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John R. Sommerfeldt,

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E. Rozanne Elder

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ST. PETER: AN ARCHITECT OF THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE

WILLIAM M. DALY
Boston College

In good part history grows out of the lives of real men.* Often enough, though, it is shaped and moved by their legendary ideals and deeds as well. Alexander would have been amazed to hear of his later, chivalric, involvements. Charlemagne would have found more than his age and physical appearance in the *Chanson de Roland* astounding. And it is permissible to imagine a blush on the face of Betsy Ross if she could have heard what subsequent generations of American school children were to be told about her singleminded, patriotic domesticity. Yet, in these and many other instances, legend has moved men and women, and thereby made history.

The discussion which follows focuses attention on an example of legendary afterlife which did something to move early medieval Europeans along the historical paths they followed. Its influence was more significant than is always recognized. The afterlife in question here is that of St. Peter. The reader will discover that Frankish, and specifically Carolingian, devotion to St. Peter became a strong, prominent thread in the web of bonds and ideas out of which the Carolingian Empire was created.

In the opinion of some scholars, that prosperous, small businessman with the muscular enthusiasm and the capacity for headlong commitment who became Peter, was a friend of the Zealot cause when he was a young man. If so, his later role as the patron of the Carolingian Empire constitutes an ironic outcome to his strenuous real-life expenditure of mature energies in quite other directions than bringing down the Roman Empire. Perhaps, though, foreknowledge would not have entirely displeased Peter. For one component of Frankish feeling by the mid-eighth century was a somewhat supercilious attitude toward the Roman conquests of old, and another was an occasionally intense identification with Old Testament Jewish heroes. One hopes, and indeed suspects, that Peter would have been shocked at some of the tactics employed by his successors as they worked to forward his, or more properly speaking their, causes in Italy. Nonetheless, it is possible that his youthful political enthusiasm would have been rekindled by Frankish success in Italy, as well as by its outcome in the famous events at his tomb in A.D. 800. In any case, St. Peter and his tomb had become highly conditioned ideas in Carolingian minds by the year 800.

The conversion of Constantine gave new significance to St. Peter in the West, even though the emperor himself was not oriented toward Rome. His reign brought peace for Christians and with it, among other results, the

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The following abbreviations are employed in the footnotes. *CC: Codex Carolinus* (ed. Wilhelm Gundlach, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi,* I; Berlin, 1892); *DACL: Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (edd. F. Cabrol, H. Leclercq, and I. Marrou; 15 vols. in 30, Paris, 1907-1953) *HZ: Historische Zeitschrift; P.L.:* J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina* (221 vols., Paris, 1841-1864); *RH: Revue historique; ZK: Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte.*

possibility that St. Peter's bones could be restored to their traditional resting place. Constantine himself was so devoted to St. Peter that he sponsored the building of St. Peter's church—the one which preceded the present Renaissance building—in a most difficult location. He had a large bronze sarcophagus built on the spot to enclose the saint's remains. Royal and private pilgrims and donors, Roman and German, abounded thereafter.[1]

Gradually over the next centuries, piety, superstition, and the fear that plunderers might steal Peter's relics, combined to produce St. Peter's Confession. The Confession was an evolutionary enclosure within the church and over the tomb. It was made up of increasingly ornate and monumental decorative and protective devices which, as they collected over time, made access to the relics both more impressive and more difficult. Constantine's plain gold cross attached to the sarcophagus was the unobtrusive beginning of a decorative tendency which eventually saw the addition of gold, silver, marble, and precious stones in the form of altars, candelabras, plaques, columns, statues, paintings, barriers, gateways, and grilles. By the early sixth century, direct access to the relics had been obstructed.

Important as the additions made to the Confession from the fifth century onward were, they appear as a comparatively restricted and unsteady stream when compared with the lavish flood of additions which the *Liber pontificalis* records for the lifetimes of Pepin III and his son, Charlemagne. These additions reached their climax in the reigns of Popes Hadrian I and Leo III, then tapered off quickly a few decades before the Saracen sack of St. Peter's in 846, when most of them were torn out and carried off. For a moment the Carolingian north reacted to this shock with more unanimity of concern than it could summon up for its domestic crises, but with as little success. The death throes as well as the birth pangs of the Empire were interknit with what happened to Peter in Rome at Peter's Confession.

As will be noted in what follows, Pepin and Charles were deeply concerned about the Confession. They made important gifts to it. One suspects that Hadrian's giant candelabra of 1365 lights in the form of a cross and Leo III's long list of additions, which included covering the walls of the Confession with gold and the erection of great jeweled, golden gates, derived some, if not most, of their sustenance from Carolingian gifts. In this respect, the huge quantity of gold, which Charlemagne captured in 795 from the Avars and divided mainly between Aachen and Rome, suggests an interesting financial-cultural story, the implications of which for the Carolingian Renaissance Fichtenau has already discussed, not without some cynicism.[2]

The Confession had other emotional magnetism for the Carolingians. Its influence included the fact that Pepin's and Charlemagne's formal donations of territory to St. Peter were deposited there.[3] Early in his reign, when Charles visited St. Peter's for this purpose, he was probably granted the rare

1. The detail in this and the following three paragraphs is drawn from H. Leclercq, "Pierre (Saint)," *DACL,* 14/1 (1939), 902-908.
2. Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire* (trans. Peter Munz; Oxford, 1957), ch. 4.
3. Louis Halphen, *Charlemagne et l'Empire carolingien* (Paris, 1949), 43, 106-110; Christian Pfister and François Ganshof, "Le règne de Pépin le Bref (751-768)," and "Le règne de Charlemagne jusqu'au rétablissement de l'Empire en Occident (768-800)," in Ferdinand Lot, Christian Pfister, and François Ganshof, *Les destinées de l'Empire en Occident de 395 à 888* (Vol. I, pts. 1-2 of *Histoire du moyen âge,* ed. Gustave Glotz, 1940-41), 412, 442.

privilege of being allowed to view the tomb itself.[4] As will appear in what follows, the *laudes regiae,* which Pepin and Charles valued so intensely, were usually sung there when they were sung at Rome. One of Charles' sons was baptized there, making Charles and Hadrian spiritual co-fathers, and, when Charles sojourned in Rome, he seems to have preferred the vicinity of the tomb to the exarch's usual residence for his lodging place.[5] The mass which Charles was attending on Christmas Day, 800, had been arranged at the Confession as the occasion for anointing his son, Charles.[6] The fact that a better known event also occurred that day and that Charlemagne was later said to be surprised and disaffected by it must not obscure the fact that if Aachen was at one polar extremity of the magnetic field in which his political plans developed, Rome—or to be more accurate, the Confession of Peter—was at the other.

Recognition that veneration for St. Peter was involved in Carolingian attachment to the papacy and in their politics is not new. Unfortunately, Zwölfer's *Sankt Peter,*[7] which appeared almost forty years ago, produced so much controversy about its emphases and omissions that the subject itself tended to submerge from view. Zwölfer found the origin of north European devotion to Peter among the English converts of the seventh century. Irish and English monks, as he saw it, cooperated with the papacy to introduce the devotion to the Continent, where it became virtually the dynastic religion of the Carolingian family. The Carolingians commended themselves in Germanic fashion to Peter as their patron and protector as they undertook to displace the Merovingians (associated in Zwölfer's opinion with St. Martin and St. Denis) and build their own political order. Zwölfer tended to minimize Pepin's secular motivations as he came into conflict with the Lombards and moved into Italian involvements. He pointed to, but did not explore, later examples of Petrine influence upon Carolingian monarchs.

Much of what Zwölfer wrote has not stood up well. Ewig has shown recently that veneration for Peter was unusually strong in Gaul even in the Merovingian Age and that it was not a Carolingian monopoly. It is clear, too, that there were many strong, non-religious dynamics within Carolingian politics.[8] They sometimes wear a thin religious covering. Nonetheless, since Zwölfer wrote, the religious components of the Carolingian order have also received increasing emphasis in such matters as its cultural renaissance, its

4. Leclercq, "Pierre," p. 906.
5. Halphen, *Charlemagne,* p. 113. Peter Classen, "Karl der Grosse, das Papsttum und Byzanz," *Karl der Grosse* (ed. Wolfgang Braunfels; Düsseldorf, 1965) I, 550. Classen assumes that the choice was the pope's.
6. Pfister, Ganshof, "Le rétablissement de l'Empire en Occident (800-814), *Destinées,* 1/2, 475.
7. Theodor Zwölfer, *Sankt Peter, Apostelfürst und Himmelspfortner, seine Verehrung bei den Angelsachsen und Franken* (Stuttgart, 1929).
8. Eugen Ewig, "Der Petrus- und Apostelkult im spätrömischen und fränkischen Gallien," *ZK,* 71 (1960), 213-15, has found abundant evidence that Christian Gaul was giving St. Peter unique reverence well before the arrival of the Irish and English monks. The tradition reached back to Roman times. It embraced and was extended by the Merovingian kings since the time of Clovis. Some of the contemporary reviews of Zwölfer's study regarded his theses as overstated in some part; see especially Hans von Campenhausen in *ZK,* 12 (1930), 461-62, and Josef Sauer in *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins,* 45 (1931), 508-511. Zwölfer's views were several times criticized in the course of Erich Caspar's *Geschichte des Papsttums von der Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft* (Tübingen, 2 vols., 1930-1933), for example, II, 699, 710-11, 788.

social legislation, and the notion of empire itself.[9] Provided that one does not simplistically overemphasize the religious content and implications of the documents that survive, there is something to be gained from a new look at what the evidence has to say about the import of St. Peter for Pepin and Charlemagne.

The great bulk of information which we have about the attitude of early Carolingians toward St. Peter and the uses to which the papacy put their veneration for the Apostle derives mostly from the nearly one hundred letters to Pepin, Charlemagne, and others collected in the *Codex Carolinus*. We owe the survival of these letters to the concern of Charlemagne himself. That he valued them highly is indicated by the fact that he worried that the letters in their original form were in danger of being lost. Less than ten years before his imperial coronation and at a time when pride in his royal prestige was taking on large dimensions at his court, he ordered them collected and transcribed. The introduction to the *Codex* attributes this decision to his desire that "his successors would not in any way lack useful testimony provided by Holy Church."[10] We may speculate that the editing and transcription itself served to put into circulation at court many or all of the themes to be discussed in what follows.

Spread as they are over a half century stretching from the latter part of the rule of Charles Martel as mayor of the palace to almost the middle of Charlemagne's reign, the letters in the *Codex* speak to us of many things: embassies, exchanges of gifts, announcements of births, negotiations about baptisms, and so on.

But by far the most prominent single theme is voiced in urgent, repetitious, and often strident papal appeals to Carolingian leaders to secure Central Italy against the Lombards, or against the Lombards and the Greeks, so that Peter's and his vicar's rights and territories will be secure and prosperous, in the sense that contemporary popes defined security and prosperity. Every crisis at Rome, and even many minor disturbances and rumors of threat, brought peremptory or pleading letters; and what the popes regarded as successes produced commendation and exaltation.

At the center of the many bonds which the popes elaborated between themselves and the Carolingians lay the promise which Pepin had made, probably first at Ponthion, and then more formally and in writing at Quiersy in early 754.[11] The document itself has not been preserved, but its existence was repeatedly referred to in later years, both by popes and by Carolingian monarchs. It bound Pepin and his successors to Pope Stephen II and his successors to the end of time.[12] Stephen rehearsed its contents when, in 755,

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9. Recognition of the importance of religious themes and concerns in the development of the Carolingian Renaissance and in Carolingian politics and political thought characterizes most studies of the last generation, for example, A. Kleinclausz, *Charlemagne* (Paris, 1934) and *Alcuin* (Paris, 1948); Louis Halphen, "L'idée d'état sous les carolingiens, *RH*, 185 (1939), 50-70, and *Charlemagne;* F. L. Ganshof, *Recherches sur les capitulaires* (Paris, 1958); H. X. Arquillière, *L'Augustinisme politique* (2nd ed., Paris, 1955); Robert Folz, *Le couronnement impérial de Charlemagne* (Paris, 1964); Percy Schramm, "Karl der Grosse," *HZ*, 198 (1964), 306-345. Although Fichtenau presents a sometimes sharp devaluation of the religious motives at work among many of the court scholars, including Alcuin, he roots some important intellectual and social attitudes of Charlemagne and his contemporaries in religious values. See his *Carolingian Empire*, ch. II.
10. *CC*, Introduction, 476.
11. Pfister, Ganshof, "Règne de Pépin," pp. 409-410.
12. *CC, 12,* 508; *37,* 548.

he was working to persuade Pepin to return to Italy for a second campaign against the Lombards: "And you promised blessed Peter to secure his rights and to see to the defense of the Holy Church of God, and as a true *fidelis* of God, to move speedily and with pure heart to fight for the defense of God's church."[13] The pope referred to the promise as a written donation.[14] Indeed, he gave it the binding force of a chirograph which Pepin must honor if he cared about his eternal bliss.[15]

The promise was reasserted, sometimes effusively, by both sides throughout the letters, especially at the beginning of a new reign, or when some special common interest came to focus, but also at other times. On it the popes rested their appeals for every important political request they made.[16]

In forging and exploiting the oath, Pope Stephen was tapping a vein of Carolingian sentiment already well developed. Early letters in the *Codex* could speak of Frankish veneration for Peter as a well known fact before 750.[17] One particularly clear example of this veneration was Pepin's assertion that St. Peter supported him against the Bavarians and his insistence that his defeat of the Bavarians in 743 signified God's and Peter's preference for him.[18] The Apostle's sponsorship of Carolingian victory was a theme often expressed in papal letters in the next forty years. The Franks were proud of the relationship. They called on St. Peter as they went into battle against the Lombards in 754. They and the popes thereafter regarded their victory as a miracle produced by the saint's intercession.[19] Both the pope and Charlemagne credited the Franks' victories over the Saxons to him. Charlemagne insistently requested prayers at the Confession of Peter during his most pressing Saxon crisis.[20]

Even back in Merovingian days, Frankish writers had begun to reshape their legendary past to equate it with that of the Trojans and the Romans. By the mid-eighth century, they were already sure that they were the elect of God, as one can learn from the preface to the Salic Law composed at that time.[21] Their elect status was taken into account and ex-

13. *CC, 7,* 492.
14. ". . . Iusticiam beati Petri, in quantum potuistis, exigere studuistis, et per donacionis paginam restituendum confirmavit bonitas vestra." *CC, 6,* 489.
15. *CC, 7,* 492-93.
16. References to the promise occur in many letters, for example, *12, 14, 21, 24, 34, 36, 37, 40, 42, 44, 45, 50, 53, 60.*
17. *CC, 1,* 476, 477; *5,* 488; *6,* 488-89.
18. Frankish evidence independent of papal correspondence is discussed by Zwölfer, *Sankt Peter,* pp. 115-16.
19. *CC, 6,* 489; *7,* 491, 493; *8,* 498; *35,* 543; *50,* 569-70, 570; *53,* 575; *60,* 587; *76,* 607, 608; *83,* 617.
20. See below, n. 39.
21. Possibly from the fifth, and certainly from the seventh, century Frankish writers and political leaders engaged in remaking the Frankish legendary traditions about their past to give the Frankish people kinship and equal prestige with the Trojans and Romans. Between the early seventh and late eighth centuries, they became superior to the Romans and uniquely Christian. The later stage of this inflation is fully voiced in the second Prologue of the Salic Law, which appears to have been composed about 760 by someone close to the ways of thinking of Pepin III. See Karl A. Eckhardt (ed.), *Lex Salica, 100-Titel Text* (Weimar, 1953), 27, 54-55. Some of Eckhardt's views have been questioned by other scholars, for example, Rudolf Buchner, *HZ,* 182 (1956), 373. For further discussion of aspects of the Franks' notion of their exalted position in history, see Eugen Ewig, "Zum christlicher Königsgedanken im Frühmittelalter," *Das Königtum* (ed. Th. Mayer; Lindau and Konstanz, 1956), pp. 21-24, 42-65; Ernst Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae, a Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley, 1946), pp. 58-59; Folz, *Couronnement,* pp. 100-101; J. M. Wallace-

ploited by the popes from the time of Stephen II onward. As this theme developed, the Franks emerge as a people protected (probably in a proto-feudal sense as Zwölfer has maintained) by St. Peter, and they excel other kingdoms in their loyalty to Peter.[22] They are told that their fame in this respect is manifest. While the Christians of Rome are Peter's special wards, the Franks, who are the Romans' brothers, are his specially chosen ones among all nations.[23] Like their newly anointed royal dynasty, they are "a holy people, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation." Accordingly, the pope can reassure them that he praises them abroad throughout the world and that their fame stands above that of all other nations.[24]

Frankish election, insofar as the popes were concerned, was closely associated with the elect status of the new dynasty. Stephen II gave Carolingian election the bulk of his emphasis when he discussed the notion of election. He rooted it in Pepin's promise and associated it with his and his sons' anointing. To Pepin, the pope wrote that he had been predestined while in his mother's womb and that he and his sons had been raised above their ancestors and chosen by God as His own *peculiares* above all other kings and peoples. At least twice during their father's lifetime, his sons, the future Charlemagne and Carloman, received educational essays in the form of papal letters. These letters assured them that the qualities of pre-election and unique prestige inhered in them, too, and were associated with their having been anointed for the defense of the liberty of the Roman Church.[25] Among many other related experiences of his childhood and early manhood, charges of this sort must have stuck in Charles' memory to be considered as occasion suggested in later years.

Assurances of election, however welcome to Frankish leaders, were rarely sufficient by themselves to persuade them to undertake difficult projects in Italy. In the long run, the popes of the era had to take what they could get from an increasingly knowing Pepin and an increasingly powerful Charlemagne. As best they could, they narrowed the gap between royal and papal policies in Italy by developing and exploiting a battery of persuasive themes.

Three of Stephen II's letters in 755 and early 756 repay detailed examination for their persuasive themes.[26] In the course of 755, Pepin's reluctance to return to Italy for a second campaign against the Lombards had become quite clear. As a Lombard siege of Rome loomed, the pope decided to go all out in his rhetoric. In doing so he worked out a battery of motivational themes many of which he and his successors repeated in subsequent letters of the *Codex*. Stephen's apparatus of persuasion went well beyond the simple (and ineffective) words of an earlier letter that year, or those of his predecessor, Gregory III, who had also ineffectively reminded Charles Martel fifteen years earlier:

> Do not despise my entreaty nor close your ears to my claim; and then the prince of the apostles will not close the kingdom of heaven to you. I adjure you by the living and true God

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Hadrill, "Fredegar and the History of France," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library,* 40 (1957-1958), 527-50, and his introduction to his edition of Fredegar's *Chronicon liber quartus cum continuationibus* (London, 1960), xi-xxiv.

22. *CC, 5,* 488; *6,* 488; *10,* 503.
23. *CC, 10,* 502, 503.
24. *CC, 39,* 552 (citing 1 Peter 2:9); *39,* 552; *45,* 561.
25. *CC, 26,* 530; *35,* 543.
26. *CC, 7, 8,* and *10.*

> and by those most holy keys of the Confession of blessed Peter, which I have sent you as a token of supplication, not to prefer your friendship with the king of the Lombards to your love for the prince of the Apostles.[27]

As will be recalled from what has already been said about Pepin's oath of Quiersy, Stephen rehearsed its content in some detail in one of these three letters. His persuasive strategy stressed the implications of the oath. Pepin's readiness to defend St. Peter's Church had involved him in the welfare of all Christians, he reminded the King, for Peter's Church is the *caput* of all churches and, as such, enables the salvation of Christians. Assumption of the unique obligation to defend Peter's rights confers on the ruler who undertakes it a relationship to Peter above that of other rulers and leads to the spread of his good name throughout the world.

The pope went on to inform Pepin that his renown had accordingly begun to spread after his recent, miraculous victory over the Lombards. Now as he hung back, gossip was spreading that the Franks were reluctant to fight. One of these three letters was written during the siege of Rome. It reported a taunt made by the Lombards outside the walls: "We have you surrounded and you can't slip through our hands. Let the Franks come and rescue you now!"[28]

Worse would follow, the pope predicted. Reneging on the oath would lose Pepin God's support. His enemies would prevail at home; the Franks would be attacked on their borders. Furthermore, all of them, Pepin, his sons, his counsellors, and the whole Frankish people ought to contemplate their status in the next world, for life is short and a fiery judgment awaits the wicked. Peter is not only a generous and loyal patron, as his past favors to the Franks have shown; he is also, be it remembered, an exacting lord. Do they want to see him standing before the Judge on the Last Day, holding Pepin's void chirograph in his hand? Does Pepin want to risk separation on that Day from his weeping wife and sons?[29]

Another of Stephen's three related letters written during the crisis of 755-756 purports to be a letter actually written by St. Peter himself to Pepin, his sons, and the Franks, whom he addresses as his adopted sons. Not surprisingly, most of Peter's themes match Stephen's. In addition, as their patron, he promises them anything that they will ask, so long as they return to do battle for him at Rome. He warns them that if they fail to come they may well suffer the fate of the Chosen People before them and be dispersed. St. Peter even provides Pepin with an advance text of the sentence he will pronounce upon him if (as he feels sure Pepin will not do) he should refuse Peter's plea. It runs as follows:

> We, by the authority of the one and holy Trinity, through the Apostolic grace which is given to me [sic] by Christ, the Lord, separate you from the Kingdom of God and from life eternal for transgressing our exhortation.[30]

It so happened that Pepin and the Franks returned to Italy and drubbed the Lombards. Then Pepin made his historic grant of territory

27. *CC, 2,* 478-79.
28. *CC, 8,* 495; *7,* 491; and see *10,* 501; *11,* 504.
29. *CC, 7,* 492-93; *8,* 496-97.
30. *CC, 10,* 503. The bad syntax here is not mine, nor presumably does it indicate that St. Peter's grasp of Latin was poor after living some centuries at Rome. The culprit would appear to be a papal or Carolingian scribe.

to Peter. Stephen II's next letter was a paean of more optimistic themes. It proclaimed that another miracle had been worked; Rome is in a state of jubilation; the pope is actively informing all nations about Pepin's great deeds. Stephen ended the letter by calling God's blessing down on Pepin's family and his seed to the end of time. He prayed God to extend Carolingian authority over the Franks forever and to grant the King eternal joy in heaven.[31]

Thereafter, in one or another combination, themes of this sort predominated in the letters of subsequent popes. They soon became almost formulaic. Often placed at the conclusions of papal letters to the Carolingians, they included the following concerns: peace and orthodoxy, the ruler's and his family's health and prosperity, protection against adversaries at home, continuing victories over barbarian nations, fecundity, longevity, and eternal joy, including the privilege of reigning with a crown beside Christ.[32]

Stephen's letter of 757 lies near the beginning of the Papal States. It seems also to witness the very early stages of an important rite in the emerging liturgy of medieval kingship. When assembled and combined, as I have done with them here, Stephen's intercessory phrases seem to be echoes from the *laudes regiae*. In the opinion of Ernst Kantorowicz, this prayer rite, which was to become so dramatic and creative a part of medieval European theology, was a Frankish adaptation of Insular litany-rites probably combined with older Roman ones. Kantorowicz found the circumstantial evidence strong for the emergence of the *laudes regiae* toward the middle of the eighth century at the Carolingian court, though the first certain recorded celebration of them that he could find in the *Liber pontificalis* was for the year 774, when Pope Hadrian ordered them sung for Charlemagne.[33]

The letters in the *Codex Carolinus* provide considerable detail to fill in the gap. The first appearance of a cluster of intercessory themes was in 756. It appears in a postscript to the querulous letter which Stephen wrote during the siege. It is juxtaposed with mention of the presence in Rome of Pepin's ambassadors, Abbot Warnehar and Count Thomaric, one of whom had been taking part in the defense of the besieged city. This juxtaposition may indicate that Pepin had, through one or both of these ambassadors, requested the pope to sing lauds.[34] The next year, the term *"laudes"* itself occurred in the letter of grandiloquent rejoicing just summarized in part. The pope used the expression *"extensa voce melliflue . . . laudes persolvere indeficienter."* Further on he referred to the ceremony as *"magnas gratiarum persolvere laudes,"* and he associated them with the liturgical hours.[35] A few years later, in 761, Pope Paul I in a similar con-

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31. *CC, 11,* 504-505, 507.
32. For example, letters *17,* 517; *21,* 524; *24,* 528; *26,* 531; *30,* 536-37; *33,* 540; *50,* 570; *62,* 590; *9,* 611.
33. Kantorowicz, *Laudes,* pp. 13-64. The text of one of the two oldest versions of the *laudes* is printed by Kantorowicz, pp. 15-16. See also Folz, *Couronnement,* pp. 101-103. Mabillon's text of the other version may be found in P.L. 138, cols. 885-88.
34. *CC, 8,* 497-98. Kantorowicz has observed that certain phrases inscribed on a crucifix presented to the basilica of Ostia by Pope Stephen seem to echo a portion of the *laudes.* He suspects that this circumstantial evidence indicates an earlier origin than he was able to establish from the evidence that he examined. *Laudes,* p. 22.
35. *CC, 11,* 504-505.

text employed the term "lauds of the litany," the technical phrase which distinguishes royal lauds from other types of lauds.[36]

Likely or clear references to lauds sung for the royal family occur in at least eleven other instances down to within a year of the end of the *Codex*.[37] Various expressions indicate that at certain times, especially when the king was campaigning, the royal lauds were sung frequently. In 774, when Charlemagne visited Rome at Eastertime during his Lombard campaign, his progress toward the city was accompanied by the strewing of palms and olive branches while lauds were sung.[38] If defending Peter's territories was part of the bargain between the Carolingians and the Apostle, the singing of royal lauds was early, and possibly from the first, associated with his vicar's share in this bargain. Charles anxiously requested them at times, especially when campaigning against the Saxons.[39]

St. Peter had a prominent connection with the royal lauds. On at least one occasion they were spoken of as lauds to God and Peter,[40] and mention of them was otherwise associated with him as the protector of the Carolingians. Indeed, they were usually offered at the Confession of Peter himself, just above his tomb.[41] One of the four days for which Hadrian ordered that lauds be sung throughout Christian lands in 786 for Charlemagne's victory over the Saxons was St. Peter's feast day in June.[42]

One of the occasions when lauds were sung occurred some time after the death of Stephen II, possibly in 761. At that time, Pope Paul I formally received an altar that Pepin had sent to Stephen in honor of St. Peter. While lauds were solemnly sung, the altar was brought down from the *aula* of St. Peter's Church. From there, representatives of Pepin presented it in the Confession over St. Peter's tomb or, as the pope said in his letter to Pepin, "over the body of the gatekeeper of the kingdom of heaven." There he blessed it with the oil of chrism, and offered mass on it for Pepin's eternal salvation and the security of his kingdom. The pope forbade under pain of excommunication that the altar ever be removed from the Church. He reported to Pepin: "Behold! Your memorial stands shining in the Apostolic *aula* for eternity."[43]

Other royal gifts witnessed the eternal bond between the Carolingians and Peter. One especially deserves remark. It was a cross which Charlemagne sent Pope Hadrian, probably in the year 787 or 788, at a time when he was anxious that papal intercession for his cause not cease. The pope assured him that he had placed the cross in St. Peter's to be kept there until the end of time.[44] Consciously or not, Charlemagne had duplicated Constantine's decorative gift.

Gifts such as these symbolized the bond to the end of time and into

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36. *CC, 21,* 524.
37. Clear references occur in letters *24,* 528; *43,* 557; *50,* 570 (which confirms and strengthens Kantorowicz's reference from the *Liber pontificalis), 60,* 686; *61,* 588; *76,* 607-608; *79,* 611; *94,* 633. Among probable references are letters *53,* 575; *99,* 653.
38. *CC, 37,* 548; *Liber pontificalis* (edd. L. Duchesne and J. Bayet; 2nd ed., Paris, 3 vols., 1955-1957), I, 495ff.
39. *CC, 76,* 608; *94,* 632 (both of which indicate explicit requests); and *50,* 570; *61,* 588; *79,* 611; *94,* 633 (where requests seem to be implied).
40. *CC, 60,* 586.
41. *CC, 21,* 524; *61,* 588; *94,* 633.
42. *CC, 76,* 608.
43. *CC, 21,* 524.
44. *CC, 79,* 611.

eternity which the Carolingians and the popes agreed that Pepin's oath to Peter had initiated. Another characteristic that popes prominently attributed to Carolingian kings was concern and responsibility for orthodoxy. As soon as Pepin's involvement with Italy involved contacts or negotiations with the Greeks, Pope Stephen II began to amplify his responsibilities under the oath to include protection of orthodoxy.[45] Fearful of a deal between Pepin and the Greek court and of the advance of the Iconoclasm in the early sixties, Stephen's successor, Paul I, warned him about assailants of the orthodox faith and repeatedly reminded him of his responsibility to sustain orthodoxy.[46] The pope also made a point at this time of stressing the theme to Pepin's sons when he wrote to them of their present and future responsibilities.[47] When Pepin's loyalty was assured, Paul I hailed him as defender of the orthodox faith and began including among his titles the phrase "orthodox king."[48] Later popes usually discussed other issues, but Pope Hadrian I sometimes took pains to praise Charlemagne for his orthodoxy. One of these occasions will be discussed at the end of this article.

The oath between the Carolingians and the popes implied not only a status lasting until the end of time and into eternity, and a special responsibility for orthodoxy, but a unique prestige. Stephen II had affirmed that Pepin, his sons, and all of the Franks loved and were favored by St. Peter beyond all other peoples. His successor went further and asserted that Pepin and his sons were "superior to all kings." He associated their unique status with their devotion to Peter and their election by God as protectors of the Church. Years later, to motivate Charlemagne to support papal policy in Italy, Pope Hadrian appealed to his realization that he was pre-eminent over other kings.[49]

A context which stressed the special, indeed unique, ties of the Carolingians to the Church was bound to relate their role also to the notion of the Christian People, one of the master themes of early medieval political and social theology. Stephen II included the theme in his persuasive and subsequent congratulatory efforts of the late fifties. He observed that to protect the Church by campaigning in Italy would be to achieve the security of Christians. The Christian world, he wrote, was watching Pepin and his sons to see what their response to Peter's needs would be. The Carolingian victories in Italy were miracles for all Christians to witness and discuss, and they moved Christian spirits from sorrow to joy.[50]

Paul I continued and elaborated the theme. Pepin's services to orthodoxy in avoiding the snares of the Greeks have brought peace to the Christian People. He is the "Liberator of the Christian People." All Christians recognize his services to orthodoxy; they compare him to David; and they all sing lauds for him.[51]

Pope Hadrian, too, gave Charlemagne a role within the Christian People. It was not an unlimited one. During one moment of tension between

45. *CC, 11,* 506.
46. *CC, 30,* 536.
47. ". . . Orthodoxam christianorum fidem vobis commisit exaltandam atque viriliter defendendam." *CC, 33,* 540.
48. *CC, 21,* 523; *25,* 530; *26,* 530; *30,* 537; *32,* 538-39; *35,* 543; *36,* 544-45; *39,* 552; *40,* 553; *42,* 554-55.
49. *CC, 93,* 631.
50. *CC, 7,* 491; *11,* 504. A later pope spoke formulaicly of the joy of all the Christian People upon hearing of Charlemagne's reconciliation with his brother, Carloman. *CC, 44,* 559.
51. *CC, 25,* 530; *30,* 537; *36,* 545; *40,* 553; *42,* 555; *43,* 557.

them, Hadrian took pains to remind him that the pope had a unique and untouchable authority over the Christian People.[52] Nonetheless, Hadrian felt free to urge Charlemagne to act in Italy in terms of his responsibility to the Christian People, and he wanted all the Christian People within and beyond the Frankish kingdom to share in singing lauds for Charlemagne at the time of his victory over the Saxons in 786.[53]

In Pepin's reign, there was a strong papal tendency to define the king's role by analogy to Old Testament figures. While precedents for this practice lay as far back as the time of Charles Martel, the notion became clearer, and at times it was articulated in detail, in the fifties and sixties, by Stephen II and Paul I. Pepin, his family, and his people were told by these popes that Pepin was a new Moses, a new Joshua, a new David. This was so because his deeds were comparable to the release of the Chosen People of old.[54] Pope Paul also put the comparison into the mouths of the Christian People in general: all the faithful, he said somewhat tendentiously, regarded the Frankish king as David's equal because he had safeguarded orthodoxy and brought peace to the whole Christian People.[55]

During his father's lifetime, Charlemagne had received a papal letter which, while it emphasized his father's likeness to Old Testament figures, assured him that his name, too, was written in heaven beside David's and Solomon's.[56] Hadrian I seemed less interested in Old Testament analogies. He took up and extended a theme which Paul I had initiated. It was the idea that the work of the Carolingian monarchs was unfinished, that it was progressing toward new goals set by God.[57] It is at least interesting and perhaps significant that Hadrian's increased reference to this theme accompanied some changes at Rome. They include the apparent disappearance toward the beginning of this pope's reign of the use of Eastern Emperor's regnal years to date papal correspondence and, by 781, the emergence of the practice of dating papal correspondence by Hadrian's own regnal year. Also, that same year, Hadrian began to issue coins with his name and image on them.[58] Concurrently with this evolution, he was urging Charlemagne to support an increased papal territorial sway in Central Italy in exchange for a "much greater" intervention for him with God by Peter, his protector and helper.[59] In later letters, Hadrian repeated his wish that Charlemagne's prestige increase to new heights.[60] Two of these deserve special attention.

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52. *CC, 92,* 630.
53. *CC, 50,* 570.
54. *CC, 3,* 480; *11,* 505; *33,* 540. Folz has briefly discussed the history and some instances of this practice in Carolingian times. *Couronnement,* pp. 96-98. Specific examples of such Old Testament parallels are discussed in greater detail by Ewig, "Königsgedanken," pp. 10-13, 22-24, 42-48.
55. *CC, 42,* 554-55; *43,* 557.
56. *CC, 33,* 540.
57. *CC, 30,* 536; *33,* 540.
58. Pfister, Ganshof, "Règne de Charlemagne," p. 448. The significance of the elimination of such imperial references in papal documents and coins has been questioned by W. Ohnorge, "Der Patricius-Titel Karls des Grossen," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift,* 53 (1960), 317-19. He regards it as normal papal practice not to use imperial references in the absence of a crowned emperor and observes that coining silver money did not contravene Byzantine wishes. Classen has more recently accepted the older view that the papal intention was more serious and relates it to a somewhat earlier Beneventan precedent. "Karl," pp. 554, 559.
59. *CC, 53,* 575.
60. *CC, 68,* 597; *72,* 603; *85,* 622.

The first concerns an unsuccessful attempt which Hadrian made in 778 to bring Charles to Italy to support papal territorial claims to the south of Rome. After retelling the story of Constantine's alleged generosity to Pope Sylvester in giving territories such as these to the Roman Church, he promised him that if he complied,

> all nations who hear of it will sing: "Lord save the King and hear us this day as we call upon Thee; for behold, a new Constantine and most Christian Emperor of God has arisen, through whom God has deigned to bestow all things on his holy Church of the blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles."[61]

Was this an invitation to attend royal lauds with a new theme added to them? Charles was too busy with his northern problems to come immediately, and, when he did come, he favored a compromise settlement with Hadrian's Beneventan enemies. We can only guess whether the pope meant this remark as a serious offer and whether Charlemagne understood it as such.

In any event, he had not heard the last of honorific statements from Hadrian. Four years later, for example, Hadrian assured Charles that the pope had no emperors or kings to thank but him for the donation of Italian lands to Peter, and he testified to Charlemagne's unique status: "You truly love the holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, your mother, beyond all faithful and orthodox kings and emperors of earlier times."[62] By implication, at least, Charlemagne had surpassed Constantine. Two years later, Hadrian's esteem was voiced in his order that lauds be sung throughout the Christian world for Charles' Saxon victory of that year.[63] Within a year or so after this ceremony, Charles had sent the cross to St. Peter's which has already been mentioned as at least a coincidental repetition of Constantine's gift. Slight straws, all of these, when taken by themselves, but, in sequence, ones suggestive of a drift which makes it easier to understand the talk at Charlemagne's court in the 790s, the *Libri Carolini,* Pope Leo III's mosaic which paired Constantine and Charlemagne, and finally the coronation itself in 800.

The half-century of correspondence between popes and Carolingians which preceded this intensification of imperial sentiment in the 790s suggests that the creation of the Carolingian Empire did not occur suddenly. There would seem to be good reason for locating the beginnings of the process even further back in the eighth century than most of the recent revisionary studies have been disposed to do. Possessing hindsight, as we do, we must avoid the anachronism of making every papal plea and chance hyperbole of these decades point toward the resolutions we now know to

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61. *CC, 60,* 587. Like many before him, Classen has recently expressed the opinion that this remark proves that the Donation of Constantine was already in existence and that its phrases were in the pope's mind when this was written. Until scholarly opinion is more settled that the evidence is this clear, it would seem preferable to suspend judgment. Could not this reference have been an echo of the Sylvester legend that preceded the Donation? It appears strange, at least on first impression, that if the Donation of Constantine were already available, it left so little trace of itself in the papal letters preserved in the *Codex,* for aside from another reference to Constantine, discussed below, the letters are silent in this respect. Classen, "Karl," pp. 543-44, 557 and n. 78.
62. *CC, 72,* 602-603.
63. *CC, 76,* 608.

have taken place. The intensifying magnetic field which flows through papal letters of the latter half of the eighth century did not necessitate, nor by itself produce, the coronation of Charles in 800. It did, however, constitute a precondition, and in some important ways a cause, of what eventually happened.

It is well to recall that religious forces were not the only ones at work in this complex process of development. Pepin's first campaign against the Lombards seems to have been primarily influenced by his sense of debt to St. Peter, reinforced by his recent political dependence on the Apostle, and the Apostle's vicar, for the success of his revolutionary displacement of the Merovingian monarchy. Once Pepin became involved in Italian politics, a momentum with its own inner political and military implications and necessities began to develop. Still, his devotion to Peter as the patron of past and future Carolingian successes remained a powerful consideration in the policy decisions that led to the second Italian campaign and, in effect, to the creation of the Papal States by the Donation which he recorded and deposited at Peter's tomb. One need only recall Pepin's fleeting vision of the possibility that on the Last Day St. Peter might be holding his chirograph void in his hand, if one wishes to recreate some of the religious feeling surrounding his decision.

Pepin's son, Charles, soon became more directly involved in Italy as balance-of-power politics took on especial intensity there from the early years of his reign. A wrong choice or a military failure in Italy could not have been for Charles the luxury it might have been for his father. Both Lombard and Byzantine resistance to his growing power created rivals to his claims. They could threaten his situation in Italy and even, in the early years at least, raise a shadow of trouble north of the Alps. Whatever mutual differences and doubts might at times exist between Charles and Pope Hadrian, the two men were soon forced onto common ground.[64]

The fundamental fact of this situation was that Byzantine power had evaporated from most of Italy in the years after 750. Diplomatic recognition of the fact followed some distance behind the retreat of power itself, but the assertion of new political autonomies, including that of Charles, was increasing in the 770s and 780s. The process was so far advanced that when the Iconoclast Schism was ended in 787, Hadrian remained fundamentally attached politically to Charles, even though Frankish theological notions about images became disturbing to the Pope.[65]

The Pope's needs throughout nearly the whole period suggested a continuation and development of his predecessors' policy of ideologically strengthening Carolingian status and authority in the direction of a greater sharing of titles hitherto confined to the Byzantine emperors. How far the Pope wished to go in this direction is not clear, but his adoption of comparisons to Constantine, if paralleled to his wish that Charles wear Roman garb,[66] may imply that he would have been as ready as Leo III later was, to go the whole way. His purposes are not entirely clear in the letters.

Charles resisted most of Hadrian's attempts of this sort. But he asserted his own claims. Increasingly, from 774 onwards, he acted as if he

64. Classen, "Karl," pp. 549, 555.
65. M. V. Anastos, "Iconoclasm and Imperial Rule, 717-842," *The Cambridge Medieval History,* IV, 1 (ed. J. M. Hussey; 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1966), 75-77; George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (trans. J. M. Hussey; Oxford, 1956), pp. 162-63.
66. Ohnsorge, "Patricius-Titel," pp. 314-15.

wanted some share in Byzantine imperial authority. In that year he accepted the honors due an exarch at Rome and on his own, rather than on papal, authority assumed the title of "patricius."[67] His marriage alliance with the Byzantine court in 781 and the presence of Greek tutors at his court to educate his daughter, Rotrud, in the following years[68] suggest less than modest claims to imperial status, though probably not an interest in ruling at Constantinople or claiming universal imperial authority. From 787 or so onward, when the alliance with Constantinople was broken, he moved into a vigorous anti-Byzantine policy which was expressed in military, diplomatic, religious, and ideological ways.[69]

Charlemagne's decision shortly after 790 to have the *Codex Carolinus* assembled was probably influenced by his strong anti-Byzantine outlook at the time. As has already been remarked, his own statement of purpose tells us only that he wanted to be sure that "his successors would not in any way lack useful testimony provided by Holy Church." What, in sum, were the main features of this "useful testimony" which Charlemagne put into circulation in the early 790s, whether he intended merely to combat Byzantine views and policies, or to give his increasingly powerful position in the West a firmer, ideological foundation than some of his subjects or European neighbors were willing as yet to concede it?

The most prominent single theme, and, indeed, the integrating principle, of the letters in the *Codex* is the unique bond which exists between the Franks and St. Peter, and more specifically between the Carolingian dynasty and the saint. Many formal oaths embody and restate the bond; it is a commonplace of diplomatic exchange. The bond finds particularly deep expression in two chirographs, one of them Pepin's, the other Charlemagne's, which donate and guarantee to St. Peter "his" territories in Central Italy, the core of the future Papal States. One part of each chirograph lies on St. Peter's tomb at the Confession. On Judgment Day, the Apostle will hold his part of it in his hand as the Carolingians approach the Divine throne.

The letters present members of the Carolingian dynasty as clients—one could almost say vassals—of St. Peter. In return for performance of duty, they are assured of a large variety of unusual, and in many cases, unique, benefits. They are the elect of God and the anointed leaders of His new Chosen People, the Franks. They stand equal to the great leaders of the original Chosen People celebrated in the Old Testament, Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon. They possess a special, new prayer-rite, all their own, the royal lauds. Sung for them to God and Peter usually over the Apostle's tomb at the Confession, the lauds ensure Peter's protection for his special clients. The lauds also secure constant victories and commemorate Carolingian triumphs. A great Carolingian victory over the heathen requires the repeated singing of the royal lauds throughout all Frankish lands and even among Christian people elsewhere.

Around the bonds between Peter and his clients there had precipitated, in addition to these privileges, a growing cluster of titles and qualities. From God, through Peter, the Carolingians receive health, prosperity, fecundity, and longevity in this world, and joyful reign as crowned kings, sitting in the Divine court, throughout eternity. Their loyal service to the Apostle also

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 310-11, 321. Classen, "Karl," p. 550ff.
68. Classen, "Karl," pp. 558-59.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 560; Anastos, "Iconoclasm," pp. 87-88; Ohnsorge, "Patricius-Titel," p. 321.

brings them steadily widening boundaries and consequent fame throughout the Christian world. In these ways, and as the chosen champions of orthodoxy, they hold a unique place among Christian rulers and among all the Christian People. They are superior to other Christian kings. Charlemagne's prestige transcends even that exalted state: he stands pre-eminent because he loves the Church more than any previous Christian king or emperor. Meanwhile, the role of the Carolingian dynasty continues to enlarge as God puts greater service and correspondingly greater glory in its path. It will rule on earth to the end of time. Lest people forget, Pepin's altar and Charlemagne's cross, the quintessential Byzantine symbol of Christian imperial authority, shine in St. Peter's Church near the tomb for all to see as symbols confirming that the bond between the Carolingians and God, through Peter, is eternal. By 790, a considerable osmosis, some of it undoubtedly conscious, some of it not, had occurred as the Byzantine imperial mystique yielded themes to strengthen the already waxing Frankish political theology.[70]

Charles, as a boy, had listened to some of the letters. They had been part of his education for kingship. Many of them he had received in his mature years as king. For him and for us they constitute the most extensive single record of what had gone into the making of the first Christian emperor of the West. When he ordered them assembled, he was anxious that they not be forgotten, nor did he, himself, forget his debt to the Apostle who served as their magnetic center. In 806, as old age approached, Charles decided to provide for the political life of the Empire after his death. Like a true Frank, he prospectively divided its territories and authority over them among his three surviving sons. Only one part of his whole inheritance remained undivided:

> Above all else, however, we order and command that the three aforesaid brothers undertake the joint care and defense of St. Peter's church, as in times past it was undertaken by our grandfather, Charles, and by our father of blessed memory, King Pepin, and afterward by ourselves. They should devote themselves to defending it, with God's help, against its enemies, and safeguarding its rights to the extent that their obligations and reason require.[71]

The special concern that Charles demonstrated in his political testament for his bond with Peter should assure us that he, at least, numbered the Apostle among the architects of his Empire.

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70. By the eighth century, a large cluster of titles and attributes had accreted around the Byzantine emperors. They were used not only in diplomacy and court ceremonial, but were in many cases spread in hymns and religious art and literature. Included among them were the notions of election, long life, and uniqueness. The imperial role was defined in terms of Christian Empire and included enlarging its boundaries and spreading Christianity. The Eastern Emperors, too, were assured victory and were acclaimed in ceremonies that had at least distant relevance to the Carolingian royal lauds. The cross (which was one of Charlemagne's noteworthy gifts in the 780s to St. Peter's church) was the quintessential imperial symbol, used even by the Iconoclast emperors. Louis Bréhier, *Le mond byzantin* (Paris, 3 vols., 1947-1950), III, *La civilisation byzantine*, pp. 4-6, 48-77. For the association of Byzantine emperors with Constantine, see Eugen Ewig, "Das Bild Constantins des Grossen in den ersten Jahrhunderten des abendländischen Mittelalters," *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 75 (1956), 1-46.

71. Capitulary 45 *(Divisio regnorum,* 6 February 806), *Capitularia Regum Francorum, MGH, Legum, Sectio II,* I (ed. Alfred Boretius; Hannover, 1883), c. 15, 129. For some similar or related later Carolingian evidence, see Capitularies 220, 245, 279, 281, *ibid.*, II, 99, 168, 351, 359; also Lorenz Weinrich, *Wala, Graf, Mönch und Rebell* (Lübeck, 1963), p. 81.