cloister walk. This has been identified as a chapel built over the grave of the alleged founder Waltger. Although Wemhoff maintains that he sees no archaeological evidence against this theory (pp. 134, 137), it seems to me more important that there is no real evidence in favour of it, apart from a few brief remarks in the contested Vita Waltgeri. Moreover, little more than 2 x 2 m seems extremely small for a chapel, not to mention its unusual place and shape, with an eastern opening.
125 Wemhoff, Das Damenstift Herford 1, pp. 22-23; Kroker, "Kaiser, Könige und fromme Frauen".
German, who had secured the eastern kingdom after the Treaty of Verdun and whose father-in-law was buried in Herford. In 860, the relics of Pusinna came to Herford from Binson or Châtillon-sur-Marne in the bishopric of Soissons. The Translatio s. Pusinnae shows how Pusinna, a relatively unknown Burgundian saint, offered the nuns of Herford a spiritual example to aspire to: she had lived as a recluse while maintaining close relationships with her – naturally also holy – family. The women of Herford formed a similar sort of religious family. The reasons and politics behind this translation may be manifold. They are not immediately relevant to us, since we know very little about the presentation of the relics in the church and their impact on the building activities. It is tempting to speculate that the relics of Pusinna or the increasing wealth of the foundation were the immediate cause for the phase IIIb rebuilding, which in that case would have started around the 860s, yet the evidence is too limited to draw such conclusions.

Assuming that Wemhoff’s reconstruction is more or less correct, most salient about the architecture of the convent in Herford is perhaps its striking resemblance to the monasteries discussed in the foregoing. No immediate differences between communities of men and women are visible at first sight; these structures could equally have belonged to a male monastery. With regard to the


127 Translatio sanctae Pusinnae c. 6, ed. Wilmans, Die Kaiserurkunden der Provinz Westfalen, p. 544. According to the Translatio, Herford’s abbess Haduwi (858?-887?), turned to Charles the Bald for help in the acquisition of relics. If Herford did indeed have a special relationship with Louis the German, it is interesting that they did not turn to him with this request. Unless the nuns already had their eyes on specific, West-Frankish, relics.

128 Röckelein, Reliquientranslationen, pp. 190-214. For further discussion of the text, see above, where it is discussed together with the Translatio S. Viti. See also Shuler, ”The Saxons within Carolingian Christendom”, pp. 47-49; Appleby, ”Spiritual progress in Carolingian Saxony”; Honnelmann, ”Reliquientranslationen nach Sachsen”, esp. pp. 178-180.

129 For this, see among others Shuler, ”The Saxons within Carolingian Christendom”, pp. 47-49; Appleby, ”Spiritual progress in Carolingian Saxony”; Honnelmann, ”Reliquientranslationen nach Sachsen”, esp. pp. 178-180, Röckelein, Reliquientranslationen, pp. 190-214, Semmler, ”Corvey und Herford”.

130 Herford is not remarkable in this aspect. Cf. Jäggi & Lobbedey, ”Church and cloister”, p. 89.
abbey church, we have to treat the reconstruction perhaps even more carefully. Assuming, however, that the reconstruction of the transepts is correct, we can establish that they must have been used differently than for example in Fulda, since the number of priests in Herford would have been much smaller. Although altars may have been placed in the transepts, it is unlikely that they were needed for the celebration of private masses and that this need gave rise to the rebuilding. The appearance of the transepts here despite of this shows that we cannot simply rely on traditional explanations of their use, such as use for liturgical purposes or the veneration of saints. On the other hand, it is possible that the transepts were part of a ‘Doppelchoranlage’ honouring on the one side Pusinna and on the other Waltger, Herford’s founder. It is equally possible that one of the transepts was used to accommodate the community of nuns.\footnote{Wemhoff presupposes that the eastern transept was needed for the ‘Stiftsdamen’. \textit{Das Damenstift Herford} 1, p. 27. This is possible, although mainly attested for later convents. See Jäggi & Lobbedey, “Church and cloister”. Another, more common, alternative for the women’s choir was a gallery, which could be placed in various parts of the church.}

As in the case of Corvey, it is difficult to establish any architectural connections between this convent and the communities it stood in close contact with, such as Corvey and Soissons. The material shedding light on the building history of Corvey and Herford may be somewhat limited and open to various interpretations, but about Soissons and Corbie, next to nothing is known. It would also be interesting to explore the influence Herford exerted in its turn on foundations it supported, such as Wendhausen and Gandersheim, if we knew more about the building history of these communities.

\section*{4.5 Conclusion}

Corvey and Herford were very well-connected institutions. They kept in close contact with emperors, high-ranking courtiers, bishops and other communities in a different part of the realm. In a sense, they needed these contacts since they were
located in the periphery of the empire, in an area that had only relatively recently
been conquered by the Franks and Christianised. Instead of starting as moderate
missionary settlements, they were strongholds of the faith almost from the start.
After an unsuccessful first attempt, Covey was founded again in 822 under the aus-
pices of Adalhard and Wala. Its first abbey church was ca. 36 m long and decorated
with paintings and precious materials. Sometime during the building process, the
decision was taken to add a small outer crypt. This may have been instigated by
the arrival of the relics of Vitus in 836. Abbot Warin had travelled to Saint-Denis
himself to convince Hilduin, who had shortly before been exiled to Corvey, to
donate the relics to the monastery. There, he may have seen the outer crypt that
Hilduin had added to the abbey church, which we have encountered in the first
chapter of this study. As I have argued above, the crypt in Corvey seems to have
functioned mostly as a container for relics, underlining their sanctity and making
their presence in Saxony visible.

The phase I church was dedicated in 844, yet probably substantially modi-
ified within three decades through the rebuilding of the choir area, which was
extended towards the east, preceded by a transept and surrounded by a much more
elaborate outer crypt, as well as the addition of the Westwork. Instead of focusing
all attention on a single (founder) saint, the crypt is most likely to have served as a
repository of a number of relics, together creating a holy space more or less sepa-
rated from the abbey church. At the same time, the rebuilding of the abbey church
attests again to the growing number of secondary altars.

The development of the nunnery in Herford went along similar lines. Its
first church was built on the site of an earlier Christian cemetery and was slight-
ly more moderate than that of Corvey, both in its design and its finish. Possibly
around the time of Corvey’s phase II, Herford also went through a rebuilding. Lit-
tle can be said with certainty about the resulting church, yet it is clear that besides
the expansion of the nave through the addition of side-aisles, here too the (eastern)
choir was renewed and a western extension added. Again, this resulted in a church
with a larger number of separate spaces.
Other than what we might expect, both communities’ marginal position on the outskirts of the realm is not immediately obvious from the architecture of both communities. In any case, it did not restrict the resources and building materials that were available. But perhaps this is not surprising after all: it was especially important here that these foundations, the first of their kind in the region, made a good impression. Moreover, now that the Saxon nobility had monasteries of their own to sponsor and send their children to, they were keen to do so.