E I N H A R D

Studien zu Leben und Werk

Dem Gedenken an Helmut Beumann gewidmet

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Modern readers of Einhard’s ‘Vita Karoli’ are further from Einhard’s text than they may realize, for the earliest manuscripts of the ‘Vita’ contain a text which is significantly different from that of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica edition, the base for the French and German editions by Halphen and Firchow. In place of the chapter division used in all modern editions the earliest manuscripts indicate a threefold division which gives the text a different scheme of compositions from those which modern editors and interpreters have tried to impose. The text of the ‘Vita’ is often preceded by Einhard’s preface, and is followed by the text of Charlemagne’s will.

Einhard’s preface makes important claims for the work, for the achievements of Charles and of his age, for the truth of his account of those achievements, and it raises the issue of style. The preface is not transmitted in all of the early manuscripts of the Vita, and may be a later addition to the text. It is included in Paris B.N. Lat. 10758 copied at Rheims in the last years of Hincmar’s episcopate, between 877 and 881, and in the St. Gall manuscript copied before 872 Vat. Reg. Lat. 339, in Adhemar of Chabannes’ copy, Paris B.N. Lat 5943A and in many twelfth century manuscripts. It is not in the ninth century Lorsch manuscripts Vienna 510 and Vat. Pal. Lat 243, or the Worms manuscript Vienna 473, where the text begins at chapter 18, nor in the tenth century manuscripts Vienna 529, Montpellier 360 or Einsiedeln 323. Melchior Goldast, in his excellent ‘Animadversiones’ first published as an appendix to J. H. Schmincke’s edition of Einhard, raised the question of what the title of the work was thought to be. Did contemporaries regard the work as a biography, or as the gesta, the deeds of Charlemagne? Goldast noted that Lupus called it gesta in his letter to Einhard, as did Pope John VII in letter to Charles the Bald. But the Lupus references may be to contents and not title. Before 865 Gottschalk entitled it Vita Karoli imperatoris. The evidence of the manuscripts supports Gottschalk: Paris B.N. Lat. 10758 and its tenth century copy B.N. Lat. 4628A entitled it Vita Karoli Magni Imperatoris ab Einardo Dictata. Montpellier 360, London B.L. Add. 39646 and B.N. Lat. 6264 have the title Vita Karoli Magni Imperator ab Einardo Abbate Cappelano Suo Descripta. Vat. Reg. Lat. 339 De Vita Karoli Augusti. So the early manuscripts treat the work as a ‘Vita’, a biography.

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1 ‘Vita Karoli Magni’ (= MGH SRG 25); HALPHEN (ed.) 1923; FIRCHOW (ed.) 1995.
4 GOLDAST 1711, p.157.
5 The papal letter is edited by ECKHARDT 1967, pp. 295 - 311; p. 304: sicut in gesta quae de eo conscripta sunt legitur.
6 LAMBOT 1945, p. 489, a discussion of the word dicaculum.
The mid tenth century Northern French manuscripts St. Petersburg F.IV.4 offers important evidence for the reception of Einhard's biography. The final phrase of its title uses a plural which has been taken to convey the status of the addressee. The title reads *Vita et conversatio glorissimi imperatoris Karoli atque invictissimi augusti incipit, edita ab Eginardo sui temporis impense doctissimo necnon liberalium artium viro, educato a prefato príncipe, propagatore et defensore religionis christianae, quam feliciter perlegendo currentes laetamini in Christo.* The text ends *Preceíllentissimi prestantissimi ac pie recordationis Karoli invicti Augusti vita finivit*.

There are good reasons for regarding this manuscript as the copy of a volume made for Charles the Bald after Einhard's death, perhaps from Compiegne. This title echoes much in the text; the *vita et conversatio* formula, Einhard's superlatives to characterize Charlemagne and the account of Einhard as a man skilled in the liberal arts and trained by Charlemagne all amplify the claims of the preface, though the prominence given to Charlemagne's Christianity is not in Einhard. This elaborate title gives a late Carolingian evaluation of the life, a reception of Einhard's own categories of imperial biography. A smaller group of manuscripts include the six line verse with which the palace librarian Gerward dedicated the work to Louis the Pious, which concludes

*Hanc prudens gestam novis tu scribere lector
Einhardum magni magnificam Caroli*

and a smaller group of fifteenth century manuscripts preserve the preface, and the earliest chapter divisions and titles, supplied by Walafrid Strabo. Walafrid's preface begins: *Gloriosissimi imperatoris Karoli vitam et gesta, quae subiecta sunt, Einhartus, vir inter omnes huius temporis pa/tinos non solum pro scientia vera et pro universa morum honestate laudis egregiae, descripsisse cognoscitur et purissime veritatis, utpote qui his paene omnibus interfuit, testimonio roborasse.*

Walahfried's preface ends with the same emphasis on Einhard's truthfulness: *eum et dilectioni provectionis sui laudem praecipuum et curiositati lectoris veritatem debere perspicuam.* Both Gerward and Walafrid blur the Vita-Gesta distinction, and both give the courtiers' verdict on Einhard as a fellow courtier.

The manuscript evidence of the work's reception shows that it was regarded as central to the commemoration of the Carolingians: copies were owned by Louis the Pious, Charles the Bald and Louis the German, early manuscripts copied Einhard's Life of Charlemagne followed by one of the biographies of Louis the Pious. Einhard's work rapidly became a popular text, and both Lupus and Gottschalk seem to have studied it. Einhard's account of the pagan Saxons was set alongside Tacitus' *Germania* as a source for Saxon history by Rudolph of Fulda in the 860's, and Einhard was a source for the Merovingians truckling in their oxcart in Adrevald of Fleury's account of the

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7 This title is copied in B.L. Add. 21109, B.N. Lat. 5925, 5354, 6264, Vat. Reg. Lat. 550 and 637.
8 TREMP 1991, p. 129 - 134.
9 For these manuscripts, and for the reception of Einhard's biography by Thegan and the Astronomer, E. TREMP'S Monumenta edition of their biographies MGH SRG 64, pp. 23 - 40 (Thegan) 75 - 81 and 115 - 133 (Astronomer).
Miracles of St. Benedict\(^{12}\) and the standard source for how Pippin's brother Carlomann retired to a monastery at Monte Soracte. The 'Vita' was the chief source for the five book epic composed by the Poeta Saxo at Corvey. Notker Balbulus, writing at St. Gall at the request of Charles the Fat in 881, inverted the values of Einhard in order to reclaim the account of Charlemagne's achievement, placing piety in the foreground, replacing the deposition of the Merovingians with an image with a golden head, and two Irishmen selling wisdom.

This popularity resulted not only from the subject matter, but also from Einhard's stylistic pretensions. The preface to the 'Vita' expresses Einhard's justification for writing, and those justifications establish a claim to define questions of genre and style in remarkably original ways. Einhard's biography has been so influential that we risk overlooking the features which made it such a profoundly distinctive work, and help to establish the purposes of his borrowings from Suetonius, and his debts to classical standards of style.

To understand Einhard's enterprise, it is essential to follow Traube's directions and pursue the parts of each sentence back into the vein from which they were quarried\(^{13}\). Einhard's enterprise entailed the composition of the biography of a secular ruler, and such biographies had last been written in antiquity, in collections of lives of emperors. To create a comparable work required the development of a language which would describe secular virtues. The preface tackles the questions of language and memory which define what Einhard sought.

In the preface Einhard explains that his biography is about Charlemagne's life and the purpuse of that life, the *ratio vivendi* which was how Lehmann, following Traube, believed that *conversatio* should be translated\(^{14}\). *Conversatio* is a term with clear religious implications: Einhard uses the word to describe Carlomann, Charlemagne's brother, leaving the world for the monastery of Monte Casino, and to describe the youth of Charlemagne's sister Gisela\(^{15}\). The term *conversatio* traditionally was understood as the *bona conversatio* of the saint and the pairing *vita et conversatio* is standard in hagiography\(^{16}\). The Merovingian 'Vita Desiderii' c. 13 is an example: *Vita et conversatio eius digna et probata ab universis habetur*. The only secular instance which I have found is in the late antique account of the Life of the Brahmins *haec est ergo vita et conversatio Brachmanorum*\(^{17}\).

So in the opening words of the preface Einhard uses the terminology of hagiography for the life of a secular hero. But to the categories of *Vita* and *conversatio* he adds a third term, amplifying them with the hero's deeds, the *res gestas*, the subject of historical narrative. The force of the term is well shown in a passage from Paschiasius Radbertus' great commentary on Matthew XI Prologus where the *res gestas* of human

\(^{12}\) Adrevald, 'Miracula S. Benedicti' = MGH SS 15.2 quotes the 'Vita Karoli' at pp. 482 - 484, 486.


\(^{14}\) LEHMANN 1941, pp. 154 - 207 at p. 193. The best English rendering of *conversatio* is vocation.

\(^{15}\) 'Vita Karoli' c. 2: *amore conversationis contemplativa succensus*. Gisela c. 18: *a puellaribus annis religiosae conversationis mancipata*.


\(^{17}\) Migne PL 17, 1131.
history are contrasted with divine mysteries in quibus non historia tantum texitur
more eorum solummodo qui res gestas narrare probantur sed divina rerum mysteria
suis in locis ordinantur. Einhard characterizes Charlemagne as both his lord and his patron, the dominus and
the nutritor. Isidore had defined nutritor quasi nutu eruditor, someone who teaches with a nod. The term was used of Ambrose by Augustine Ambrosio nutritore, and Cassian well conveys the personal bond mementote semper doctoris vestri ac
nutitoris, in cuius quasi gremio quodammodo amplexu que crevistis, qui communis
mihi ac vobis magister fuit. Gregory 'Dialogues' Book XIII refers to a bishop who
told him of Herculanus vir sanctissimus, nutritor meus Perusinae civitatis episcopus
fuit. St. Peter is described as pastor et nutritor noster. In the 'Historia Abbatum' Bede
described Coelfrid as the nutritor and tutor of his monks. The only instance I have
found of nutritor in a secular context is Paul the Deacon's praise of King Luitprand
Philosophis aequandus, nutritor gentis, legum augmentator. Here again Einhard is
transposing the language of hagiography to describe his bond to his hero. Einhard's expression influenced his contemporaries: Lupus of Ferrières used it of
Bishop Aldric of Sens, domini ac nutritoris mei Aldici and both Hincmar of Rheims
and his opponents used it of Hilduin, abbot of St. Denis. Theodgaud of Trier and
Gunther of Cologne describe Hilduin as ille tuus dommus et nutritor fuerit carus, Hincmar refers to domini et nutritoris mei Hilduni abbatis sacri palatii.

But the bond is not only one of loyalty to a patron, Charlemagne is a king, described
with two superlatives excellentissimi et merito famousissimi, most celebrated and most
renowned. Excellentissimus is used by Bede of Edwin in the chronicle included in his
'De Temporum Ratione', and it is used in the 'Vita Eligii'. It was the standard
epistolary formula for addressing a ruler, and is frequent in papal letters. Famousissimus is less common but is found in Rufinus, 'Historia Monachorum' 7 and
Cassian, 'Collationes' XIII, 5: Famousissimus Socrates. Such exceptional qualities
serve to attest Charlemagne's greatness, a ruler described with superlatives, he is
omnia sua aetati maximi, his life is clarissimam and his deeds are moderni temporis
hominibus vix imitabiles. Secular greatness is a new attribute, and in the 'Vita'
Einhard explores it as an analysis of Charlemagne's personality and his virtues as well
as his life and achievements.

Einhard's famousissimus became a stock epithet for Charlemagne. Lupus, in his letter
to Einhard uses it vestra mensura per famousissimum imperatorem Karolum as does
Jonas of Orleans 'Historia translationis S. Hucberti': extempto rebus humanis
famousissimo imperatore Carolo victoriosissimo piisimo Augusto. Clarissimus is
used of Charlemagne in letters of Alcuin.
Einhard strove for completeness, but also brevity, lest he offended those troubled by prolixity. This juxtaposition was a rhetorical commonplace. Brevitas was especially Ciceronian but is praised by Pliny Ep. 1.20: *cui nihil aeque in causis agendis ut brevitas placet*. Alcuin’s ‘Rhetoric’ explains the *brevis narratio*, a proper beginning with no digressions avoiding an excess of words and a mass of details. Brevitas is contrasted with *prolixitas* too many words can cause *fastidium* too few ignorance. *Tempera te in utrumque, ne aut prolixitas fastidium aut brevitas ignorantium generet*. A Carolingian ‘Expositio Symboli’ uses the same formulation *ne aut breviter dicendo non aperiant intellectum, aut prolixitate verbi generetur fastidium*. Bede ‘In Pentateuchum’ *breviter dixisse sujicit, ne quod fastidium lectorem pervenit*. The writings of Einhard’s contemporaries suggest that such disdain was a very real issue. Joseph Scottus explains his reasons for abridging Jerome on Isaiah *vel fastidium lepidosque lectoribus tam longo libros legendi labor*.

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30 Orator 139, de Inventione 2.6. Brevitas is an ideal in ’De Inventione’ 1,29.8; 1,32.2. and ’In Herrenium’ 1,15, ’De Oratore’ 2.53.
32 Migne PL 88, 345.
33 Migne PL 91, 311.
35 Migne PL 3, 1481.
36 CSEL 1, p. 184.
37 Migne PL 83, 1099, 1103, 1106.
38 MGH Epp. 5, p. 132.
39 MGH SS 15.1, p. 248, cf. *major ars ad notitiam mean aliorum perlata est*. 
leveretur⁴⁰. Lull Longioris sermonis prolixitas legenti fastidium ne gigant⁴¹. Walafrid’s brief preface to Thegan’s life of Louis the Pious confirms that an inappropriate style provoked disdain: Unde sit gratus opus pro bona voluntate, non fastidiendum pro quantulacumque rusticitate⁴². Paschasius Radbertus starts a new book of his commentary on Matthew ne accurata lectio fastidientibus non placeat⁴³. In the ‘Vita Karoli’ fastidium becomes a specific reaction to the novelty of the subject matter, and introduces a discussion of how the present age is to be evaluated. Some hold that it is unworthy to be commemorated, others are ready to commemorate it but do not care how they express themselves so long as their own names are also commemorated. Following the teachings of Alcuin’s ‘Rhetoric’ brevitias and fastidium are linked by Einhard. He has altered the rhetorical commonplace to apply it to his subject not merely his style. Readers may disdain new subject matter, if it is possible not to offend the minds of those who scorn any new writings, who even disdain ancient moments made by the most learned and eloquent men. Nova has deftly been applied both to new events and to new forms of writing, and the disdain of both has been linked to a more general hostility to even the ancient works of most learned writings. Parallels in patristic writings suggest that there is irony here. In the ‘De Doctrina Christiana’ 4,7 the docti diserti are those who condemn the language of the prophets, and in Jerome on Osea II, Prol. those who objected to something think they are docti and diserti⁴⁴. So these opponents may be religious and devout. Helmut Beumann wrote of Einhard’s souverän Verachtung to the traditional logic of the brevitias fastidienum schema⁴⁵. The vetera monumenta are classical models, those who object to them are rejecting the striving for classical authority and eloquence which implicitly becomes his goal.

I know there are many who have consecrated theirselves to leisure and letters who do not think that our age should be so neglected that almost everything that is done as if unworthy of any memory be handed to silence and oblivion. But there are also people who lead on by love of eternity would rather set down the great deeds of other people in any kind of writing than to subtract the fame ot, their name from the memory of posterity. Hellmann was right, there is irony here⁴⁶. Einhard is not one of those in search of love of eternity. He is a debitor praying the praise he owes. Hostility to the present age can also be found in Bede; in his commentary on Luke he refers to fastidiosissive lectoribus quales in praesenti aeo plures invenies praedilectitate vel assequendi quae diserta sunt vel capiendi quae alta⁴⁷. But there are important classical parallels. Pliny Ep. V, 6: nova fastidientium; Pliny Ep. VI, 21: sum ex iis qui mirer antiquus, non tamen ut quidam temporum notrorum ingenia dispicio. A remarkable passage in a poem of Hibernicus Exul shows that the debate between supporters of ancients and moderns was lively.

⁴⁰ MGH Epp. 4, p. 483.
⁴¹ Ep. 92 = MGH Epp. 4, p.212.
⁴² Thegan (= Walafridi Prologus) MGH SRG 64, p. 168.
⁴⁴ Migne PL 25, 860.
⁴⁵ BEUMANN 1952, pp. 1 - 14. Beumann’s reading of the preface has been questioned by VOLTER 1986, pp. 297 - 314, but his objections do not convince, as I hope the extensive parallels here clarify.
⁴⁶ HELLMANN 1961, pp. 159 - 225.
⁴⁷ CCL 119 p. 5.
But the important echoes here depend on Sulpicius Severus’ Life of St. Martin, the life of the patron of the Franks: *exinde perennem, ut putabant, memoriam nominis sui quaequiem, si vitas clarorum virorum stilo inlustrassent* (*Vita Martini*, I, 1). Those who write well about the lives of famous men secure eternal memory for themselves. This seems to be behind Einhard’s attack on those who want their names to be transmitted to posterity by writing the celebrated deeds of other people in any sort of writing. Einhard’s contemporaries have made the error of ignoring style, but like Sulpicius’ targets they are chiefly concerned with their own fame. Like Einhard, Sulpicius was also worried about the reaction to his style *ne, quod fore arbitror, sermo incultior legentibus displiceret omniumque reprehensionis dignissimus iudicarer, qui materiam disertis meritio scriptoribus reservandam inpudens occupasem.*

He urges his readers to consider the subject matter *ut res potiusquam verba perpendant, et aequo animo ferant si aures eorum vitiosus forsitan sermo perculerit.* This is the source of much of Einhard’s thought here.

Einhard is concerned, above all else, with remembrance, with what is worthy to be committed to the memory of future generations, with what he himself should not forget, and with the memory of so pertinent an individual as Charlemagne. Bede in the Preface to his Historia Ecclesiastica tells how Abbot Albinus of Canterbury supplied him with all *quae memoria digna videbantur* (cfr. Jerome in *Prophetas Minores* *quae memoria digna sunt scribere*). The alternative is forgetfulness and that would not be appropriate for such remarkable and inimitable achievements. Regino of Prüm began his chronicle by affirming that if he remained silent men would think that in his age either people had ceased to act or that there was nothing worth remembering.

What is worthy of memory should be set down in writing. But Einhard lived in a society in which commemoration was a liturgical procedure, and that commemoration included the memory of laymen. *Memoria* was a reciprocal system, a means of linking social groups into a Christian community. Though Einhard’s preface avoids any Christian profession, the terminology is so redolent with Christian flavour that its implications are unmistakeable. Einhard’s letters convey how persuasive the language of *memoria* was.

But Einhard’s writing as an eyewitness, no one could do it better. And he has a personal reason, his gratitude to Charles and his friendship with him and his children from the time when he came to the court. As Stuart Airlie reminds us the ‘Vita Karoli’ is very much a courtier’s text. Einhard’s account is truthful, what Einhard described he saw himself and can report with the trustworthiness born of personal experience. Truth had also been claimed as the special virtue of the hagiographer: *nullum ea...*
veracius quam me compare Cassian, ‘Collationes’ IX. 34, rectius quam nos ac
veracius intuetur. In his account of the translation of the relics of Marcellinus and
Petrus he stresses that his account depends on what he himself saw ideo fiducialiter
scribimus quod nos contigit oculata, ut dicunt, fide.

The claim of reliability based on sight is regarded by Einhard, in both the ‘Translatio’
and the ‘Vita’ as a traditional one (ut dicunt). The expression can be found in a letter
of Cyprian referring to Paul’s ascent to heaven (ad Fortunatum, c 13): Probat Beatus
apostolus Paulus (...) qui oculata fide Jesum dominum vidisse se gloriatur and in
other accounts of miracles De Miraculis S. Stephani neque fastidientium aures visibus
vestris oculata fide. A miracle story in the Historia Tripartita uses the same phrase et
hoc oculata fide cognoscens.

The distinction goes back to Isidore, who noted that among the ancients no one used
to write history unless he himself had lived through the events and had seen what he
was to write down. It is better to comprehend what has happened with our own eyes
than to gather it from what we have heard. What is seen can be put forward without
deceit. Regino of Prüm’s Chronicle entry for 817 quoted Jerome (in Rufinum II, 25)
Aliter enim narratur visa, aliter audita to mark the beginning of his account of his
own times, where he was not only excerpting others. So Einhard is claiming to write
in a tradition in which history is the record of personal experience, and the claim was
recognized by Walafrid. In his preface Walafrid stressed that Einhard wrote as an
eyewitness purissime veritatis, upote qui his paene omnibus interfuit, testimonio
roborasse.

What Einhard saw is to be entrusted to writing and to memory. The juxtaposition was
used by Einhard in his ‘Translatio’ about recording the miracles of the saints litteris ac
memoriae mandare decrevimus; eo tamen miraculo, quod nunc memoriae mandare
decrevi and in such a context it is traditional opera seniorum quae studiose
memoriae mandare desponimus (Cassian De coenobiorum institutis IV, 15); Bede
‘Vita abbatum’: non pauc a etiam litteris mandata reliquit.

The memory of Charlemagne should not fall prey to oblivion, the oblivionis tenebris.
Psalm 30.13 in the Psalterium Hebraicum reads Oblivione traditus sum, quasi mortuus
and Ecclesiastes 9.5: oblivionis tradita est memoria eorum..

In searching for a source for several of the themes of Einhard’s preface we may
consider a letter of Pliny Ep. 58 to his friend Titinius Capito who wants him to write
history spreading the fame of others aliorumque famam along with one’s own.
Nothing attracts me as much as that love and longing for a lasting name: Nihil aequ
ac diuturnitatis amor et cupidus sollicitat especially in one who is aware that there is nothing in him to blame qui nullius sibi conscius culpae posteritatis memoria non reformidet, and so has no fear if he is to be remembered by posterity. The letter ends: History cannot fail to give pleasure however it is presented Historia quoque modo scripta delectat. If Einhard knew this letter (and the verbal similarities are closer than in any other single source except for Sulpicius Severus), it would have justified the enterprise of writing in his unpolished style.

Cicero had urged the orator to stress the importance of an immortal remembrance by posterity as the best spur to achieving honesty and dignity. Augustine ‘De Musica’ states that: ‘Historia quoque modo scripta delectat.’ If Einhard knew this letter (and the verbal similarities are closer than in any other single source except for Sulpicius Severus), it would have justified the enterprise of writing in his unpolished style.

Einhard’s assertion that he is giving a truthful account (mihi conscius sum me vera dixisse) is closely paralleled in Sulpicius ‘Vita Martini’ c. 27: Ego mihi conscius sum me rerum fide at amore Christi impulsum ut scriberem. Einhard did not know whether anyone else would record Charlemagne’s deeds. If his work was one of several, that would be better than for Charlemagne to be forgotten. He was most famous and most excellent, and his deeds were unmatched. Charlemagne’s deeds are described as egregios actus a phrase found only in Bede ‘Vita metrica sancti Cuthberti’: Illius egregios referens antistitis actus. They are sacrally to be imitated by contemporaries, the moderni temporis homines. Lull refers to moderni principes. The other reason for writing was Einhard’s debt for his nourishment and for Charlemagne’s friendship nutrimentum impensum from the time when he first began to live in his court (cf. Augustine to Pope Boniface in his ‘Contra Duas Epistolas’: amorem rependere impensum). Gregory ‘Dialogus’ I. 9: Qui nutritus in eius officio tanto valet de iIIo quaeque veracius dicere, quanto eis hunc contigit vitam. Gregroy the Great also affirms that one who has been nourished by someone will give a truthful account of them. The term conversari is used of Christ on earth but also in discussions of the court in Carolingian capitularies assidue conversari solet de qualibet causa, Alcuin (Nonne videtur mihi inter varios paradisi flores totus conversari), Rufinus ‘Historia monachorum’ combines it with the Vita et conversatio formula parum adhuc temporis debere eum conversari, donec vitae et conversationis eius plurimi aemulatores existant.

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63 ‘De Invenzione’ 2.82.335 affirms that utility and dignity secure the memory of posterity cf. KEMPSHALL 1995, p. 30.
64 Migne PL 32, 1147
66 Migne PL 94, 593.
68 Migne PL 44, 550.
69 Migne PL 77, 190 note the Christian transformation of the term in an inscription in the church of S. Sabina in Rome Xristi nutritus in aula = DIEHL (ed.) 1925 · 31.
70 MGH Cap. I, p. 189.
71 Ep. 139 = MGH Epp. 4, p. 220.
72 Migne PL 21, 413.
The terminology of debt is also a standard feature of epistolography; *debitorem* is used in letters of Augustine (*cui benevolentiae debitor sum*) and of Alcuin (*me maxime debitor benignitati vestrae verissime agnosco*).

In a concluding profession of humility Einhard says that Charlemagne’s memory deserves more than his feeble talent *ingeniolum*. The term was frequently used by Jerome (Ep. 85: *turbidos nostri ingenioli rivulos*; Ep. 133: *si quid in meo ingeniolo vitii repererint*), in the prologues to his commentaries on the Prophets (Commentary in Isaiah: *qui pro tenuitate ingenioli invidorum morsibus pateo*), Bede in Samuel *imitantes pro captu nostri ingenioli scribam illum doctum in regno* and was used by Leidrad of Lyons in a letter to Charlemagne *iuxta exiguitate tamen ingenioli*.

Einhard may have found it in Alcuin, who used it in letters to Charlemagne *secundum modum ingenioli mel* and *De Rhetorica*: *flammivomo tuae sapientiuae lumini scintilla ingenioli mei nil addere possit* (cfr. Lupus Ep. 56: *mei superstredretur ingenioli facultatem*). Einhard’s in geniolum is *exile et parvum*, a combination found in a letter of Pliny Ep. 2, 14.1. Rufinus, in his ‘Exposition symboli’ begins by referring to his *ingenium teme et exile*. Jerome in the preface to his commentary on Galatians spoke of his *exilis ingenii rivulum* and in his commentary on Zacharias of *eruditionem nostram quae vel nulli vel parvi est*.

Instead the life needs Ciceronian eloquence. The naming of Cicero, combined with the quotation from the Tusculans, is a profession of allegiance to the greatest of the authors of *vetera monumenta*. Einhard owned many of Cicero’s rhetorical works, and clearly regarded him as an authority. Lupus of Ferrières, in his letter about the ‘Vita’, recognizes the imitation of Cicero. Traditionally Christian writers had rejected Cicero for the simplicity of the fishermen to whom Christ had preached his Gospel. *Tulliana facundia* is regarded as inappropriate by Cassian, ‘De coenobiorum institutis’ XII. 19. Jerome talked of *Tulliana puritate* of eloquence (Ep. 59,8; *Ubi mare illud eloquentiae Tullianae* Ep. 147,5). The Merovingian ‘Passio Praejecti’ affirmed that readers should not look for Ciceronian eloquence *non querat in his Tullianarum eloquentiam vel oratorum facundiam (... ) sed puritatem sanctae ecclesiae*. Though Einhard affirmed his inferiority to Cicero, that affirmation was recognized as an assertion of stylistic excellence, perhaps in contrast to Christian simplicity.

But any kind of writing is better than to pass over Charlemagne’s deeds in silence. The phrase derives from Cicero ‘De Legibus’ I, 63 *non possum silentio praeterire* where Cicero cannot pass over in silence the study of wisdom. Nor should the acts of saints be passed over in silence (Hieronymus Epistola 108: *Non debo silentio praeterie* on the birth of Paula and in his ‘Vita Hilarionis’ *Quis vero possit silentio praeterire*). Cassian ‘De coenobiorum Institutis’ IV. 30 *gesta qui per hanc*
claruerunt penitus silentio praeterire\textsuperscript{81}. Fortunatus 'Vita Sancti Medardi' Beatissimi Medardi vitam (...) nequivimus silentio praeterire quamvis non valeamus gestorum cuncta perstringere\textsuperscript{82}.

The phrase \textit{en tibi librum} presents a problem which has been ignored. Who is this \textit{tibi}? Before we assume that it simply refers to the reader it is worth examining patristic and contemporary usage. Though there is at least one Late Antique instance where the \textit{En tibi formula} is used to a general reader\textsuperscript{83} most parallels refer to a particular person. Pope Hadrian wrote to Charlemagne \textit{en tibi vulus mei specium transformatum}\textsuperscript{84}, Isidore to Braulio \textit{En tibi, sicut policitus sum, misi opus}. The letters of Symmachus are full of the formulation \textit{En tibi filium nostrum}, \textit{en tibi libellos}, \textit{en tibi litteras}.

The eleventh century London manuscript British Library Cotton Tiberius C,XI offers a possible solution to the identity of the \textit{tibi}\textsuperscript{85}. The text of the ‘Vita’ is headed \textit{Einhardus G Suo Salutem}. I suggest that the \textit{G} stands for Gerward, the palace librarian who took over control of the palace buildings in ‘Translatio’ IV,\textsuperscript{7}\textsuperscript{86}. Gerward later retired to Lorsch, and has been convincingly identified with the author of the Annals of Xanten\textsuperscript{87}. He summoned Einhard to court in a letter of 830 which is known from Einhard’s reply\textsuperscript{88}. So the preface was directed to a fellow courtier, trained in the capella and so involved in the drafting of court documents and attentive to the concerns with style, but also able to acknowledge the bonds of the nutritor and of the aula. And Gerward, in his turn, presented the life to Louis the Pious.

But what is remarkable is the Einhard, \textit{Homo barbarus et in Romana locutione parparum exercitatus} should have tried to write this work in Latin. \textit{Barbarus} must imply that Einhard sees himself as German, and it is set in contrast not only to a tradition of Roman style, but also to the eloquence of Cicero\textsuperscript{89}. \textit{Exercitatus} was a common Late Antique expression \textit{et docti et in his exercitati homines facile collegerunt ‘De Civitate’ Dei VIII,6}. Jerome in Ep. ad Titum: \textit{Nihil prodest aliquem exercitatum esse in dicendo}\textsuperscript{90}. Einhard begged indulgence for seeming to disobey Cicero’s precept, used when he talked of Latin authors, that to commit thoughts to writing without due arrangement and ornamentation, or without providing the enjoyment with which to delight a reader, is an abuse of literature and leisure.

Cicero’s opinion would have deterred Einhard, had he not resolved to risk mens’ judgements and endanger his feeble mind by writing rather than to let the memory of

\textsuperscript{81} CSEL XVII, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{82} MGH AA 4, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{83} Prudentius: \textit{En tibi signatum libertatis documentum}.
\textsuperscript{84} Migne PL 98, 1256.
\textsuperscript{85} The manuscript was damaged in the 1731 Cotton fire and this leaf is barely legible. It also contains the only copy of Gerward’s ‘Annales Xantenses’, though that is a separate contemporary section. The fullest account is GUMBERT 1990, pp. 55 - 69. Gumbert believes that both the ‘Vita’ and the ‘Annales Xantenses’ were copied c. 1100 by Egmond scribes.
\textsuperscript{86} Gerwardus palatii bibliothecarius, cui tunc temprois etiam palatinorum operum ac structurarum a rege cura comissa erat. Einhard tells how he spoke to Louis the Pious about a miracle: MGH SS 15.1, p. 258.
\textsuperscript{87} LÖWE 1950, S. 82 - 99.
\textsuperscript{88} Einharti Ep. 52 = MGH Epp. 5, S. 135.
\textsuperscript{89} Cf. Paschasius Radbertus, ‘Vita Adalhardi’ = Migne PL 120, 1546: \textit{si vero idem barbaro, quam Theutiscam dicunt, lingua loqueretur}.
\textsuperscript{90} Migne PL 26, 583.
so great a man be passed over. Jerome Ep. 47,1 *qui scribendo disertissime deterruit, ne scriberem, 'Vita Cypriani' que quidem tanta atque tam magna et mira sunt, ut magnitudo contemplatione deterrar ac imparem me esse confitear.* That Charlemagne is twice described as a man, rather than a king may check those who see the biography as a mirror for princes. Einhard sees greatness as an attribute of personality, not of status.

Here again we may suspect irony, for *hominum iudicia* are to be despised, Jerome in Isaiah 2,3: *spernentes hominum iudicia, nec laudibus eorum extollamur nec obrectationibus contristemur.* 'In Galatos' 191: *non putemus ab apostolo nos doceri, ut exemplo suo hominum iudicia contemnamus (...);* Ep. 66: *prima virtus est monachi contemnere hominum iudicia.* Boethius 'Consolatio Philosophiae', IV pr. 6. *atque in hoc hominum iudicia depugnant et quos alii praemio alii supplicio dignos arbitrantur.* Gregory, 'Moralia' 29,6: *nequaquam iudicia hominum de professione religionis fallunt.*

Einhard’s command of rhetoric was noted by Walafrid, and his eloquence was praised by Hrabanus in his epitaph for Einhard *probus actu atque oraculatis.* The fullest evaluation of Einhard’s skill comes in the over enthusiastic letter of Lupus which praised the ‘Vita’ for its *Tulliana gravitate.* He set this letter at the head of his letter collection. In our age the study of the liberal arts is a fabula, the works of our age displeased him because they lack *Tulliana veterorum gravitate,* which fathers of the church emulate. But then a copy of the ‘Vita Karoli’ came into his hands and it the *clarissime gesta* of the emperor were conveyed *clarissime litteris allegastis.* He found elegance of meanings, choice compoundings as used by model authors, and the author’s sentences were not obstructed by over long periods. It was a model of eloquence which revealed the probity and wisdom of the author.

Lupus had obtained a list of Einhard’s library and mentioned works he hoped to borrow, the ‘Ad Herennium’, ‘De Rhetorica’, ‘De Rhetorica tres libri ac dialogus de oratore’, ‘Explanatio in libros Ciceronis’ and Aulus Gellius. The wealth of Ciceronian texts in a private library is unparalleled, clearly Einhard had sought out rare texts, perhaps from the library of Charlemagne, to enhance his understanding of rhetoric following the model he found in Alcuin’s ‘De Rhetorica’. In an important recent study Michael Kempshall has shown how closely Einhard followed Ciceronian models92. Lupus affirmed that his imitation was successful.

Einhard’s ‘Vita Karoli’ can be seen as a tribute to Ciceronian standards, which Einhard had learned from Alcuin. Alcuin’s ‘De Rhetorica’ is a hitherto unrecognized source for the stylistic ideals of the work. And those ideals enabled Einhard to transform a vocabulary which he had found used in Sulpicius Severus, Cassian and Rufinus to convey the inimitable virtues of the holy man, and which justified an author whose style might be unpolished in writing a biography, so that he might write the biography of the ruler who had been his patron and friend. No searching for verbal echoes, parallels or borrowings will enable the strength of that friendship to be recovered. But the greatness which Einhard found there he expressed for posterity by transforming forms of hagiographical language. His preface, probably addressed to his fellow courtier the librarian Gerward, was a declaration of his loyalty to Charlemagne, and to the rhetorical ideals which could secure his memory.

91 Migne PL 26, 345.
92 KEMPSSHALL 1995.