

# CULTURAL MEMORY and the RESOURCES of the PAST



## The Project

**'Cultural memory and the resources of the past, 400-1000 AD'** is the title of a joint research project by the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Universities of Utrecht, Cambridge and Leeds. It is funded by Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA), a project led by the European Science Foundation (ESF).

The Early Middle Ages are the first period of history from which many thousand original manuscripts survive. Ancient literature and scholarship, the Bible and patristic writing have come to us through this filter. This rich material has mainly been used to edit texts as witnesses of the period in which they were written. But it also constitutes a fascinating resource to study the process of transmission and transformation of texts and other cultural contexts. It can shed new light on the codification and modification of the cultural heritage and its political uses, and constitutes an exemplary case study for cultural dynamics in general.

Just as the Carolingian period (8th/9th century AD) has filtered and reshaped the past according to its concerns, so the Modern Age has used and sometimes misused its ancient and medieval heritage.

The project consists of four interrelated studies:

- **‘Learning Empire – Creating Cultural Resources for Carolingian Rulership’** concentrates on the role of the popes as cultural brokers in the 8th century (Vienna)

*Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner and Marianne Pollheimer*

- **‘Biblical Past as an Imagined Community’** deals with learning in 8th century Bavaria and with the meaning of ‘populus’ in early medieval texts (Utrecht)

*Mayke de Jong, Robert Flierman, Erik Goosmann, Sven Meeder and Giorgia Vocino*

- **‘Otherness in the Frankish and Ottonian Worlds’** explores changes in attitudes towards aliens (Leeds)

*Ian Wood, Tim Barnwell and Richard Broome*

- **‘Migration of Roman and Byzantine Cultural Traditions to the Carolingian World’** (Cambridge)

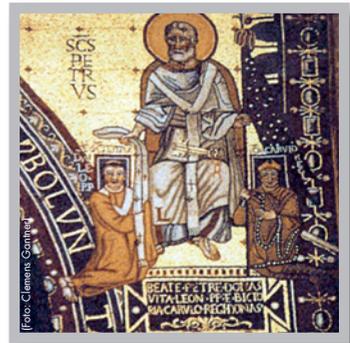
*Rosamond McKitterick, Désirée Scholten and Graeme Ward*

*This folder presents an overview of the achievements of the individual projects, which soon will be published in a collaborative volume. The individual projects are not listed by the place the participants worked at, because with time these boundaries have blurred and the project has transformed into a cooperative effort by the whole group.*

# Creating Cultural Resources for Carolingian Rule: Historians of the Christian Empire

Walter Pohl • Project-Leader • Principal Investigator

This project has dealt with perceptions of the Christian-Roman empire of the past found in ancient and contemporary works of historiography, for instance Eusebius/Jerome, Eusebius/Rufinus, the *Historia Tripartita*, Jordanes' *Romana* and the *Liber Pontificalis*, with an eye to their (sometimes massive) transmission and reception in the Carolingian period. It also explored Paul the Deacon's views of Christian Empire found in his *Roman* and *Lombard Histories*. The different takes on the history of the Christian emperors are surprisingly varied or even contradictory, for instance, in their depiction of Constantine. Taken as a whole, these texts suggest that Christian empire was a form of government that had not yet been successfully put into practice for any considerable period of time, due to human weakness and the workings of the devil. Things could be done better. Empire was a resource of the past that could have a future.



Triclinium Mosaic, Detail, Lateran, Rome: Pope Leo III and Charlemagne are kneeling in front of St. Peter, who gives a pallium to the pope and a vexillum to the Frankish king.

# Carolingian Political Discourse and the Biblical Past

*Mayke De Jong* • *Principal Investigator*

The impact of the Old Testament on Carolingian society has received much scholarly attention, especially with regard to kingship and law. The Old Testament indeed offers more practical precepts than the New, yet its reception in court-connected Carolingian circles was not just determined by the *sensus historicus*, but also by its spiritual significance. Taking the notion of ‘repertoires of identification’ as my point of departure, I present three case studies that take us away from the well-known Old Testament models of kingship and society, and into the elective biblical affinities of three members of the governing Carolingian elite: Hraban Maur, Dhuoda and Paschasius Radbertus. Their work discussed here does not qualify as biblical commentary. Instead, all three authors reacted to political turmoil of the 830s and 840s. These crises made members of the elite reflect deeply on the duties of public office and leadership. In their various attempts to articulate the basic values of leadership they had always lived by, one can observe the power of biblical repertoires of identification.



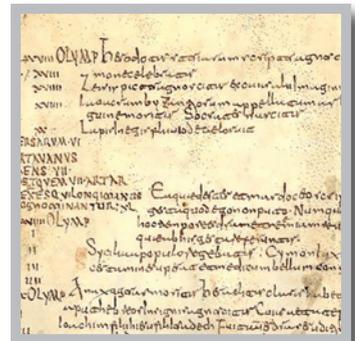
Utrecht Psalter: The Psalmist admonishes Saul (Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, ms. 32, fol. 30r; by permission of the Utrecht University Library).

# Transformations of the Roman Past and Roman Identity in the Early Middle Ages

Rosamond McKitterick • Principal Investigator

Among many influential texts that can be understood as part of an effort to shape the present by means of restructuring the past are those promoting the integration of Christian and imperial Rome into the 'cultural memory' of early medieval Europe. By examining the representation of the city of Rome in the *Liber pontificalis* and in the *Chronicon* of Eusebius-Jerome this project dealt with the active role of the city of Rome itself in their narratives and the degree to which both *Chronicon* and *Liber pontificalis* articulate or helped to shape perceptions of a specifically Roman and Christian identity. Both texts present the Roman imperial past and Christianise it by juxtaposition rather than replacement. The manuscript Lucca, Biblioteca capitolare 490 (shown on the right), which contains both texts, confirms that these texts were not passively received. Active engagement with them resulted in further transformations of the presentation of the Roman past and of the way in which Rome and Roman identity might be incorporated into a wider sense of the Christian identity in the early middle ages.

Lucca, Bibiloteca capitolare, ms. 490, fol. 18r:  
The Chronicle of Eusebius in the Latin translation  
made by Jerome in the fourth century occupies  
fols 2r-30r in the manuscript.



# Who are the Philistines?

*Ian Wood* • *Principal Investigator*

Although early medieval scholars liked to think of themselves as belonging to a Chosen People, this did not mean that they necessarily saw themselves as members of a New Israel. A good example of the refusal of early medieval religious writers to accept a straight equation of the Christians with the Jews of the Old Testament can be found in Bede's Commentary on the First Book of Samuel. This book, with its account of the creation of kingship among the Israelites, of the initial success and subsequent failure of Saul, and of the emergence of David, and especially his triumph over Goliath, might seem a key text in the history of the idea of the Chosen People. Rather than any clear distinction between Us and Them understood in terms of ethnic groupings, however, Bede presents a more Augustinian picture of the righteous and of the heretics and unbelievers.



Utrecht Psalter: Illustration to Psalm 2, where the Lord addresses the kings of the world (Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, ms. 32, fol. 2v; by permission of the Utrecht University Library).

# Missionaries and Changing Views of the Other from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries

*Tim Barnwell • Participant*

This project was concerned with depictions of the 'other' in missionary texts from the ninth to twelfth centuries, focusing on those texts produced in the Archdiocese of Hamburg-Bremen. More than most, missionaries and the authors who described their work were forced to confront the issue of difference, and struggle with the limitations of their existing ideas to make sense of the societies they encountered. They could not abandon the established ways of thinking about the north, but nor could they ignore the complexities of the Scandinavian and Baltic world, which often undermined such ideas. The result was that these authors imagined the north in complex and contradictory ways. It could be barbarous and uncivilized, full of monsters and signs of the apocalypse, yet also vast and diverse, full of traders and pagans famed for their hospitality. It is such conceptual variety which has been the focus of this project.

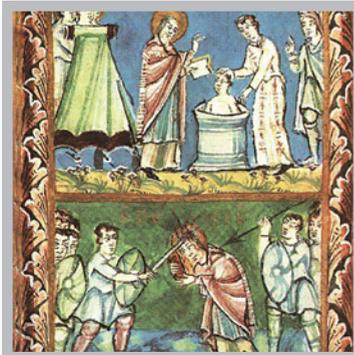
Cynocephali/ dog-headed men in the 1397 Kievan psalter. The ninth century archbishop Rimbert expected to meet such creatures in Scandinavia, leading him to question what it was which defined humanity.



# Defining the Other in the Merovingian and Early Carolingian Periods

*Richard Broome • Participant*

This sub-project dealt with the issue of how attitudes to otherness changed in the Frankish worlds between the mid-seventh and early-ninth centuries. The primary focus of the project was how Merovingian and Carolingian authors portrayed those peoples on the peripheries of the Frankish world in terms of ethnicity, religion and political relationship with the Franks: what groups were considered 'others' and why, and how were they portrayed?



This image from the tenth-century Sacramentary of Fulda shows the Anglo-Saxon missionary Saint Boniface (d. 754) baptising recent converts to Christianity (top) and his martyrdom at the hands of Frisian pirates (bottom). It highlights both the peaceful and the aggressive interactions which could take place between Christianity and paganism. Missionary zeal for preaching and conversion meant that any pagan was a potential Christian, but hostility (on both sides) and the durability of non-Christian beliefs meant that pagans generally were portrayed as the enemies of Christianity.

# Discourses of Inclusion and Exclusion in the Carolingian World: The Saxon Case

*Robert Flierman • Participant*

This project dealt with the incorporation and Christianisation of the continental Saxons under the Frankish king Charlemagne (d. 814). Its specific focus was on changing perceptions of the Saxons in eighth- and ninth-century history-writing, by Franks as well as by Saxons. Broadly speaking, we see the Saxons change from 'them' to 'us', from depraved pagans with a penchant for infidelity, to the newest members of the Christian people, administered with divine sanction by the Carolingian rulers.

Painting (1840) by Ary Scheffer (1795-1858), currently in the Galerie des Batailles in the Palace of Versailles. It is a romantic rendition of one of the key events during the conquest of Saxony: the surrender of the elusive Saxon rebel leader Widukind in 785. In subsequent centuries, Widukind became the object of highly diverging traditions, in which he was alternately remembered as a saint, a villain and a national hero.



# The Papacy as Cultural Brokers in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century

*Clemens Gantner • Participant*

Central Italy was a contact zone between the culturally Greek empire now centred on Constantinople and the Latin West. The most important institution in this region was the papacy in Rome. The papacy did not command a big military force, but it possessed ample cultural and religious resources, which enabled it to act as a powerful cultural brokerage institution. Its cultural capital was grounded both in the past and in the present and it drew upon the heritage of the city of Rome and the Roman church. The papacy thus managed to establish itself as one of the most important political players in eighth and ninth century Italy.



The fresco from Santa Maria Antiqua (Rome/Forum) shows Pope Zacharias (741-52). The portrait was done during the lifetime of the pontiff. The chapel was dedicated to Saint Julitta by Theodotus, an influential Roman official of this time.

# Changing Perceptions of Pippin the Short in Carolingian Historiography

*Erik Goosmann • Participant*

This project has had a close look at the literary reflection in Carolingian historiography of an important and highly controversial event in the dynasty's formation: the abdication and monastic conversion of Carloman (c. 708-755), a prominent Carolingian ancestor, in 747. The event was important, because it left Pippin the Short (r. 741-768), Carloman's younger brother, in sole command of the Frankish realm, allowing him to claim the kingship and found the Carolingian dynasty. The event was controversial, because Frankish society commonly associated abdication and conversion of secular rulers with dishonour and shame. Regardless of Carloman's actual circumstances or motives, later Carolingian history-writers attempted to protect (or rehabilitate) Carloman's reputation. This was a gradual process that began by stressing the voluntary character of Carloman's conversion. Later, Carloman came to be presented as an exemplary penitent and Benedictine monk. This project therefore explores how this controversial event transformed from a problematic memory into a useful resource of the past.

A genealogical representation of the Carolingian dynasty, from the *Chronicon Universale* of Ekkehard of Aura, dated to the second half of the twelfth century. The illustration is extant in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS lat. fol. 295, f. 80v. Detail



# The Exchange of Learning in Early Medieval Bavaria

*Sven Meeder • Participant*

This sub-project studied the exchange of learning in early medieval Bavaria, focussing more closely on the place of biblical learning in canonical works. Well before their more successful Carolingian overlords and kinsmen, and in competition with the Frankish church, the Agilolfing dukes and their learned circle attempted to create a divinely favoured polity based upon the principle of correct biblical interpretation and authoritative ecclesiastical tradition. This project deals with questions surrounding the use of the Bible within the dynamic field of canon law, and the role of canonical learning within the attempts to bolster medieval political authority by biblical scholarship.



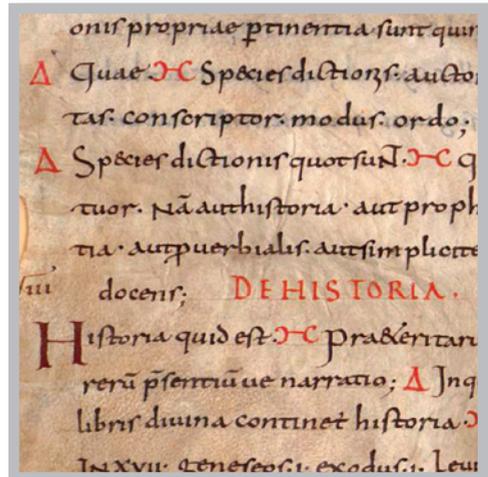
Image of the Cover of the famous Carolingian Gospel Codex Aureus of Sankt Emmeram. Made in ca. 870 at the Palace of Holy Roman Emperor Charles the Bald. Charles donated it to Arnulf of Carinthia who gave it to the Sankt Emmeram Abbey.

# Exegesis and Imperial Governance

Marianne Pollheimer • Participant

This case study looked at the Carolingian reception and manuscript transmission of the *Instituta regularia divinae legis* written by Junillus Africanus in the sixth century at the court of Justinian I. This handbook of biblical exegesis survives in sixteen manuscripts from the eighth and ninth centuries. In the text notions of biblical and divine law converged with secular lawgiving, thus positioning the ruler at the interface of divine and human governance. The manuscripts reflect the *Instituta's* use in the fields of Christian education and biblical studies in the Carolingian period, but also their reception as reference text in the contexts of orthodox belief and lawgiving. They provided an important resource of the past for the Carolingian empire to explore the political dimensions of theological texts.

Munich, BSB, Clm 19415 p. 138:  
Junillus, *Instituta regularia divinae legis*  
(Freising, 820-830), Detail  
© Bayerische Staatsbibliothek



# The Transmission and Translation of Ecclesiastical History: The Historia Tripartita of Epiphanius-Cassiodorus

*Désirée Scholten • Participant*

In the sixth century the retired Italian prime minister Cassiodorus compiled a history of the church, the *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita*, using three sources from the fourth century as part of his fascinating programme of Latin translations of Greek texts. This text is a composite Latin abridgement of the Greek ecclesiastical histories of Sozomen, Socrates and Theodoret.



Study of this history has offered the opportunity to make a precise case study of cultural transmission from the Greek fifth-century East to the Latin sixth-century West and then onward to assess the cultural impact of this articulate vision of Roman and Christian history in the Carolingian world of the ninth century.

A depiction of Ezra the Scribe, from Folio 5r of Codex Amiatinus (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Amiatinus 1), is suggested to be a portrait of Cassiodorus.

# Framing Ambrose in the Resources of the Past

*Giorgia Vocino • Associated Participant*

The Carolingian Life of Ambrose (*De vita et meritis sancti Ambrosii*) survives in only one late ninth century St. Gall manuscript (Stiftsbibl. 569). It was written especially for a learned Milanese archbishop capable of decrypting and appreciating an extremely skilled and elaborate compilation. The writing combines different sources (classics, patristics, hagiography, ecclesiastical history, exegesis) to draw a portrait of the patron saint of Milan and church father. The project focused on the use of these sources – above all the *Historia Tripartita* and Ambrose’s political letters – showing to what extent the anonymous compiler was aware of the contemporary political and ecclesiastical debates about the role of bishops and rulers in a Christian society. Using contemporary textual witnesses as well as late antique and early medieval hagiography, Ambrose is depicted as being at the pinnacle of an illustrious gathering comprising the most prestigious late antique saints as well as biblical heroes.

St Ambrose crowning Archbishop  
Angilbert II (824-859), Golden Altar of  
Sant’Ambrogio (mid-9th century), Milan.

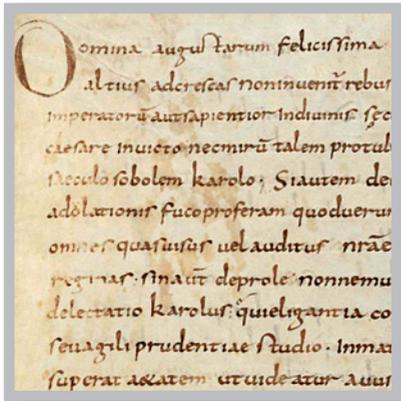


# Roman History East and West: The Universal Chronicle of Frechulf of Lisieux

Graeme Ward • Participant

In c. 829, Frechulf, bishop of Lisieux, completed his massive two-volume history of the world. Frechulf drew directly and explicitly upon a range of earlier historical texts to create a particularly rich Christian narrative, which stretched from Adam down to the seventh century, pivoting on the birth of Christ. Long overlooked by scholars, Frechulf's Histories offer an invaluable insight into the cultural and intellectual history of the early Carolingian world.

This project seeks both to analyse in detail Frechulf's text, paying particular attention to its structure, themes and emphases, as well as to situate it within the wider context of ninth-century elite literary culture. His work, moreover, allows us to see how Frankish elites perceived their world within the grand scheme of Christian salvation history, and highlights the didactic value ascribed to the study of the past.



Extract from the earliest complete manuscript of Frechulf's Histories, copied at St Gall in the later ninth century. It is taken from the prologue to Part II, in which Frechulf implored the empress Judith, wife of Louis the Pious, to instruct her young son Charles with his work.

# The Project Team



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