INTRODUCTION

The Annals of Fulda and their authorship

By the ninth century annals were one of the major vehicles for historical writing within the Frankish empire.¹ The earliest annals were probably no more than brief marginal notes on the tables used for calculating the date of Easter, but it was soon discovered that an account of events organised year by year could be not simply an aide-mémoire of this kind but coherent historical narrative which both recorded events and commented on them and attempted to explain them. By the time of Charles the Great substantial works were being produced in this form: the Annals of Lorsch, the Royal Frankish Annals, the Older Metz Annals.² The works themselves are almost all without contemporary titles or ascriptions of authorship: the titles used in manuscripts, which are mostly not original, are general ones like Gesta Francorum or Historia Francorum, and those used in scholarly literature often reflect no more than the place in which a manuscript came to rest, which is not necessarily the centre in which the work was composed, or else a scholarly theory about the origins of the work.³ Most of the smaller works are monastic in origin; the larger works, including those mentioned earlier, were often produced in association with members of court circles, though none should be read without qualification as an 'official' account of events. Textual similarities have made it possible to show how the authors of annals borrowed from one another and compiled from older works, and the presence of common material in independent works shows that some annals which we now do not possess must once have existed.⁴ What we have are in effect the

¹ See McCormick 1975 and Nelson 1991: 2-5 for the origins of medieval annalistic writing.
² MGH SS 1: 20-49; Kurze 1895; von Simson 1905.
³ See for example Nelson 1991: 2 on the name of the Annals of St-Bertin. The Royal Frankish Annals, so-called because of their seemingly 'official' nature, were originally known as the Greater Lorsch Annals, and so illustrate both tendencies; Levison and Löwe 1953: 247.
⁴ Hoffmann 1958 is a good sceptical guide to the elaborate theories of nineteenth-century scholarship about the existence of 'lost' annals.
fossilised remains of debates and discussions about the Frankish political world which we can reconstruct only in part, and in reading these texts it is important to listen to their silences and note their emphases. The seemingly disinterested objectivity of the genre, found over long stretches even of the *Annals of Fulda* (henceforth *AF*), whose authors were by no means dispassionate observers of events, can be very deceptive.

*AF* — so called since Marquard Freher’s edition at the beginning of the seventeenth century because a section of them has been ascribed to the monk and hagiographer Rudolf of Fulda and because they were thought to have made use of Fulda materials — offer the major narrative account of the east Frankish kingdom from the death of Louis the Pious down to the end of the ninth century, one which has crucially shaped our view of events. In this respect they are the equivalent of the companion text translated in this series, the *Annals of St-Bertin*, which play a similar role for the history of the west Frankish kingdom. The *Annals of St-Bertin* have a comparatively straightforward make-up: they are a continuation of the *Royal Frankish Annals* by two identifiable authors, Prudentius of Troyes and Hincmar of Rheims, about whom a good deal is otherwise known. The *AF*, which are translated here from 888 onwards, have several of their sections ascribed to authors, but their genesis appears to have been more complex, and it is also perhaps more typical of annalistic works of the early and high Middle Ages. It must be examined before we can turn to the text and its outlook.

The surviving manuscripts are only an echo of what must once have been a much more extensive transmission, to judge by the use made of *AF* by a number of later annalists and compilers. There are three groups of manuscripts. Group 1 is represented by a manuscript now in Sèlesstadt in Alsace, and by another manuscript, now lost, which was in the cathedral library at Worms at the end of the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the sixteenth and of which three copies have survived. The manuscripts contain annals from 714 to the middle of 882, where they break off. The text of group 1 occasionally diverges substantially from that of the other manuscripts, as well as showing a large number of minor stylistic revisions compared with the texts found in groups 2 and 3. Next to the entry for 838 ms. ‘1’ has the note “Thus far Enhard”; before the entry for 864 it has the note “Thus far Rudolf”. The single manuscript of the second group extends to 887, but omits a number of episodes between 838 and 870, where groups 1 and 3 diverge it sometimes has the readings of group 1 and sometimes of group 3. Group 3, with the Bavarian continuation from 882, has the greatest number of manuscripts. The oldest may even be an autograph for the last years of the annals. Later manuscripts in this group come from much further west and testify to the diffusion of *AF* in this form.

8 Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, lat. 615, Kurze’s ms. ‘a’, eleventh century, of unknown provenance, though there are hints that it may have come from Saint-Trond in Lotharingia (Kurze 1891: XI).

9 The omitted episodes are in the entries for 847, 850, 859, 866, 867, 868 and 870 (below: 26–7, 31–2, 34–5, 56, 57, 58, 63–4). For the divergences (of substance, not due simply to scribal errors), see the entries for 848, 856, 863, 864, 865, 870 (below: 28, 55, 49–51, 51–2, 52–4, 53–6). Only very occasionally does ‘2’ offer a text against the common witness of the other two groups: in 859, for example, a sentence taken from Regino of Prüm; for 861 it has an additional name ‘Gerold’ among the list of those proscribed by Louis the German (below: 47); and in 880 the accounts of Poppo’s expedition against the Slavs (below: 89) show slight differences between all three groups.

10 Leipzig, Stadtbibliothek II 129a (late ninth-century, from Niederaleitich), Kurze’s ms. ‘3’. It now lacks a number of leaves and quires, but originally contained the text from 714 to 901. A copy of this, made for the early sixteenth-century Bavarian antiquary Johannes Aventinus at a time when it was in a more complete state, is Munich, Staatsbibliothek clm 966, ms. ‘3f’ in Kurze’s edition. Aventinus’s copy has marginal notes which show that he had access to a copy of the lost Worms manuscript, probably that made by Reysach (clm 1220); it ended where the other manuscripts of group 1 do, as is shown by a marginal note on f. 42v of clm 966. A further copy was made for Marquard Freher for his edition of 1600 (see below). Kurze thought ‘3’ autograph (in the sense that the manuscript shows by gaps and compression of the writing that it was being composed as it was written, rather than being copied from an existing exemplar) perhaps from 894 onwards, certainly from 857 (Kurze 1891: 35–7, 134), and this view was also taken by Bischoff 1890: 7–8; cf. Löwe 1904: 679 n. 67 on the question.

11 Munich, Staatsbibliothek clm 15121 (later 290088), from Rebendorf, and Bern, Bürgerbibliothek 746 (Kurze’s ’Sa’ and ’3b’) are small fragments of no great
INTRODUCTION

So far as we can judge it was also manuscripts of group 3 on which most later users of *AF* drew. Its text extends in the complete manuscripts from 714 to 901, but from mid-882 it offers a completely different version of events from that given in group 2, and it has additional material for the years 863 to 865, including in particular some duplicate entries and also two texts (also found in the *Annals of St-Bertin*) relating to the dispute between Pope Nicholas I and the archbishops Gunther of Cologne and Theogaud of Trier, which are referred to in the text offered by groups 1 and 2 as being available in a number of archives and hence not needing repetition in the work itself. This brief description of the manuscript tradition must be amplified by looking at the content of the annals. For the years 714 to 830 the work is undoubtedly a compilation which draws on earlier annals, in particular on the *Royal Frankish Annals* and the *Lorsch Frankish Chronicle*, with occasional use of other smaller sets of annals and saints’ lives. From 830 onwards the compilation consists largely of information and phrases not found in its known sources, though it is possible that these are drawn from a now lost set of annals. By the time of the marginal note referring to Einhard (meaning Einhard) in ms. ‘1’ the narrative has definitely become independent of other known sources. Until about 869 some passages seem to have been composed close in time to the events they record, but there are a number of distortions of chronology which suggest composition rather later. From 869 onwards the

importance for establishing the text. Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, lat. 451 (eleventh-century, perhaps from St Eucharius in Trier; cf. Hellmann 1909: 84 and Märtl 1986: 129) and Brussels, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. 7505-7518 (twelfth-century, perhaps from Mainz) are ms. ‘3c’ and ‘3r’ respectively in Kurze’s edition and textually closely related. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Reg. Lat. 638 is an eleventh-century manuscript from Pécamp in Normandy, Kurze’s ms. ‘5d’, which breaks off in 888.

12 See the references given in n. 6.

13 The point at which groups 2 and 3 diverge comes slightly after that at which group 1 ends.

14 Below: 51 with n. 15.

15 Löwe 1990: 677-8 summarises the present state of scholarship on the sources of the first section of *AF* (which is not translated here).

16 The theft from Fulda recorded in 853 (below: 35 with n. 6) seems to have been recorded soon after the event, as perhaps was the account of Gundachar’s treachery in 863 (below: 49-50 with n. 5). For distortions which may be the result of later reworking cf. for example the dating of events in 843 and 844 (below: 12), the entries on Aquitaine under 851 (below: 52), the account of the Slav campaigns of 858 (below: 41 with n. 9), the misdating of the meeting at Tusey in 865 (below: 52 with n. 5) and some entries in 867-68 (below: 67 n. 4, 58 n. 6), though these last errors are also explicable on the assumption that

The facts outlined above have allowed widely differing views on the origins and authorship of *AF*. The last person to provide a scholarly edition, Friedrich Kurze, relied heavily on the ‘thus far’ notes for 838 and 863 in ms ‘1’. For him, the annals up to 888 were compiled by Einhard (the author of the Life of Charlemagne). From 888 to 863 they were continued by Rudolf of Fulda, a distinguished scholar and hagiographer, whose death is recorded in *AF* under 865; the confusion in the annals for 863, 864 and 865 was taken by Kurze to show that Rudolf had not had time to revise them properly before his death. From 865 onwards the annals were continued by Rudolf’s pupil Meginhard, an identification suggested by the state of another work left unfinished by Rudolf on his death, the *Translatio Sancti Alexandri*, which Meginhard is known to have completed. A first version of the work extended to 882, and is represented by group 1, and also by group 3 in its text up to 863; group 2 contains a ‘second edition’ with a text extending to 887. Kurze also thought that the text of group 3 from 882 onwards was not all due to the same author; he saw the annals from 882 to 896 as having been written in Regensburg, and the remainder as a further continuation written in Niederalteich, the home of the oldest manuscript of group 3.

This account of the origins of *AF* was heavily criticised by Siegmund Hellmann in a number of articles written some fifteen years after the

work on a text up to 863-65 was resumed only in 869 and the author needed to fill in the gap.

17 Note especially the comments on Charles the Bald under 875 and 876 (below: 77 with n. 10 and 82 with n. 16).

18 See the account of the Pannonian feud 889[II] (below: 110 n. 8).

19 He set out his views, which owed much to Rethfeld 1886, in Kurze 1892 and defended them in Kurze 1911 and Kurze 1912.

20 Below: 52-3; on Rudolf as teacher (Ermanrich of Ellwangen was among his pupils) and author of a number of hagiographical works including the *Vita Leobas*, *Translatio Sancti Alexandri* and the *Miracula sanctorum in Feldensis ecclesias translatorum*, possibly also of a letter collection, see Finsterwalder 1922 and Löwe 1990: 680-7, 709-14.

21 Krusch 1933. Meginhard and Rudolf are referred to explicitly in the *Translatio*, another reason for supposing that Rudolf was responsible for the text of *AF* from 882 to 863 is that both the *Translatio* and *AF* (below: 31) refer to Tacitus’s *De Germania*, a work which seems to have survived only at Fulda and at Hersfeld in the Middle Ages and apart from these citations does not seem to have been known until its rediscovery in the Renaissance.
appearance of Kurze’s edition in 1891. 22 Hellmann rightly criticised the inaccuracies of Kurze’s edition, which was not based on a complete collation of all the manuscripts. 23 From Kurze’s edition and his own additional collations Hellmann put together a rather different account. The references to Einhard and Rudolf in ms. ‘1’ he saw as a red herring and the theories about Meginhard’s continuation of Rudolf’s work as unsubstantiated. After careful examination of the manuscripts he constructed a stemma of the manuscripts in which there were two classes, one represented by the manuscripts of groups 1 and 2, and the other represented by the manuscripts of group 3. Both groups 1 and 2 showed in different ways signs of having had their texts reworked and were demonstrably further from the archetype than the oldest manuscript of group 3. 24 Group 1 was also not to be taken as representing an early recension to 882, for the texts of groups 2 and 3 do not diverge until after the text in 1 has already broken off; 1 is, like some other manuscripts in group 3, simply an incomplete text. 25 The work was put together between the 870s and 887 by an author who drew on two older compilations. Hellmann thought that the Bavarian continuation from 882 found in group 3 was written after 887 as a deliberate replacement for the highly tendentious account of Charles III’s reign found in ms. ‘2’, and he disputed Kurze’s theory that ms. ‘3’ was at any point an autograph, since it contains errors not found in ‘3c’ and ‘3e’; the theory of a separate continuation after 896 thus collapsed.26 Hellmann also pointed to use of materials in later annalistic works referring to the period after 901 which in his view probably came from the Bavarian continuation of AF. This was a final demonstration that ms. ‘3’ was not an autograph, since the lost ‘original’ evidently went beyond 901. 27

Although many of Hellmann’s points have not been refuted either by

22 Hellmann 1908, 1909; Hellmann 1912 is a rejoinder to Kurze 1911, Hellmann 1913 a reply to Janssen 1912.
23 Hellmann 1908: 701-9. In fairness to Kurze it should be said that this was normal practice in nineteenth-century scholarly editions; one collated what seemed to be the key manuscripts as far as possible and asked librarians or paid collators to check critical passages in the remaining manuscripts.
24 Hellmann 1908: 705-17.
26 Hellmann 1909 deals with the manuscripts of group 3. Kurze in his edition unfortunately did not give the readings for the other manuscripts of this group for those sections where ms. ‘3’ survives intact.
27 Löwe 1990: 684 n. 95, discusses this question and concludes that there is no firm evidence for the existence of a text of AF which went beyond 901.

Kurze or later, subsequent scholarship has by and large accepted Kurze’s account, and in particular his ascription to Rudolf of Fulda of the section between 888 and 868.28 The unsatisfactory nature of Kurze’s text means that no definitive account of the origins and composition of the work can be offered at present. There is no doubt as to the essential wording or meaning of the text, but neither Kurze’s edition nor the corrections offered by Hellmann are enough for the kind of close textual argument needed to sort out the relations of the manuscripts to one another. What is needed is a new edition based on a full collation of all the available manuscripts. It is clear, however, that the controversy between Hellmann and Kurze created in many ways more heat than light, and the manner in which it was conducted obscured much that was common to the two accounts as well as some points overlooked by both scholars.29 Both Kurze and Hellmann assumed in effect that the archetype of AF was a finished literary manuscript; but there are hints, in the disorganisation of the entries for the years 883 to 865 and elsewhere,30 that much of the ‘original’ was more like a bundle of loose notes and jottings. Moreover, there is not all that much difference between the view that a later author made use of earlier compilations and the view that the work was continued successively by three named authors; the practical consequences are not great for our understanding of the text, especially as the ascription of the first part of the work to Einhard rests on very shaky ground31 and we know virtually nothing about Meginhard except that he completed Rudolf’s Translatio Sancti Alexandri.

29 Each side took extreme positions; thus Hellmann’s stemma (Hellmann 1909: 49) requires there to be no fewer than four lost manuscripts between the lost archetype and ms. ‘3’, which even Hellmann admitted to be from the late ninth or early tenth century, while Kurze’s theories (1899: 96-7) about how the text of ‘3’ drew on Rudolf’s text as well as on the supposed ‘second edition’ by Meginhard seem equally improbable.
30 In particular the duplicate entries for 864 and 865 in the manuscripts of group 3 (below: 51-2 and 52-4). Note also the missing letters of 877 and 884 (below: 89, 96), the changes made in the text in the references to the elections at Mainz in 866 and 863 (below: 98, 50), the missing name of the river in 863 (below: 50) and the gap left for the date and place of Louis II of Italy’s death in 872 (below: 50).
Most seriously, however, the two inscriptions of 838 and 869 have
drawn attention away from more substantial breaks in continuity.
From 830, as we have noted, AF cease to be dependent on other known
sources and give an independent account of events, though their
entries for the period from 830 to 888 are fairly thin and uninteresting
and for that reason have not been translated here. From about 869
through to 887 (in the text of group 2) the character of the text
changes again; it becomes much fuller, and there are no further errors
in chronology or entries which must have been written rather later
than the events they record, as there are in many of the annals between
838 and 869. There are also changes of vocabulary at the same time;
for example, from 870 onwards Bavaria and the Bavarians are often
called Noricum and Norici respectively, words not used in the text up
until then.35 It must remain open for the time being whether the author
or authors of this text made substantial revisions to the earlier text, in
particular to the annals for the period 830-68, or whether they took
them over intact. Much play was made in the debate between Kurze
and Hellmann of the similarities in phraseology between the supposed-
dy 'different parts' of the annals.36 They can be explained both as
imitation of the earlier compilations by the later writer and as
reworking of the earlier sources by the later writer in his style, but the
latter seems a more natural assumption. Further work needs to be
done here, though it would need to take the manuscripts into account.
At all events the text from the 840s onwards shows close links with
Mainz,37 and in particular with Archbishop Liutbert (869-89). Liutbert
was archchancellor under Louis the German and Louis the Younger,
but lost office to Liutward of Vercelli when the east Frankish kingdom
was reunited under Charles III, returning only in the final months of
Charles's reign.38 It might thus be supposed that AF are a product of
the east Frankish royal chapel,39 were it not for their account of the
years 882 to 887, which is extremely hostile to Charles III and his current
advisers until the very end of Charles III's reign, when Liutbert
returned to royal favour and to the archchancellorship, and emphasises
Liutbert's activities. They thus seem to represent the work of Liutbert
and his circle rather than of the royal chapel as such, though their
interest in the deeds of kings and their justifications show that so long
as Liutbert was in power it is not easy to separate the two things.
The possibility that a text of the annals to 882 remained available to
members of the royal chapel is suggested by the Bavarian continuation,
though one would have expected a chapel work produced under
Charles III to have an Alemannic rather than a Bavarian slant on
affairs. At all events the Bavarian continuation gives a favourable
account of Charles III's reign. Hellmann, who was concerned to show
that there had never been an independent version of AF which went
only up to 882, argued that this was a deliberate rewriting of the text
written in Liutbert's circle, but the differences between the texts do
not force us to assume this, as may be seen by comparing the two, and
the account of the Pannonian feud under 884 appears to be contempo-
rary.40 Although the most recent studies of ms. '3' have tended to
confirm Kurze's view that this is an autograph at the end,41 this does
not mean that the work was written in the monastery of Niederalteich
(the subsequent home of the manuscript) from 897 onwards as Kurze
thought; there is no discernible change of style or emphasis between
896 and 897.

The world of the AF

Neither the original AF nor their Bavarian continuation were con-
cerned to record everything important that occurred. This is of course
37 This is the view taken by Löwe 1990: 682-7 at the end of his very thoughtful
and balanced survey of the problem, to which I am much indebted in
the account given above. Löwe also argues that the section ascribed to Rudolf of
Fulda by Kurze and others may have been written under his direction by a
number of authors with links with the chapel, rather than as a piece by Rudolf
himself.
38 Hellmann 1909: 20-50; but see the entry in 884(11) (below: 110 n. 8).
39 See above, n.10.
to some extent true of all annalistic works, but the *AF* are particularly noteworthy for the way they select some episodes for extended treatment and omit other matters entirely. The long accounts of Louis the German’s invasion of West Francia in 858, the trenchant commentaries on Carolingian politics especially but not only for the years from 875 to 877, the descriptions in both texts of the end of Charles III’s reign and in the Bavarian continuation of the Pannonian feud as well as of Arnulf’s campaigns in 891, 894 and 896, all show that the authors were doing something rather different from simply recording what happened when. The interest taken in the miraculous and in natural disasters point in the same direction, though it is worth noting that group 2 omits a number of the extended narratives not concerned with political matters.\(^{40}\) The outlook is a court one rather than a clerical one; only rarely do we find signs of a specifically ecclesiastical viewpoint, as in the remarks about the episcopal elections at Mainz in 856 and at Passau in 899.\(^{41}\) There is no sign of Hincmar’s disapproval of warrior bishops, and the authors take a well-informed interest in military matters, offering a great number of detailed accounts of battles and campaigns. Even the interest in the miraculous should not be seen as specifically clerical. What is evident is the desire to write literature within an annalistic form, though perhaps not with such complex intentions as have been suggested for Hincmar of Rheims;\(^{42}\) the extended narratives in *AF* seem more like rhetorical set pieces.

The outlook of *AF* has been characterised as ‘eminently east Frankish’,\(^{43}\) but this becomes true only gradually. The period of brotherly rule between 843 and Lothar’s death in 855 is reflected in the *AF*’s interest in west Frankish and Lotharingian events, perhaps also in a certain distance towards Louis the German’s rule. However, the *AF* tell us notably less about west Frankish politics than the *Annals of St-Bertin* do about east Frankish ones, and the emphasis from the 860s is undoubtedly east Frankish. Italian affairs are given prominence only from the mid-870s onwards, coinciding with east Frankish ambitions for the Italian kingdom. Here especially *AF* are often discreetly silent about events which the author or authors must have known about, such as Louis the German’s manoeuvrings for the succession to his nephew Louis II of Italy, and their information is often fragmentary and not supported by other sources. The doings of the Slavs and Northmen on the open borders to the east and north were recorded, but here again it is often difficult to make sense of the information we are given. Partly this is because the authors were writing for an audience which had far more background knowledge than we do, but it is likely also that the deficiencies of *AF* here reflect deficiencies in the authors’ own knowledge. This should be borne in mind when considering east Frankish ‘policy’ towards the Slavs and Northmen. It should also be noted that the interest taken by the authors of the Bavarian continuation in events on the south-east frontier was not shared by the authors of the original text, who kept an eye on the Moravians and Bohemians, but were much less interested in the east Bavarian aristocracy or the Bulgars.

Where the annals are not recounting the miraculous or indulging in extended and detailed narrative they offer a version of events which is distinctly king-centred, more so than that of the *Annals of St-Bertin*. Lay leading men are mentioned only comparatively rarely before the 880s. The authors of the Mainz account of Charles III’s reign continue king-centred in their outlook, in spite of their hostility to Charles, though they do make some attempt to treat the doings of Archbishop Liutbert and the Babenberger Henry almost as if these two were rulers, no doubt because they were the chief advisers of the deceased king Louis the Younger. The Bavarian continuation has a new tone: a fair number of Bavarian leading men are mentioned in the accounts of the 880s and 890s, though the king is still at the centre of the political world. The author or authors also show an emotional commitment to a particular region – Pannonia, the eastern march of Bavaria – of a kind rare in Frankish historical writing. Here too, as in the shifting emphases on Slav and Italian affairs, the annalists were probably reflecting real changes in the world they were depicting; a world which was slowly becoming more regionalised and in which the gap between rulers and their leading men was closing.

**Earlier editions and translations**

The text was published twice in the early modern era, by Pierre Pithou,\(^{44}\) who used the incomplete ms. ‘3d’, and by Marquard Freher,\(^{45}\)

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\(^{40}\) See above, n. 10.

\(^{41}\) Below: 38 and 139–40.


\(^{44}\) Pithou 1588.

\(^{45}\) Freher 1600: 1–55.
days to a certain island in the Rhine near Ingelheim. His sickness increased and he died on June 29. His body was brought to the city of Metz and buried with ceremony in the church of the holy Arnulf the Confessor.  

The Franks chose Lothar, who came too late from Italy, to rule over them for the future in his father's place. They say that the dying emperor designated him as the one who should take the government of the kingdom, sending him the royal insignia, that is, the sceptre and crown of the empire. His brothers did not agree to this, and prepared to rise up against him. First his brother Louis came with a strong force of the eastern Franks to defend the part of the kingdom east of the Rhine and met him as he came with an army outside the walls of Mainz. An agreement was made and judgement deferred until another time. Lothar set out to the west against Charles. Louis bound the eastern Franks, Alemans, Saxons and Thuringians to him with oaths of fidelity. 

841

Meanwhile, as Louis was setting garrisons in the places near the Rhine and preparing the defence of the eastern bank against invasion by the westerners, Lothar, worried by rumours brought by messengers of this, gave up pursuing Charles and returned in April, crossing the Rhine secretly with his army near Worms. He compelled Louis, who was betrayed by some of his followers and almost surrounded, to retreat into Bavaria. After he [Lothar] had set guards whom he thought faithful to him over those parts, he turned his plans and his forces once again to fighting Charles, who had already begun to pitch his camp beyond the Meuse. Meanwhile Louis, whom Charles had summoned to his aid by messengers, passed through Alemannia. Here those counts whom Lothar had left as guards met him with an army in the Ries. A battle took place, and Count Adalbert, the instigator of these disputes, was killed, and with him an uncountable number of men, on May 13. Louis, the victor in the battle, crossed the Rhine and came into Gaul to bring help to his brother Charles. When the three brothers met in the Auxerrois near the villa of Fontenoy they could not agree about the division of the kingdom because Lothar claimed supreme rule for himself. They decided that the issue should be determined by the sword and subjected to God's judgement. On June 25 a great battle was fought between them, and there was such slaughter on both sides that no one can recall a greater loss among the Frankish people in the present age. Lothar indeed began to withdraw to the palace of Aachen of the same day; Louis and Charles overran his camp, gathered up and buried the bodies of their followers, and parted from each other. Charles remained in the west; Louis came to the royal

8 Bishop of Metz 614-29, d. around 640. He was one of the ancestors of the Carolingian family: on Metz and the Carolingians see Oxcell 1967.
9 'too late' = seroi. According to Nithard II, 1 [Scholz 1972: 141], Lothar advanced cautiously from Italy, wishing to see how the land lay, but since he was in Italy at the time of his father's death and issued diplomas at Strasbourg at the end of July the delay cannot have been all that great: D Lo I 44, dated July 24, is falsified but its date is confirmed by the genuine D Lo I 45 of July 25.
10 This is confirmed by Astronmer, c. 69 (MGH SS 2: 647), which adds that Louis specified that Charles should keep the part of the kingdom allowed him by the agreement made at Worms in 838. Lothar was received as his father's successor in August 840, at a meeting at Ingelheim which wasattended by a large number of secular and ecclesiastical magnates from the whole of the Frankish empire; Dümmler 1887a: 139-43.
11 On the meeting see Nithard II, 1 [Scholz 1972: 142]; it is to be dated around August, since Lothar issued a diploma at Mainz on August 13 (D Lo I 46).
12 ... dilato in alius tempus placito: placitum is a judicial term, though it may also be used of a battle.
13 For Louis's hold on these regions see above, 838 with n. 4, and compare AB 841 (Nelson 1991: 49). Louis was in Westfalia in October (DD LG 26-8).
villa of Salz around the middle of August. Lothar, having again collected his men from all sides, came to Mainz and ordered the Saxons to come to him at Speyer with his little son Lothar. He himself, crossing the Rhine as if to drive his brother Louis into exile among the peoples beyond the frontiers, broke off the pursuit and returned to Worms. There he celebrated the wedding of his daughter and again set off into Gaul against Charles. He spent the whole of the winter in wasted effort and returned to Aachen.

On December 25 a comet appeared in the sign of Aquarius.

842

Louis, seeing now that Lothar remained obstinate in his original intention and would still not give up although defeated, collected a fair-sized army of the easterners and crossed the Rhine. He received the surrender of the cities on the western bank of the Rhine, who supported Lothar. Charles met him at the town of Argentoratum, which is now called Strasbourg. From there they set out with a common purpose and forced Lothar, deserted by his men, in whom he had placed much trust, to flee from the villa of Sinzig, where he was staying, on March 19. They supposed that he was making for Italy, having given up hope as it was rumoured, and so divided the part of the kingdom which he had held up to now between them. But Lothar, having gathered a very trustworthy army, took up a position near the Gallic town of Mâcon. His brothers pursued him there, and as they saw that he was now more ready to make peace with them, preferred to make a treaty rather than to go on for a long time in savage fighting. They made the condition, however, that forty of the leading men from each side should be chosen to come together and draw up a uniform inventory of the kingdom, so that it might later be easier to divide it amongst them equally. When these things had been done, Louis returned from Mâcon and held a general assembly in the month of August in the villa called Salz. Then he set out for Saxony, where there was a very serious conspiracy of freedmen seeking to oppress their lawful lords. He crushed this ruthlessly by sentencing the ringleaders to death. Towards autumn he met his brother Charles in Worms, while Lothar remained in the villa of Thionville. When their representatives, meeting in the castle of Koblenz, were unable to agree on the partition of the kingdom, they put off the judgement until another time and each returned to his own kingdom.

In the same year there was an eclipse of the moon on March 30, the fifth day of the week before Easter, in the tenth hour of the night.

7 He is found at Heilbronn on August 18 (D LG 30).
8 Lothar was at Mainz on August 20 (D Lo I 61). Even after Fontenoy he still had considerable support among the east Frankish magnates; cf. Nithard III, 3 (Scholz 1972: 159), AB 841 (Nelson 1991: 51) and the opening of AP's annal for 842. He had also been in contact with the leaders of the Stellinga uprising in Saxony, promising them his support in return for theirs; see 842 n. 6 for references.
9 A repetition of his tactics and those of his father; the attack, confirmed by AB 841 (Nelson 1991: 51), cannot have been much more than a feint, however, as by September 1 Lothar was in Thionville heading west (D Lo I 162).
10 Her name and that of her husband are not known; for speculation see Dümmler 1887a: 167 n. 2.
1 The cities (and their surrounding territories) of Mainz, Worms and Speyer, which finally came to Louis by the Treaty of Verdin in 843.
2 A reference to the Strasbourg Oaths taken by Charles the Bald, Louis the German and their followers; see Nithard III, 4-5 (Scholz 1972: 161-3) and also AB 842 (Nelson 1991: 52).
3 We have no details about who it was who deserted Lothar; compare AB 842 (Nelson 1991: 53). The date of March 19 is a conjectural emendation of the manuscript tradition, which has March 15 or 16, when the two brothers were still at Mainz, cf. Nithard III, 7 (Scholz 1972: 164).
5 On the way in which the various proposed divisions culminating in the Treaty of Verdun were drawn up see Nithard IV, 4 (Scholz 1972: 170-1), AB 842 and 843 (Nelson 1991: 55-6 and 56) and Ganshof 1971: 289-302.
6 The Stellinga uprising in Saxony between 841 and 845 is one of the very rare examples of a popular revolt in early medieval Europe. The Saxons seem to have been divided into three castes (excluding slaves): nobles, freemen and freedmen. The conquest of Saxony by Charles the Great was achieved to a large extent by winning over the Saxon nobility. The consequence was a depression of the status of the freemen, and a tendency for both freemen and freedmen to become dependent peasants, whereas previously they had enjoyed considerable political rights; Reuter 1991: 66-7. According to Nithard IV, 2 (Scholz 1972: 166-7), Lothar had promised the rebels the rights their forefathers had had when they were still heathens, and both Nithard and AB 842 (Nelson 1991: 54) imply that their revolt was combined with an anti-Christian reaction. A com-parable revolt by the Slav Liutizi against Saxon domination in 893 following Otto II's defeat in southern Italy shows a similar mixture of politico-economic and religious motivation. The Stellinga - the name means 'companions, comrades' (Wagner 1980: 131-3) - was taken very seriously, and the penalties handed out were brutal; compare the similar treatment of the peasants' self-defence league in the Seine basin reported in AB 859 (Nelson 1991: 89). A final uprising in 843 was crushed by the Saxon nobility themselves; Nithard IV, 6 (Scholz 1972: 173). On the whole subject see Müller-Mertens 1972.
7 On the reasons for the delay see Nithard IV, 4-5 (Scholz 1972: 169-72).