The rulership of Pippin I of Aquitaine

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This article uses the reign of Pippin I of Aquitaine (d. 838) as a case study for the historiographical concept of 'sub-rulership' in Carolingian Francia. It unpicks how Pippin's status varied over time, arguing that Pippin's rulership represents well the tension between kingship as an office and as a dynastic status. Pippin was a king's son, and therefore became a king, but once he had this title it provided a status linked to, but apart from, his familial ties. This article demonstrates how this relationship played out in practice, from Pippin's accession to the throne to his own son's succession.

In the winter of 831–2, Pippin I of Aquitaine, second son of the emperor Louis the Pious, escaped his father's guards in Trier and fled to his *regnum* of Aquitaine, where he had reigned as king since 817.[1] The Astronomer's *Life of Louis* describes a harsh winter, with downpours and frozen earth, and so Louis's men struggled to apprehend the fugitive Carolingian.[2] Pippin's allies harried Louis's forces to such an extent that Louis was forced to retreat across the Loire. While the weather may have been on Pippin's side, the Astronomer's story also indicates that Pippin had support, probably elite support, which he presumably accumulated during his time spent as king in Aquitaine. He had enough backing to form part of the rebellion of 833, which would, albeit briefly, dethrone

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[1] *Ordinatio imperii*, ed. A. Boretius, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* [hereafter *MGH*] *Capitularia regum Francorum* [hereafter *Capit.*] 1 (Hanover, 1883), no. 136, pp. 270–1.

[2] Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 47, ed. E. Tremp, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum* [hereafter *SS. rer. Germ.*] 64 (Hanover, 1995), p. 470.

Louis; and when Pippin changed sides in 834, that support helped him to restore his father.[3]

This dynastic drama raises the question of why Pippin retained his support in 831–2 and why the Astronomer felt the need to mention it. The Astronomer contrasted Pippin's hard-fought escape with Louis's 'kind' (*indulgens*) treatment of his son to 'correct his [Pippin's] bad conduct' (*propter morum correctionem pravorum*), underlining the idea that Louis was a benevolent father.[4] In defying paternal correction, Pippin was evidently a bad son and so an illegitimate king. Yet Pippin retained elite support despite his defiance of his father. Pippin was still a *rex* (king), and still commanded elite backing in the realm thanks partly to his royal title and to the time he had already held that title.

Probably because Pippin predeceased his father, historians have paid him rather little attention, particularly in comparison to his brothers.[5] Roger Collins's 1990 contribution is still the most recent full study, while Philippe Depreux's prosopography dealt with Pippin only insofar as he was part of his father's entourage.[6] Pippin is rarely a subject in his own right; in narratives of the rebellions of the early 830s, he tends to fall into the background, eclipsed by the actions of his immediate family.[7] Dying before Louis and the subsequent succession struggle, Pippin has remained in the historiographical shadow of his father.

This article, however, makes the case that Pippin's twenty-year reign alongside and under his father is of particular interest for understanding ideas of 'sub-rulership' in the Carolingian world. Historiography on Carolingian sub-rulership has tended, in the past several decades, to underline the importance of family. Brigitte Kasten, writing in the late 1990s, argued against the use of bureaucratic or legalistic terms to understand either the political thought or practical realities of multiple Carolingian kings.[8] In her view, the essentially 'patrimonial' character of Carolingian political culture explains the

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[3]   J.L. Nelson, 'The Last Years of Louis the Pious', in *eadem*, *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London, 1996), pp. 40–2.

[4]   Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 47, p. 470.

[5]   The other brothers have all been the subject of modern monographs: J.L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992); E.J. Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817–876* (Ithaca, 2006); M. Schäpers, *Lothar I. (795–855) und das Frankenreich* (Vienna, 2018).

[6]   R. Collins, 'Pippin I and the Kingdom of Aquitaine', in P. Godman and R. Collins (eds), *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 363–89; P. Depreux, *Prosopographie de l'entourage de Louis le Pieux (781–840)* (Sigmaringen, 1997), pp. 341–2.

[7]   M. Costambeys, M. Innes and S. Maclean, *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 217–19; S. Airlie, *Making and Unmaking the Carolingians, 751–888* (London, 2020), pp. 148–56 focuses more on Pippin but largely in the context of his father and the rebellions.

[8]   B. Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft. Untersuchungen zur Teilhabe am Reich in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit* (Hanover, 1997), p. 3.

hierarchy, as 'a king was a king – no more and no less' (*König war König – nicht mehr und nicht weniger*).[9] More recently, Stuart Airlie foregrounds the importance of creating and upholding dynastic 'charisma' (in an explicitly Weberian sense) in Carolingian legitimacy.[10] For Airlie, royal sons, even if they were crowned kings, ultimately derived their legitimacy from their dynastic status and were judged accordingly. Louis's supporters, for example, judged his sons as bad sons, rather than as bad kings, when condemning their rebellions.[11] This follows in a tradition which sees Carolingian authority as rooted in the family. For example, Régine Le Jan reasoned that, in some ways, all of the Carolingian lay elite were seen as a *familia* under the Carolingian ruler's patrimonial authority.[12] In a similar vein, Elina Screen has argued that Lothar I and Louis II's 'successful partnership' in ruling Italy was presented and understood in terms of a harmonious father-and-son relationship.[13]

The prevailing historiographical position is therefore that familial ties, rather than legalistic ideas of a hierarchy of offices, underpinned the relationships between royal fathers and sons in Carolingian Francia. This article, however, uses Pippin I as a case study to consider how these familial dynamics interacted with ideas of royal office. The Carolingian dynasty was more than simply a family, as the royal (and imperial) title passed down its generations. Ideas of royal office coexisted with the familial relationships that underpinned the practical side of royal politics. Patrimonial rights were certainly important and this article does not attempt to return to a legalistic model, where one king legally outranked another.[14] Instead, it uses Pippin as a case study to understand how Pippin's kingship developed over time, with an eye to his life cycle and contingent political events, and so follows his reign in chronological order. In so doing, it underlines how events and the realm one ruled could shape both dynastic and ministerial aspects of kingship. Pippin's rule shows us how Carolingian rulership was flexible, and could adapt to both varying familial dynamics and the conditions within a particular *regnum*.

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[9]   Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 213–15, quotation from p. 215.

[10]   Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*, particularly pp. 16–18.

[11]   Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*, pp. 155–60.

[12]   R. Le Jan, *Femmes, pouvoir et société dans le haut Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2001), pp. 191–2.

[13]   E. Screen, 'Carolingian Fathers and Sons in Italy: Lothar I and Louis II's Successful Partnership', in C. Gantner and W. Pohl (eds), *After Charlemagne: Carolingian Italy and Its Rulers* (Cambridge, 2020), pp. 148–63, particularly pp. 149–52.

[14]   As summed up in Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 558–62.

Coronation and the *regnum* of Aquitaine

Pippin I became king of Aquitaine in 817.[15] He was born around 797, before Louis had formally married Pippin's mother Irmingarde, whose anointing as empress in 816 cemented Pippin's legitimacy.[16] Louis set out this new vision for the realm in the famous *Ordinatio imperii* (*Ordering of the Empire*), establishing an order for succession and granting titles to his sons.[17] The emperor issued this text to preclude any familial quarrels, invoking divine support for the distribution plan.[18] Lothar, the eldest, received the imperial title alongside Italy and authority in the heartlands, while Louis, the youngest, received a *regnum* based around Bavaria. Pippin, the middle son, received Aquitaine.[19] He took the throne with a demonstrably royal name, matching that of his grandfather and the first Carolingian king of the Franks, Pippin III (*r.* 751–68). Contemporaries appreciated the dynastic and personal resonances of names, and they were a key part of Carolingian dynastic identity.[20] Charlemagne had renamed Pippin (originally Carloman) in 781, disentangling him from any connection to Charlemagne's deceased brother and asserting his status as a future heir.[21] Charlemagne's decision implicitly questioned the status of another of his sons, Pippin the Hunchback.[22]

While the name Pippin was a sign of a throneworthy Carolingian, our Pippin's title was also a sign of his firmly royal status. Pippin invariably employed the title *rex Aquitanorum* on coinage and in documents, and

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15   *Annales regni Francorum*, *s.a.* 817, ed. F. Kurze (ed.), *MGH SS rer. Germ.* 6 (Hanover, 1895), p. 145.

16   B. Kasten, 'Kaiserinnen in karolingischer Zeit', in A. Fößel (ed.), *Die Kaiserinnen des Mittelalters* (Regensburg, 2011), pp. 11–12.

17   On the *Ordinatio imperii*, see S. Kaschke, 'Die Teilungsprojekte der Zeit Ludwigs des Frommen', in P. Depreux and S. Esders (eds), *Regnum semper reformandum: Mobiles et enjeux des capitulaires de Louis le Pieux en 829 / Hintergründe und Ziele der Kapitulariengesetzgebung Ludwigs des Frommen im Jahr 829* (Ostfildern, 2018), pp. 95–6, citing the substantial historiography on the topic.

18   Kaschke, 'Die Teilungsprojekte', pp. 91–4; K.-F. Werner, 'Hludovicus Augustus: Gouverner l'empire chrétien – Idées et réalités', in P. Godman and R. Collins (eds), *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 72–3.

19   *Ordinatio imperii*, c. 1, p. 271: 'volumus ut Pippinus habeat Aquitaniam et Wasconiam et markam Tolosanam totam et insuper comitatos quator, id est in Septimania Carcassensem et in Burgundia Augustudunensem et Avalensem et Nivernensem'.

20   R. Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VIIIe–Xe siècle). Essai d'anthropologie sociale* (Paris, 1995), pp. 193–5.

21   J.L. Nelson, *King and Emperor: A New Life of Charlemagne* (Oakland, 2019), pp. 183–5.

22   J.L. Nelson, 'Charlemagne – *pater optimus*?', in *eadem*, *Courts, Elites and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 2007), pp. 271–83; S. McDougall, *Royal Bastards: The Birth of Illegitimacy, 800–1230* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 80–3; J. Davis, *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 416–17.

this title had been used by Louis during his reign in Aquitaine.[23] The title *rex* itself carried Isidorian implications of correction and therefore both a higher status and responsibility, bound up in Isidore's etymological analysis and reiterated as a commonplace in Carolingian political thought.[24] In the case of Brittany, for example, the title *prior* was used for a subordinate (or perceived as subordinate from a Carolingian perspective) ruler who was not a Carolingian.[25] There was, then, a clear contrast between rulers of the Bretons and a Carolingian *rex*: Carolingian authors deliberately underscored that the Bretons did not have a king. Ermoldus Nigellus, in his panegyric *In Honour of Emperor Louis*, was the exception that proved this rule. He referred to the Breton ruler Murman, through a speech of Lambert of Nantes, as 'king . . . if it is right to call "king" someone who does not rule anyone'.[26] Ermold intended Murman to be the exact antithesis of a legitimate ruler, which called into question whether it was even right to give him the title of *rex*. This contrast underlines the connection between the trappings of royal status, including the title, and the responsibility that went with it. Based on these kingly duties, a Carolingian ruling a *regnum* of the empire was perceived as of higher standing than other subordinate rulers. The title of king did not simply arise from dynastic status, or even the exercise of power, as the case of Murman implies.

Upon Pippin's accession, coinage was minted bearing his name. The passive voice here is a conscious choice; the issuing of coinage had become a crucial part of legitimate royal authority, but exclusively of the senior ruler.[27] Pippin I's issue appears to have been commemorative of his assumption of the *regnum* of Aquitaine and only eight examples survive, from two obverse dies. Simon Coupland dates the surviving coins to around 818, based on the simple temple design, which reinforces the commemorative explanation.[28] Comparing the small

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[23] I.H. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Authority in the Carolingian World (c. 751–877)* (Boston, 2008), pp. 145–6; see the list of titles before 800 in H. Wolfram, *Intitulatio I, Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1 of 2 (Graz, 1967), p. 208.

[24] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, IX.iii.4, ed. and trans. S.A. Barney *et al.*, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 200.

[25] For example, Lupus of Ferrières uses *prior* for the Breton ruler Nominoë: Lupus of Ferrières, *Epistolae*, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 4 (Berlin, 1925), no. 84, p. 75.

[26] Ermold, *Carmen in honorem Hludowici Caesaris*, ed. E. Faral, *Ermold le Noir* (Paris, 1932), III, pp. 99–101. Translation is that of T.F.X. Noble in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan and the Astronomer* (University Park, 2009), p. 157. My thanks to one of the anonymous reviewers for raising this point.

[27] E. Screen, 'Coining It? Carolingian Rulers and the Frankish Coinage, ca. 750–900', *History Compass* 17 (2019).

[28] S. Coupland, 'The Coinages of Pippin I and Pippin II of Aquitaine', *Revue numismatique* 31 (1989), p. 198.

issue of Pippin I with the far more substantial coinage of his son Pippin II also suggests a coronation issue at the behest of Louis.[29] The commemorative issue was a statement of Pippin's new royalty rather than a separate medium of exchange for Aquitaine, as Louis's coinage would be used there for day-to-day business. Louis had therefore likely ordered the minting of these coins, allowing his son a small share in the rights of a full Carolingian ruler, but only on Louis's terms.

The *regnum* of which Pippin took the throne in 817 occupied an unclear position in the Carolingian world, and has itself been little studied in recent scholarship. The only work attempting a comprehensive history of Carolingian Aquitaine is still Léonce Auzias's 1937 volume, which argues Aquitaine was essentially the same as the other regions within the empire.[30] In the 1970s, Michel Rouche argued for a distinct Gallo-Roman Aquitanian identity, created through pressure from outside.[31] More recent work has however contended that the concept of 'Aquitania' varied throughout the Carolingian period.[32] In the *Divisio regnorum* of 806, Charlemagne distinguished between Aquitania, Vasconia, Provincia and Septimania, yet all became known collectively as the *regnum Aquitanorum*.[33] Carolingian sources emphasized diversity to acclaim the authority of the Carolingian rulers, as governing multiple *gentes* was a sign of great (and sometimes imperial) authority.[34] Aquitaine was physically distant from the Carolingian heartlands, but the Carolingian realm accommodated varying identities within a universal Christianity.[35] Indeed, Septimania proves this point: Carolingian sources frequently refer to 'Goths' to underline the wide reach of Carolingian rulership.[36] References to the

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[29] S. Coupland, 'The Importance of Coinage in the Carolingian World', *Early Medieval Europe* 30.3 (2022), p. 100.

[30] L. Auzias, *L'Aquitaine Carolingienne (778–987)* (Toulouse, 1937), p. 70.

[31] M. Rouche, *L'Aquitaine, des Wisigoths aux Arabes, 418–781: Naissance d'une Région* (Paris, 1979).

[32] R. Kramer, 'Franks, Romans, and Countrymen: Imperial Interests, Local Identities, and the Carolingian Conquest of Aquitaine', in R. Kramer and W. Pohl (eds), *Empires and Communities in the Post-Roman and Islamic World, c.400–1000 CE* (Oxford, 2021), pp. 278–82.

[33] *Divisio regnorum*, ed. A. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* I, no. 45, c. I, p. 127. See also J. Martindale, 'The Kingdom of Aquitaine and the "Dissolution of the Carolingian Fisc"', *Francia* II (1984), p. 137.

[34] C.J. Chandler, *Carolingian Catalonia: Politics, Culture and Identity in an Imperial Province, 778–987* (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 61–4.

[35] R. Kramer, *Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire* (Amsterdam, 2019), particularly pp. 215–17.

[36] Kramer, 'Franks, Romans, and Countrymen', pp. 281–2; S. Patzold, 'Einheit versus Fraktionierung: Zur symbolischen und institutionellen Integration des Frankenreichs im 8./9. Jahrhundert', in W. Pohl, C. Gantner and R. Payne (eds), *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100* (Farnham, 2012), pp. 389–90.
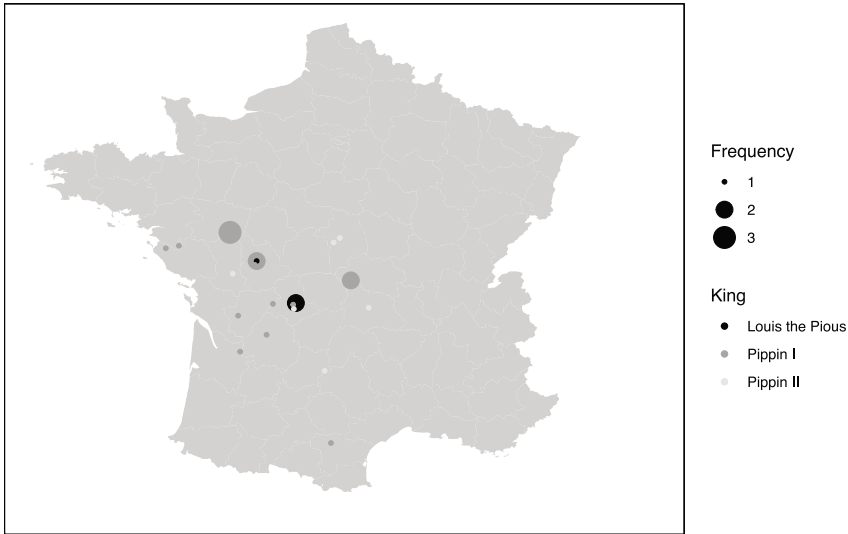
Fig. 1 Locations of the acts of kings of Aquitaine

Gascons are often either as a rebellious 'Other', like the Bretons, or as another example of the imperial status of Carolingian rule.[37]

Within this diverse *regnum*, there were nonetheless a set of frequently used royal palaces that tended towards the north (Fig. 1). Pippin I occasionally headed south, but never issued a diploma in Gascony.[38] The region appears to have revolted several times in the 810s, contributing to a detachment from Carolingian affairs.[39] Indeed, in 836, Pippin attempted to prevent Sancho Sanchez's assumption of comital title in Gascony, but failed.[40] One might compare this relative lack of royal activity with the situation in Brittany, which Carolingian rulers often claimed as part of their realms but that was also absent from royal acts and omitted from capitularies and imperial divisions.[41] Both regions were on the borders of the Carolingian realm and possessed their own rulers, although the paucity of evidence precludes

[37] See, for example, Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 5, p. 296, identifying a 'certain Basque Adelrich' as a traitor, but the name itself is Frankish, as noted in Noble, *Lives*, p. 232.
[38] Collins, 'Pippin I', p. 373.
[39] S. Ottewill-Soulsby, *The Emperor and the Elephant: Christians and Muslims in the Age of Charlemagne* (Princeton, 2023), pp. 196–9.
[40] *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.* 836, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS. rer. Germ.* 5 (Hanover, 1883), p. 12, in J.L. Nelson (trans.) *The Annals of St-Bertin* (Manchester, 1991), p. 36.
[41] C. Brett, 'Brittany and the Carolingian Empire: A Historical Review', *History Compass* 11.4 (2013), pp. 272–3.

much specific discussion of politics. Gascony lacked the monastic communities which may have preserved royal diplomas, or even attracted them, although it did possess many small episcopal sees.[42] Yet this absence of diplomas parallels a lack of archaeological evidence for any Carolingian palaces south of the Dordogne.[43] The Pyrenees hindered travel from a practical perspective, particularly in the west, and royal travel south of the mountains was almost always on campaign.[44]

Pippin's base in the north of the *regnum* would have put him closer to the Frankish heartlands and also allowed him to mirror the patterns of his father's diplomatic activity as king of Aquitaine. Remaining in a specific region, with occasional journeys outside it for campaigning or for other reasons, was typical for Carolingian rulership, imbuing specific spaces with royal authority.[45]

At this stage, Pippin's authority over the realm appears to have been limited. In a diploma of 820, at the request of Benedict of Aniane, Louis the Pious ordered *fideles* in Aquitaine, Provence and Septimania to administer justice to the advocates of Aniane, along with commissioning reports on judicial delays.[46] The diploma lacks any reference to the newly crowned king of Aquitaine and instead refers only to the authority of Louis as *imperator*. A later diploma, issued in March 822, at the behest of Tructesind of Aniane, reiterated similar orders.[47] Louis continued to treat Aquitaine as his responsibility, with Aniane's interests in the kingdom under his oversight, even though the monastery itself fell within Pippin's kingdom. Yet after this point references to Aquitaine drop off in Louis's diplomas, although he retained an interest in the region.[48] The year 822 therefore marks a

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[42] The closest large monastery to Gascony is Moissac, on the other side of the Garonne River to Gascony proper.

[43] L. Bourgeois and J.-F. Boyer, 'Les Palais Carolingiens d'Aquitaine: Genèse, Implantation et Destin', in L. Bourgeois and C. Remy (eds), *Demeurer, Défendre et Paraître: Orientations Récentes de l'Archéologie des Fortifications et des Résidences Aristocratiques Médiévales entre Loire et Pyrénées* (Chauvigny, 2014), pp. 101–2.

[44] Chandler, *Carolingian Catalonia*, p. 73. Compare below for discussion of how this played out in practice in 827.

[45] J. Schneider, 'À propos du souverain itinérant dans l'empire germanique (VIIIe–XIVe siècle)', in S. Destephen, J. Barbier and F. Chausson (eds), *Le gouvernement en déplacement. Pouvoir et mobilité de l'Antiquité nos jours* (Rennes, 2019), particularly pp. 294–7 on the Carolingians, but see the caveats in R. McKitterick, 'A King on the Move: The Place of an Itinerant Court in Charlemagne's Government', in T. Artan, J. Duindam and M. Kunt (eds), *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 166–7.

[46] MGH *Diplomata Hludowici pii* [hereafter DD LdF] 1, ed. T. Kölzer (Wiesbaden, 2016), no. 188, pp. 464–5.

[47] MGH DD LdF 1, no. 205, p. 307 mentioned 'omnibus comitibus, vicariis, centenariis sive ceteris iunioribus . . . Aquitanie'.

[48] After 822, Aquitaine is only referred to four times, in MGH DD LdF 2, ed. T. Kölzer (Wiesbaden, 2016) nos. 254, 322, 323 (the latter two refer to Louis's presence in Aquitaine but the acts do not relate to the *regnum*), and 377; pp. 632–6; 795–9; 799–801; 940–2.

change in both Louis's and Pippin's approaches to the region, both according to surviving diplomas and from the perspective of family politics.

Marriage and the 820s

In 822, five years after he assumed the royal title, Pippin married Ingiltrude. The *Annales regni Francorum* (*Royal Frankish Annals*) present Louis as the instigator of the union:

> When the assembly at Attigny was over, the emperor went hunting in the Ardennes . . . He [Louis the Pious] ordered Pippin [I of Aquitaine] to go to Aquitaine, but first had him take as his wife the daughter of Count Theotbert of Madrie and then made him depart to the west after the celebration of his wedding.[49]

Louis was therefore allowing Pippin to set up his own *familia*, in the sense of both a family and a household. All the agency, in the passage above, was with Louis: he arranged the marriage and, as a corollary, sent Pippin to rule his *regnum*. Marriage was within the authority of the *paterfamilias* as the overarching patriarchal figure of the dynasty, and indeed Louis would likely have arranged (as well as have merely approved of) the marriage.[50] Louis's actions implied his approval of Pippin and Ingiltrude having children, who would then be heirs to the *regnum* of Aquitaine. Louis's authority extended to Pippin's own family, even as Pippin exerted his own patriarchal authority over his family. It was not unusual for Carolingian sons to marry years after receiving their royal title, and indeed Carolingian royal sons seem to have married later than their Merovingian predecessors.[51] One outcome of this may have been, as Airlie suggests, increased tensions between fathers and sons, although there is no immediate sign of this in Pippin's case.[52] The marriage nonetheless marks Pippin out as attaining a new degree of independence from his father, as the rise in Pippin's diplomas and the drop in references to Aquitaine in Louis's diplomas imply.

For Carolingian elites, marriage was a public event, and this applied most to royal marriages.[53] Dhuoda, for example, mentions her 824

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[49] *Annales regni Francorum*, *s.a.* 822, pp. 157–8.
[50] S. Joye, 'Carolingian Rulers and Marriage in the Age of Louis the Pious and His Sons', in J.L. Nelson, S. Reynolds and S.M. Johns (eds), *Gender and Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford* (London, 2012), p. 102.
[51] Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, pp. 274–6.
[52] Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*, p. 246.
[53] Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, pp. 325–7; Le Jan, *Femmes, pouvoir*, pp. 53–86.

wedding to Count Bernard of Septimania as a public event at Aachen, perhaps as a way to assert her own proximity to royalty and to attest that this closeness had been reinforced in a public yet personal event.[54] A royal son's wedding was, then, one way that the dynasty demonstrated this son's political maturity, before a public, elite audience.[55] It follows that the marriage of Pippin and Ingiltrude heralded a distinct shift in Pippin's kingship, which emerges in both his diplomatic activity and in the expectations of contemporaries, indicating a patrimonial and familial understanding of royal status.

Along with a royal family went a royal *familia*, or household, and Pippin's household and court appear to have grown through the 820s. For example, Ermold resided at Pippin's Aquitanian court for a time, before being exiled for an unknown crime against Pippin and Louis. To secure his release, he penned a pair of poetic addresses around 825, aimed at Pippin and his father respectively. Ermold's epistolary address to the king of Aquitaine acclaims the hustle and bustle of his court, to which Ermold aimed to return.[56] He refers to Ingiltrude (although not by name) as an integral part of the royal household, who participated in the court life of Aquitaine.[57] There were courtiers, visitors bringing petitions and gifts, and a *familia* fitting for a Carolingian king. Ermold used similar terms in an address to Louis, in which Empress Judith, Louis's second wife, is also singled out for praise.[58] In both cases, Ermold sought to hail the recipient of his praise as fulfilling a moral mission of rulership, aimed at Christian salvation.[59] The court was the moral and spatial centre of the Carolingian realm and was crucial to Carolingian rulership.[60] Christine Veyrard-Cosme's study of the poems argues they are best understood as rehabilitating Ermold – through discussion of his participation in the rebellions against Louis – and as questioning the justice and utility of Ermold's exile.[61] Throughout the

[54] Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. M. Thiébaux, *Dhuoda: Handbook for her Warrior Son* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 84.

[55] Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 249–52; Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*, p. 247.

[56] Ermold, *Carmen in honorem Pippini regis*, I, ed. E. Faral, *Ermold le Noir* (Paris, 1932), pp. 204–6.

[57] Ermold, *Carmen*, I, pp. 202–4.

[58] Compare Ermold, *Carmen in honorem Hludowici*, III, pp. 163–7; Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, III.9, p. 170, on the royal *domus magna* ('great house'); on gifts, see Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, pp. 85–6.

[59] A. Dubreucq, 'Poésie d'éloge et image de l'empereur à l'époque carolingienne l'exemple d'Ermold le Noir', *Hortus Artum Medievalium* 8 (2002), pp. 201–4.

[60] S. Airlie, 'The Palace of Memory: The Carolingian Court as Political Centre', in S. Rees Jones, R. Marks and A.J. Minnis (eds), *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 1–20, particularly pp. 8–10.

[61] C. Veyrard-Cosme, 'Ermold le Noir (IXe s.) et l'*Ad Pippinum Regem*', in N. Catellani-Dufrêne and P. Michel (eds), *La Lyre et la Pourpre: Poésie latine et politique de l'Antiquité Tardive à la Renaissance* (Rennes, 2012), pp. 81–5.

poem, *pietas* (piety), both familial and spiritual, is prominent, underlining Louis's capability to exercise legitimate imperial authority.[62] Through this normative discussion, Ermold implied Pippin would understand his obligations of royal justice and that these obligations would secure a commutation of the exile.

Ermold also called attention to Pippin's war leadership against the Umayyad armies, another mark of legitimate kingship and another example of royal responsibility.[63] Pippin's patronage of Ermold as a court poet was itself a sign of royal status and signalled this royal status to the Aquitanian and broader Carolingian political community. Ermold writes that he had been on campaign with Pippin's troops but had been out of his depth in combat. Pippin supposedly quipped that Ermold should 'put down [his] arms and write love letters instead', a remark drawn from Ovid.[64] The one-liner indicated Pippin's ability to identify and sponsor scholarship as well as to lead his men in battle. In Ermold's address, therefore, three key attributes of rulership emerge: the royal *familia* and palace, leadership in war, and royal cultural patronage. Ermold presented Pippin as exemplifying these three elements, possessing a majestic *familia*, enjoying victory on the battlefield, and patronizing figures such as Ermold himself. The first two elements indicate the importance of the patriarchal norms of rulership discussed throughout this article, as both a protector of the realm and ruler of the household.[65] Ermold's construction of legitimate rulership oriented around duty, whether that was towards family, the realm, or God, and it was these duties that he presented Pippin as fulfilling.[66]

Ermold's poem was not all praise of Pippin. In one section, the poet highlighted Pippin's love of the hunt, a quintessentially elite masculine activity. Hunting could both underscore lay masculine identity and create communities within this identity, allowing for a shared

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[62] P. Depreux, 'Le pietas comme principe de gouvernement d'après le poème sur Louis le Pieux d'Ermold le Noir', in J. Hill and M. Swan (eds), *The Community, the Family and the Saint* (Leeds, 1998), pp. 214–15.

[63] A. Foerster, 'Die Stimmen der Eroberten bei Ermoldus Nigellus. Eine Mahnung an Ludwig den Frommen und Pippin von Aquitanien', in R. Szill and A. Bihrer (eds), *Eroberte im Mittelalter. Umbruchssituationen erleben, bewältigen, gestalten* (Berlin, 2023), pp. 114–18.

[64] Ermold, *Carmen in honorem Hludowici*, IV, p. 154. See S. Bobrycki, 'Nigellus, Ausulus: Self-Promotion, Self-Suppression and Carolingian Ideology in the Poetry of Ermold', in R. Corradini, M. Gillis, R. McKitterick and I. van Renswoude (eds), *Ego Trouble: Authors and Their Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 161–73, particularly pp. 164–8 on Ovid.

[65] On the king as ruler of the household before the realm, see, for example the later treatise on rulership: Sedulius Scottus, *De rectoribus christianis*, c. 5, ed. R.W. Dyson, *On Christian Rulers* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 76–82.

[66] Depreux, 'La pietas', pp. 222–4.

experience between the king and lay elite men.[67] That is to say, other members of the lay male elite expected to hunt alongside the king, and younger elite men would hunt with sons of the king. Yet Ermold carefully criticizes Pippin, warning him against over-indulging in hunting and admonishing him to 'become a man' by hunting only in moderation.[68] Ermold expected that Pippin would hunt, but this activity should not distract him from other royal duties. Here, Ermold implies that hunting in excess was a sign of immaturity.[69] This implication aligns with Pippin's new assumption of social and political maturity heralded by his marriage to Ingiltrude three years earlier, as now expectations of him were higher. Previously in the poem, Ermold wrote that he had sent Pippin his panegyric for Louis, which he hoped Pippin would read and follow.[70] Ermold therefore underlined the idea of Louis as a fatherly example, demonstrating the masculine and patriarchal idea of mature, kingly restraint even in masculine activities. Pippin had a duty to behave with restraint, but he remained under the authority of his father and was expected to imitate Louis's imperial virtues.

This patriarchal model of protection and paternal authority also emerges in one of Pippin's first acts after his marriage, a capitulary issued between 822 and 824. Pippin is mentioned in a handful of other capitularies, including the so-called *Capitula missorum* (*Capitulary of the missi*) of 821, in which Louis instructed him to help oversee rampart construction on the Loire, along with the *Ordinatio imperii*.[71] The capitulary under study here is, however, the only one in which Pippin directly legislated. It set out provisions for Sainte-Croix of Poitiers, one of the monasteries Pippin favoured.[72] Sainte-Croix had been founded by the Merovingian queen Radegund, making it a monastery steeped in royal prestige, and it possessed a relic of the True Cross. In short, Sainte-Croix was a place of great importance; indeed, it was the monastery in which Pippin would be buried, reflecting his close connection to the community there.[73] The capitulary was issued at the invocation of Louis, but under the authority of both rulers: Louis 'commanded [the capitulary] to be made and so that the same might

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[67] Goldberg, *In the Manner of the Franks*, pp. 103–28.

[68] Ermold, *In honorem Pippini*, p. 224.

[69] Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 435–6.

[70] Ermold, *In honorem Pippini*, pp. 226–32.

[71] *Capitula missorum*, ed. A. Boretius, MGH *Capit.* 1, no. 148, c. 9, p. 301.

[72] *Capitulare de monasterio S. Crucis Pictavensi*, ed. A. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1, no. 149, p. 302.

[73] J.L. Nelson, 'Carolingian Royal Funerals', in F. Theuws and J.L. Nelson (eds), *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 153–5.

be observed by all he committed it to his glorious son Pippin'.[74] As Sainte-Croix was a female monastery, Pippin's supervision was an inherently gendered act.[75] Pippin was the patriarch of Aquitaine, even though he was subordinate to Louis as patriarch of the wider Carolingian realm and dynasty. Moreover, such legal documents created an appearance of concord between royal authority and monasteries, as part of a mutual responsibility for the realm.[76] This mutual responsibility and harmony between monastic institutions and royal authority parallels the idealized concord between the senior emperor Louis and his son Pippin as king of Aquitaine. The capitulary represents every element of the realm in its place, from the ruler's patriarchal protection and oversight of a female monastic community, to the cooperation between father and son for the protection of the monastery.

Pippin's authority over monasteries extended to judgement of legal cases. In a later grant of immunity to Sainte-Croix, issued around 825, Pippin retained the right to hear its monastic disputes at his court.[77] Three years later, he judged a case of a common type: a group of *coloni* brought a charge against a landowner, in this case Abbot Jacob of Saint-Paul de Cormery, accusing him of levying unjust demands on them.[78]

The Cormery complaint was also aimed at the monastery's advocate, Agenus, who appears to have acted as a local rent collector and was accused of abusing this position to extort more rent for Cormery than was due.[79] Pippin ruled in favour of the abbot, based on sworn testimony that the demands had been levied during Charlemagne's reign; this process of receiving sworn testimony and judging based on

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[74] *Capitulare de monasterio*, p. 302: 'piissimus imperator praefatus scilicet Lugdovicus fieri pracepit, atque ut idem ab omnibus observaretur glorioso filio suo Pippino commisit'. See also Y. Labande-Mailfert, 'Les Débuts De Sainte-Croix', *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest* 19 (1986), p. 81.

[75] I. Rembold, 'Gender and Horizontal Networks in Carolingian Monasticisms (up to c. 840)', in A. Westwell, I. Rembold and C. van Rhijn (eds), *Rethinking the Carolingian Reforms* (Manchester, 2023), pp. 61–2.

[76] C. Pössel, 'Authors and Recipients of Carolingian Capitularies, 779–829', in R. Corradini, R. Meens, C. Pössel and P. Shaw (eds), *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2006), pp. 253–74; S. Zwierlein, *Studien zu den Arengen in den Urkunden Kaiser Ludwigs des Frommen (814–840)* (Wiesbaden, 2016), pp. 395–8.

[77] *Recueil des actes de Pépin Ier et de Pépin II, rois d'Aquitaine (814–848)*, ed. L. Levillain (Paris, 1926), no. 3, pp. 9–12.

[78] *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 12, pp. 46–7, translated by J.L. Nelson in 'Dispute Settlement in Carolingian West Francia', in *The Frankish World*, p. 55. It is preserved in a single manuscript, Paris BnF Lat. 8837, a collection of diplomas assembled in the seventeenth century.

[79] *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 12, p. 46: 'advocatum nomine Ageno, eo quod iam dictus abba vel sui missi eis super querissent vel exacatassent amplius de censum vel de pro solute quam ipse per drictum facere nec solver non debebant nec eorum antecessores'.

it was typical of a Carolingian court.[80] The king was supposed to be a protector of the *pauperes* and, as part of the royal office, was expected to dispense royal justice equally (although this concept of justice was limited to only free men). Pippin's court follows this model, both referring directly to Charlemagne as his predecessor and using the same vocabulary of doing *iustitia* and respecting *ius*, which also appears in Carolingian legal formularies.[81] The complainants assumed Pippin would uphold this royal obligation and thus ensure their own 'law' (*lex*) – that is, the customs that they felt precluded the kinds of monetary obligations Agenus and Cormery sought to impose.[82] This document refers to Pippin hearing both sides of the dispute – presenting himself as an accessible fount of justice for Aquitaine – in a way that is unique for this *regnum*: no similar imperial document survives that has Louis hearing both sides of an adversarial dispute.[83] Through judging fairly, Pippin underlined his position as the guarantor of a just social harmony, one to whom both the Aquitanian *pauperes* and *potentes* could go for justice.[84]

By 828, then, Pippin's rulership had proceeded along lines broadly similar to that of other Carolingians. On marrying Ingiltrude, Pippin had attained a degree of political maturity that he had not had before starting his own household.[85] Ermold's poetic address to Pippin, while surely designed to flatter, speaks to Pippin's authority – he was worth flattering – along with his adherence to the idealized image of a masculine, kingly hunter and war leader. Indeed, in Ermold's warning against excessive hunting, we get a sense of Pippin's genuine enjoyment for this activity above and beyond the articulation of a kingly identity, and an idea of how this might meld with his new-found social maturity. In 822 Pippin had, then, reached a 'coming-of-age' moment as a somewhat independent ruler. It was at this stage that he started exercising the authority implicit in the title of king and referring to the onerous obligations from God such a title implied. The title *rex* carried with it substantial authority and status, but this status could nevertheless shift over time depending on a king's demographic and familial position.

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[80] *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 12, p. 46.

[81] A. Rio, *Legal Practice and the Written Word in the Early Middle Ages: Frankish Formulae, c. 500–1000* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 27–40.

[82] Nelson, 'Dispute Settlement', pp. 55–6.

[83] M. Gravel, *Distances, rencontres, communications. Réaliser l'empire sous Charlemagne et Louis le Pieux* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 399–400.

[84] Gravel, *Distances, rencontres*, p. 400; Nelson, 'Dispute Settlement', pp. 57–8. See also Zwierlein, *Studien zu den Arengen*, particularly pp. 138–48 on *arenga* in diplomas of Louis which combined earthly and eschatological ends.

[85] Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 249–52.

Crisis

It was around 827–8 that Ermold's glamorized image of Pippin as a war leader was dented by military failure. Alongside a Bulgar incursion on the eastern frontier of the empire, a force led by Abū Marwān ʿUbayd Allāh and backed by the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Raḥmān threatened Barcelona and Girona in 827 and into 828.[86] This incursion, in support of a revolt by a certain (and much debated) Aizo, likely reflected ongoing tensions in the Iberian March, following a breakdown in the support Louis had received from across the region as king of Aquitaine.[87] Louis sent Bernard of Septimania to put down the revolt, but also ordered Pippin, alongside Counts Hugh and Matfrid, to support Bernard. However, the reinforcements arrived after the Umayyad incursion had left, its short-term raiding objectives achieved.[88] The logistical difficulties it took to traverse the Pyrenees were perhaps to blame for the failure to reinforce Bernard in time.[89]

Nevertheless, such a failure to respond was more than a tactical or strategic setback to the king of Aquitaine; it was a blow to the reputation.[90] Louis had striven to be seen as triumphant in war, making his victory at the siege of Barcelona in 801 a cornerstone of his own conception of his imperial biography.[91] Such a setback may therefore have cost Pippin legitimacy in the eyes of his father, along with members of the Aquitanian elite, as Pippin had squandered what Louis had won. A loss of confidence in Pippin on the part of his father would parallel Louis's deposition of Counts Hugh of Tours and Matfrid of Orléans for their failure to aid Barcelona in a speedy fashion.[92] Indeed, the emperor raised others, most notably Count Bernard of Septimania, to prominence at court in place of Hugh and Matfrid.[93] Louis was clearly willing to take action to preserve his own reputation as protector of the realm, particularly in a city key to his imperial image. Pippin's problems

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[86] *Annales regni Francorum*, *s.a.* 827, p. 173. On this invasion, see also Ottewill-Soulsby, *The Emperor and the Elephant*, pp. 205–6.

[87] Ottewill-Soulsby, *The Emperor and the Elephant*, pp. 215–18.

[88] *Annales regni Francorum*, *s.a.* 828, p. 174; this disaster was portended in *s.a.* 827, p. 173, with the term *clades*, a word frequently used for divinely sent punishments.

[89] Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, cc. 40–1, pp. 434–40; Collins, 'Pippin I', pp. 384–9; see also Gravel, *Distances, rencontres*, pp. 461–8.

[90] See the similar attempts of Lothar to present himself as a brave figure on the battlefield: Sernagiotto, 'The Importance of Being Lothar', particularly pp. 147–52, and see p. 157 on the 'hyper-masculinity' of Lothar as a *rex terribilis* in war.

[91] Ermold, *Carmen in honorem Hludowici*, I, pp. 26–46, narrates the siege in detail; Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 13, pp. 312–14.

[92] On the deposition of Hugh and Matfrid: *Annales regni Francorum*, *s.a.* 827, p. 173; Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 40–1, pp. 434–40; Ottewill-Soulsby, *The Emperor and the Elephant*, pp. 220–4; see also Depreux, *Prosopographie*, pp. 262–4 on Hugh and pp. 329–31 on Matfrid.

[93] Depreux, *Prosopographie*, pp. 137–8.

in war parallel the crises facing the Carolingian realm as a whole at this point. A string of meteorological events, consequent famines, and military defeats posed a serious problem for Louis and the imperial court.[94] The emperor summoned a series of church councils in response to these events.[95] The only surviving conciliar acts, those of Paris, set out a vision of cooperation between the episcopate and the ruler.[96] The bishops at Paris underlined that rulership was an obligation to God, and legitimacy was based on fulfilling this obligation.[97]

Explaining these responsibilities, Bishop Jonas of Orléans directed an advice treatise on rulership to Pippin, *De institutione regia*, or *On the royal institution*. Jonas had been closely involved in the councils of the late 820s, taking the lead on the surviving Paris acts. His dedicatory letter titled *Admonitio ad Pippinum regem* (*An admonition to King Pippin*) introduces the treatise.[98] *De institutione regia* dates to around 830, amid the first rebellion against Louis the Pious. The text also formed part of a broader Carolingian genre of royal advice.[99] Supporters of each side of the civil war justified their position in terms of *ministerium* and the responsibility of the ruler.[100] Jonas helpfully defined this *ministerium* as 'to govern and rule God's people with equity and justice, and to take care with zeal, so that they may have peace and harmony'.[101] The bishop of Orléans echoed the Paris council, elevating these royal duties above ancestry as the principal sign of royal legitimacy, as these duties ultimately furthered the salvation of all those in the realm.[102] By implication, Pippin could be an example to other Carolingian kings, as they shared a common royal responsibility.

Jonas's addition of the *Admonitio* nonetheless targeted the text squarely at Pippin, reminding him of his duties both as a king and as a son.[103] In the

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[94] M. de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 170–84.

[95] Patzold, *Episcopus*, particularly pp. 198–202.

[96] *Concilium Parisiense*, book II, c. 1–5, ed. A. Werminghoff, *MGH Leges: Concilia* [hereafter *Conc.*] 2.2 (Hanover and Leipzig, 1908), pp. 649–55.

[97] *Concilium Parisiense*, book II, c. 5, p. 655.

[98] Jonas of Orléans, *De institutione regia*, edited and translated into French by A. Dubreucq in *Le métier de roi* (Paris, 1995), *Admonitio*, pp. 148–70, addresses the treatise to Pippin.

[99] H.H. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit* (Bonn, 1968), pp. 214–18 on *De institutione regia*; K. Ubl, 'Carolingian Mirrors for Princes: Texts, Contexts, Impact', in N.-L. Perret and S. Péquignot (eds), *A Critical Companion to 'Mirrors for Princes' in Literature* (Leiden, 2022), pp. 83–6.

[100] C.M. Booker, *Past Convictions: The Penance of Louis the Pious and the Decline of the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009), particularly pp. 140–6.

[101] Jonas, *De institutione regia*, p. 198: 'Regale ministerium specialiter est populum Dei gubernare et regere cum aequitate et iustitia et ut pacem et concordiam habent studere.'

[102] Jonas, *De institutione regia*, p. 216, citing *Concilium Parisiense*, book II, c. 5, p. 655.

[103] Jonas, *De institutione regia*, p. 160: 'quia igitur quantum orthodoxum virum ipumque caesarem, dominum nostrum, genitorem vestrum dilexeritis, eique in omnibus fideliter et humiliter subiecti fueritis'.

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context of a blow to Pippin's martial reputation, in the loss of a city his father had conquered, Jonas's admonition takes on an air of specific criticism. Yet Jonas still offered a way out, in the form of the advice treatise with its message of a new future of peaceful cooperation between royal and episcopal powers. If Pippin returned to the path of equity and justice, peace, and harmony, he would take on the Augustinian benefits of the *felix imperator*.[104] For Jonas, cooperation was a matter of office, be that royal or episcopal, rather than an image of familial harmony.

Jonas's idealized image of leadership through cooperation both between bishops and kings and between the kings themselves did not immediately come to pass. Louis's removal of Hugh and Matfrid reflected a general sense of crisis throughout the realm, exacerbated by these military disasters and other portents of divine displeasure.[105] Hugh's father-in-law was Louis's son Lothar I, who in 830 became one of the instigators of a rebellion against his father, in which he was joined by Pippin.[106] In fact, Pippin appears to have taken the lead in this rebellion, at least initially.[107] The context of the apparent loss of paternal faith may have driven Pippin to revolt, although the exact causes are still a matter of debate. It certainly seems unlikely that the revolt was due to Empress Judith and supporters seeking a share of the realm for Charles the Bald, the Pippin's younger half-brother.[108] A loss of faith on Louis's part is hinted at in the Astronomer's dismissal of Pippin as a 'youth' (*iuvenis*), undermining his claims to royal independence.[109]

At any rate, Louis managed to see off the revolt and issued a new inheritance plan, which bought Pippin off with promises of an enlarged realm, alongside eventually removing Bernard of Septimania from his recently acquired position of eminence.[110] The rebels had levelled accusations of adultery at the count and Empress Judith, thereby bringing Louis's rulership into question, and the dismissal of Bernard was part of Louis's plan to neutralize these accusations.[111] Once again, this plan constructed an idea of familial harmony, with each brother supporting the other through 'fraternal love', and therefore receiving

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[104] Jonas, *De institutione regia*, p. 282: 'ut in eis perpiscue cognoscatis qui imperatores quive reges felices dici possint et debeant'. Jonas then goes on to quote from Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, book V, c. 24, ed. A. Kalb and B. Dombart, *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* 33 (Paris, 2015), pp. 748–50.

[105] *Annales regni Francorum*, *s.a.* 827, 828, pp. 173–6.

[106] See the narrative in Collins, 'Pippin I', pp. 381–2.

[107] Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 44, pp. 460–4.

[108] Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*, pp. 146–9; Depreux, *Prosopographie*, pp. 359–60; Costambeys, Innes, and Maclean, *The Carolingian World*, pp. 214–16.

[109] Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 44, p. 456.

[110] *Regni divisio*, ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, *MGH Capit.* 2 (Hanover, 1897), no. 194, pp. 20–4.

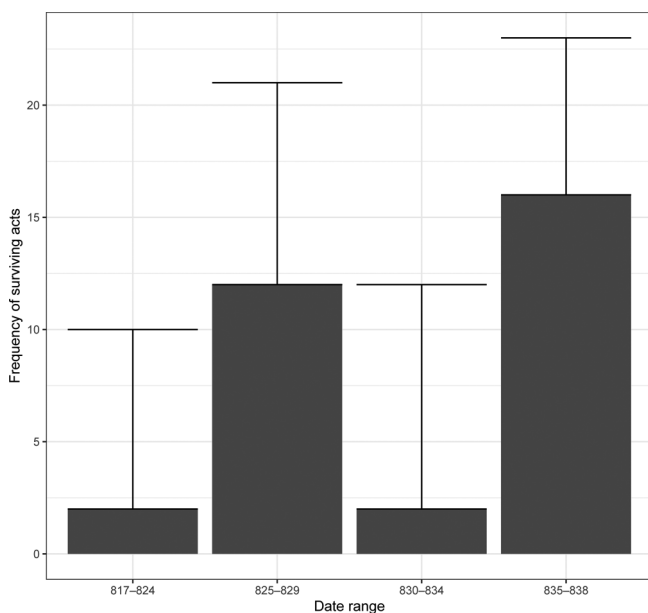[111] De Jong, *The Penitential State*, pp. 145–6.

Fig. 2 Number of acts of Pippin I by date

divine endorsement for their rulership.[112] This did not hold for long, however, and after Louis forgave and promoted Lothar, in 832 Louis the German rebelled and invaded Alemannia.[113] Louis the Pious made a bid to remove Pippin in favour of Charles the Bald, in the vignette at the start of this article, perhaps as Pippin had become close to the now-deposed Bernard of Septimania. Bernard appears to have encouraged Pippin to rebel, in a volte-face from his previous allegiance to Louis, even though the rebels had targeted him and Judith in 830.[114] This move appears to have united the three sons in rebellion against their father, famously joining to depose the emperor at Soissons in 833.[115]

The number of Pippin's surviving charters dating from the years of the rebellions drops significantly. As we can see in Fig. 2, relatively few of Pippin's charters date before 824. A rise in the number of extant charters coincides with his marriage to Ingiltrude, reflecting his 'coming of age', before then falling precipitously around 830. This drop could

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[112] *Regni divisio*, p. 21: 'Quam divisionem eo modo describere ac designare volumus, ut singuli iuxta ordinationem nostrum et fines regni sui, qui in alienigenas extenduntur, cum Dei adiutorio defendere studeant et pacem hac fraternam caritatem inter se custodire valeant.'
[113] *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.* 832, p. 5.
[114] Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*, pp. 151–2.
[115] As described in *Episcoporum de poenitentia quam Hludowicus imperator professus est, relation compendiensis*, MGH *Capit.* 1, no. 197, pp. 51–5.

be explained by a lack of support for him amid familial strife. Both Janet Nelson and Elina Screen suggested that a decrease in charter activity can indicate elites fleeing a particular ruler.[116] In Pippin's case, of course, the drop may merely reflect the survival patterns of the evidence. Lay documents are significantly less likely to survive than monastic ones, while Pippin I's line died out after his son Pippin II.[117] However, a large number of Pippin I's diplomas nevertheless survive from a range of contexts, suggesting their numbers may reveal genuine temporal and geographical trends.[118]

From the surviving evidence, there also appears to have been a difference in the political allegiance of the northern and southern Aquitanian elites.[119] Louis certainly retained substantial support in Aquitaine from his time as king, but this may have been more concentrated in the north; as we can see from Fig. 1, we have little extant evidence for the south from Louis's reign.[120] Martin Gravel has argued that local elites, who had to approach a reactive Louis with petitions, became dissatisfied with his responses to their requests. This elite unhappiness led to a perception of imperial injustice and therefore a massing of support behind Louis's rebellious sons.[121] This elite backing nevertheless concentrated behind those who already held both the title of *rex* and were Carolingians, rather than an alternative leader, underlining the importance of the royal title and dynastic status working in tandem.

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[116] J.L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), pp. 188–91; Screen, 'The Importance of the Emperor', p. 41.

[117] M. Innes, 'Archives, Documents and Landowners in Carolingian Francia', in W. Brown, M. Costambeys, M. Innes and A. Kosto (eds), *Documentary Culture and the Laity in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 152–88, particularly pp. 152–5; C. Insley, 'Looking for Charters that Aren't There: Lost Anglo-Saxon Charters and Archival Footprints', in J. Jarrett and A.S. McKinley (eds), *Problems and Possibilities of Early Medieval Charters* (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 173–4.

[118] These five originals arise from Fosses, Solignac, Lagrasse and Cormery, with the last two preserved in the cartulary Paris, BnF, MS Lat 8837 and the first three as single-sheet documents in the Archives nationales (K9 no. 3 and no. 8) and the Archives départementales de la Haute-Vienne (H 4722) respectively. The other diplomas survive in cartularies of Beaulieu, Brioude, Saint-Benoit, Saint-Maxient, Saint-Mesmin and Trèves, alongside more recent scholarly copies of now-lost documents that cover Montolieu, Saint-Maurice, Saint-Philibert, and medieval copies that still survive at Saint-Antonin, Saint-Hilaire and Jumièges. For more detail on these patterns, see Levillain, *Recueil des actes*, pp. iv–xxiv. I also include in this graph those now-lost issues that Levillain reconstructs from the above, discussed on pp. xv–xxv.

[119] As shown by the invitation some of the southern elite offered to Louis, son of Louis the German, to take the throne of Aquitaine: *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 854, trans. Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin*, p. 78; *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 854, ed. F. Kurze, *MGH SS rer. Germ.* 7 (Hanover, 1891), in T. Reuter (trans.) *The Annals of Fulda* (Manchester, 1992), pp. 35–6. These southern elite are identified as the *cognatio Gauzberti*, or the family of Gauzbert.

[120] See Depreux, *Prosopographie*, pp. 342–4 on Louis's continued strength of support in Aquitaine.

[121] Gravel, *Distances, rencontres*, particularly pp. 415–22.

Thanks to their elite support, the rebels were able to force Louis's infamous penance in 833, allowing Lothar to take the imperial throne. Yet the new emperor appears to have blundered at this moment of triumph and attempted to take too much, uniting Louis the German and Pippin against him.[122] The two kings allied again with their father, providing him with the support needed to return to the throne.[123] It appears, at least from the narrative texts, that Pippin had reconciled with Louis. These texts were, of course, constructing their own narrative of events. The fourth book of Nithard's *Histories*, for example, reflects Nithard's own background and experiences, emphasizing *fraternitas* to underscore Nithard's own familial honour.[124] His emphasis on fidelity and *sacramenta* (sworn oaths) undeniably shapes the text; in the first two books, Lothar frequently breaks the *sacramenta* he swears, and his double-dealing cost him his brothers' support.[125] Courtney Booker links part of the *Histories* to broader penitential cultures in the Carolingian world, seeing the last two books as informed less by royal patronage than as by Nithard's own need to confess the sins of the Franks.[126] Nevertheless, Pippin does seem to have returned to at least a working relationship with his father, based around the ideas of fidelity that Owen Phelan underscores as central to Nithard's perspective on events. Such ideas of fidelity also appear in Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*, a text contemporary to Nithard's and intended for both her son William and a wider lay male elite audience.[127] Even though others of Louis's sons did occasionally protest or rebel after 834, Pippin did not join them.

After the crisis

The atmosphere of reconciliation is displayed well in *Epistola concilii Aquisgranensis ad Pippinum regem directa*, or the letter of the Council of Aachen (of 836) to Pippin, written by the aforementioned Jonas of Orléans.[128] The letter opens with a clear statement of intent:

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[122] Nithard, *Historiarum*, book IV, c. 1.4, ed. P. Lauer and S. Glansdorff, *Histoire des fils de Louis le Pieux* (Paris, 2012), pp. 126–8.

[123] Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris*, c. 52, ed. E. Tremp, *MGH SS rer. Germ.* 64 (Hanover, 1995), p. 244.

[124] D.M. Polanchika and A. Cilley, 'The Very Personal History of Nithard: Family and Honour in the Carolingian World', *Early Medieval Europe* 22.2 (2014), pp. 172–4.

[125] O.M. Phelan, 'The Scope of Fidelity in Nithard's Ninth Century', *Viator* 48.2 (2017), pp. 27–32, on book I, the only book in which Pippin features.

[126] C.M. Booker, 'The Two Sorrows of Nithard', in C.M. Booker and A.A. Latowsky (eds), *This Modern Age: Medieval Studies in Honour of Paul Edward Dutton* (Budapest, 2023), pp. 115–20.

[127] Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, p. 96 (on audience) and pp. 124–6, but *passim* (on fidelity).

[128] Jonas, *Epistola concilii*, ed. A. Werminghoff, MGH *Conc.* 2.2, no. 56, pp. 725–67.

> To the illustrious and by celestial grace sublimely elevated Lord Pippin, the most noble king and immensely to be preserved by God, a gathering of venerable priests . . . , synodally gathered at Aachen at the most provident command of your most pious and orthodox father, our lord the excellent Caesar Louis, to secure the honour and beauty of the holy church of God and of restoring some ecclesiastical dignities, offer our wish of eternal bliss.[129]

For Jonas, then, the royal office flowed from God, but the commands of the council also came at the behest of Pippin's father, again linking ideas of royal office and filial duty. In Jonas's exhortation, the biblical kings who had defended priestly property were examples to Pippin, who was a successor to these biblical kings and shared their responsibilities.[130] Drawing on Jerome's exegesis of Isaiah, and a prevailing theme in Carolingian political thought, Jonas linked those that 'plunder the poor' (*rapina pauperum*) with those that 'exhaust the wealth of the church' (*ecclesia opibus abutuntur*), therefore telling Pippin that his infringements of ecclesiastical property were contrary to his royal duty to protect the *pauperes*.[131] The bishop of Orléans drew on the same themes, then, as he had done six years prior in his general treatise on rulership. Neither this letter nor *De institutione regia* see rulership as solely a family affair, although Louis's authority as a father is clearly a factor. This conciliar letter represents a return to the idealized image of cooperation between imperial father and royal son that characterized the early-to-mid 820s. This cooperation was framed in familial terms, as Kasten points out, but it was also a matter of royal duties.[132] Both father and son were, in Jonas's view, working together to ensure a harmonious Aquitaine, in which ecclesiastical property and the *pauperes*, intrinsically linked, were both safe and secure. Pippin was clearly back to being a full partner in rulership; there was no chance of a return to the pre-822 dynamics of frequent intervention, even after the rebellions.

The king of Aquitaine appears to have heeded Jonas's admonition on ecclesiastical property, as one charter in 837 restored Saint-Maurice of

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[129] Jonas, *Epistola concilii*, p. 729: 'Inclito caelestique gratia regio munere insigniter sublimato domno Pippino, regi nobilissimo et per inmensum a Deo conservando, coetus venerabilium praesulum … apud Aquasgranii iussu salutifero et ordine providentissimo piissimi et orthodoxi genitoris vestri domni nostri Hludowici, Caesaris eximii, ob honorem et decorem sanctae Dei ecclesiae procurandum . . . synodaliter congregatus, aeternae beatitudinis optans felicitatem.'

[130] Jonas, *Epistola concilii*, p. 759, citing Solomon's construction of the Temple.

[131] Jonas, *Epistola concilii*, p. 729; on the *pauperes* and ecclesiastical property, see, for example, S. Patzold and C. van Rhijn, 'The Carolingian Local Ecclesia as a "Temple Society"?', *Early Medieval Europe* 29.4 (2021), pp. 550–4.

[132] Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 559–67.

Angers's control of the monastic cell of Chalonnes-sur-Loire, previously held by Leotduinus and Gozbert.[133] This charter was not explicitly issued at the request of Louis the Pious, but may have been in response to the council of Aachen's condemnation.[134] The restoration put the affairs of the cell back in the correct order, just as the reconciliation between Pippin and Louis restored the correct order of the realm.[135] At the same time, according to the Astronomer, Lothar's supporters were threatening ecclesiastical property, particularly that of the papacy.[136] Unlike his elder brother, Pippin actively complied with the patriarchal framework that Louis was attempting to restore, along with the idea of kingship as an office with attached protective and salvific duties.[137] The two here are, again, inextricably linked: Pippin is 'taking care to restore to rectitude' (*ad rectitudinis statum reducere curamus*), both as part of his duties as a just king and in obeyance to his father's instructions.

Another charter, a restitution of property to Saint-Pierre de Jumièges, similarly elides Pippin's reconciliation with his father and his just and pious kingship.[138] The charter overturns any precarial grants concerning the domain of Tourtenay in Thouarsais and six *manentes* in Anjou.[139] Unlike in the previous document, Pippin stated that this restitution was at the request of his father, couching the charter in terms of filial duty. Pippin also acknowledged that he had 'subtracted from the church of Christ', making his return of the lands to the monastery a matter of piety and justice, as well as being his father's wish and that of the Aachen council.[140] Parallels in the English context imply that such acknowledgement of wrongs was a way of demonstrating royal piety and perhaps even of soothing an edgy political situation.[141] In this

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[133]   *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 26, pp. 108–9.
[134]   Suggested by Collins, 'Pippin I', p. 371.
[135]   *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 26, p. 108: 'Si enim e aquae minus recte perpetrate sunt et divino cultui contraria ad rectitudinis statum reducere curamus . . .'. See Zwierlein, *Studien zu den Arengen*, pp. 74–96.
[136]   Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 55, pp. 510–11; E. Screen, 'Lothar I in Italy, 834–40: Charters and Authority', in J. Jarrett and A.S. McKinley (eds), *Problems and Possibilities of Early Medieval Charters* (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 241–2.
[137]   On this shift in Louis's policy towards Aquitaine, see also Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 193–7.
[138]   The original of this charter is lost, and it survives in an eleventh-century copy produced at Saint-Pierre: Rouen, Archives de la Seine-Maritime, 9 H 24/2.
[139]   *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 29, p. 126.
[140]   *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 29, p. 126; 'ab ecclesiis Christi subtraximus'.
[141]   See L. Roach, 'Public Rites and Public Wrongs: Ritual Aspects of Diplomas in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England', *Early Medieval Europe* 19.2 (2011), pp. 182–203, at pp. 193–9; C. Cubitt, 'The Politics of Remorse: Penance and Royal Piety in the Reign of Æthelred the Unready', *Historical Research* 85.228 (2012), pp. 179–92, at pp. 187–93, both on Æthelred II's acknowledgement of wrongs. Compare also J. Tickle, 'Changing Queenships in Tenth-Century England: Rhetoric and (Self-)Representation in the Case of Eadgifu of Kent at Cooling', *Early Medieval Europe* 31.4 (2023), pp. 627–8.

light, Pippin acknowledged his own fault to defuse any remaining conflicts with his father.

In the very same sentence, Pippin positions Louis's admonition (*genitoris nostri Hludovici serenissimi augusti debitam ammonitionem*) and his responsibility as a king entrusted with the title by God (*a Deo nobis comissi*) as being separate notions.[142] Here, royal duty and filial piety are once again linked together, but not identical, in a similar vein to the 836 Aachen letter. It is royal authority that flows from God and that Pippin fulfils in the charter, ensuring the stability (*stabilitatem*) of Aquitaine.[143] Pippin was clearly obliged to follow his father's commands, and as Kasten points out, this idea of filial obedience is prominent in Carolingian texts discussing royal sons.[144] But these commands sat alongside duties that arose from his royal title: in other words, commands from God. Dhuoda similarly expected her son William, not royal but of the lay elite, to give loyalty to his father Bernard, but first of all to God.[145] Louis could, and indeed did, command Pippin to follow royal duties, but these duties existed outside of paternal commands, and were essentially the same for all holders of the title of *rex*.

In both these cases, then, Pippin's obedience to his father is linked to his duties as a king. As Depreux argues, Louis continued to intervene in Aquitaine throughout this period of reconciliation, emphasizing his authority as the patriarch of the Carolingian realm.[146] Yet Pippin does not appear to have been out of line with his father in this area at any point during his reign.[147] Instead, these admonitions again reflect the interaction between Louis's patriarchal authority, ideals of familial harmony, and notions of royal office as an obligation to God. Royal duty to protect the church was therefore intertwined with the paternal oversight of Louis, indicating how ideas of kingship as an office and dynastic authority aligned. Moreover, the connection between an atmosphere of reconciliation and ideas of royal duty indicate well how events could shape a kingship. Pippin had gone from close supervision to exercising power more independently and had then rebelled, and these dynamics discernibly shifted Pippin's kingship – from collaboration with his father to outright rejection of paternal authority, and back again.

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[142] *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 29, p. 126.
[143] *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 29, p. 126: more fully, 'ad diuturnam stabilitatem propitiari minimi dubitamus'.
[144] Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 225–7.
[145] Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, p. 126.
[146] Depreux, *Prosopographie*, p. 345.
[147] As pointed out in Collins, 'Pippin I', pp. 371–2; Gravel, *Distances, rencontres*, pp. 406–9.

Memorialization and succession

Pippin I died in 838, and his eldest son, Pippin II, quickly moved to assert his right to rule. Unfortunately for the younger Pippin, Louis the Pious had earmarked Aquitaine to be part of Charles the Bald's *regnum* and invited Lothar to Worms in 839 to consent to this new division.[148] In this plan, Lothar and Charles the Bald would split the whole realm equally, apart from Louis the German's Bavaria. The latter would receive no new territories on his father's death and Pippin II would be cut out of the succession entirely.[149] The dynastic language of the Worms division hid the difficulty of writing Pippin out of the succession, as he was a legitimate Carolingian.[150] Legitimacy was not a true/false binary, and while Louis could certainly call Pippin II's legitimacy into question, he could not unilaterally remove it.[151]

The younger Pippin issued his first charter shortly after his father's death, to a monastery, Solignac, that Pippin I had founded, making it a particularly significant place to commemorate the former king.[152] The charter was likely issued only after Louis had moved to disinherit Pippin II and it therefore constitutes an implicit rejection of Louis's action.[153] In issuing a charter that his father drew up, and in his father's name, Pippin II made a powerful statement of his own right to rule, without a break from the previous reign. It is only the dating clause that decisively identifies this as the younger Pippin's diploma. The new king subscribed to his father's diploma in favour of a monastery Pippin I had favoured, and that even bore his name.[154] While Pippin II's rulership was partly based around that of his father, he (or his supporters) made sure to assert its conformity with Carolingian expectations, as it was this conformity that was the basis of Pippin's claim to legitimacy. Moreover, Pippin II did not straightforwardly secure the support of those with whom he had dynastic connections. His sisters, Rotrude and Hildegarde, had both married counts, yet neither of these counts backed Pippin II, but instead lined up with Louis.[155]

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[148] Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 59, 60, pp. 524–34; Nithard, *Historiarum libri*, book I, c. 7, p. 11.

[149] *Annales Bertiniani, s.a.* 839, p. 23.

[150] Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*, pp. 160–9.

[151] Le Jan, *Famille*, p. 204, emphasizes this from a familial perspective.

[152] *Recueil des actes*, ed. Levillain, no. 49, pp. 195–8, established by Pippin I in no. 32, pp. 148–51.

[153] Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*, p. 167.

[154] G. Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Royal Diplomas: The West Frankish Kingdom* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 103–5.

[155] On Gerard, see Lupus, *Epistolae*, no. 17, pp. 33–4.

These changes of allegiance indicate the fundamentally divided nature of the Aquitanian *regnum*. Pippin II appears to have struggled for stable backing in the north of the kingdom, while he held onto some of the southern elite's loyalty. This southern support allowed him to hold out against Charles's attempts to seize Aquitaine.[156] It nevertheless presented a problem: the palaces of Pippin I were in the north, but this was where Pippin II's backing was weakest. This disparity is partly due to the north's proximity to the heartlands of the western kingdom, from which Charles ruled. It also reflects support for Louis, embedded in Aquitaine since the years of his reign. As shown in Fig. 1, Louis's palaces also centred in the northern part of the realm, while the southern Aquitanian elite appear to have been more recalcitrant towards Louis and later Charles.[157] Pippin II's acts thus skew more towards the south and east, reflecting this basis for his support. This disparity, then, highlights that elite allegiance to a particular ruler was not simply a matter of proximity to a known palace. Instead, while Pippin I had occasionally forayed south, this activity was stepped up by Pippin II as he sought to strengthen his hold there.

Thanks partly to this strength of this southern support for the younger Pippin, in 845 Charles was forced to acknowledge him as ruler of Aquitaine; to Charles, this acknowledgement was one of lordship (*dominatus*) rather than kingship, although to Pippin it was quite the opposite.[158] The relationship between the two leaned on familial authority again, but now between uncle and nephew. Coinage bearing the names of both Charles and Pippin II, as Simon Coupland has argued, likely marked this agreement and indicates a currency alliance between the pair.[159] Such a coinage issue presents a harmonious image of uncle and nephew ruling jointly, sharing the responsibilities of rulership and the privilege of issuing coins. Yet the use of *dominatus* – as opposed to *regnum* – by the West Frankish *Annals of St-Bertin* indicates again the importance of the royal title, and implies an ongoing tension, at least from Charles's perspective. The title *rex* itself conferred the rights and responsibilities of corrective rulership, an acknowledgement of Pippin that Charles was unwilling to make.

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[156] Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 139–45.
[157] See above, and *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.* 854, pp. 44–5.
[158] *Annales Bertiniani*, *s.a.* 845, p. 32; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 143; Gravel, *Distances, rencontres*, p. 397.
[159] Coupland, 'The Importance of Coinage', pp. 390–1; compare the co-issued coinage of Alfred of Wessex and Coenwulf II of Mercia: J. Naylor, 'The Coins of the Watlington Hoard', in J. Naylor *et al.* (eds), *The Watlington Hoard: Coinage, Kings and the Viking Great Army in Oxfordshire, AD875–880* (Oxford, 2022), pp. 100–2.

This contrast throws the significance of the royal title, alongside dynastic status, into sharp relief. Pippin II carried the 'charisma' of a Carolingian and could therefore not be straightforwardly deposed.[160] He also carried his father's name, underlining his parentage in every royal act he issued. Some in Aquitaine seem to have recognized this claim, but the omission of the title in the *Annals of St-Bertin* implies that, even when Charles and Pippin had reconciled, the West Frankish king did not see his nephew as a royal peer. At this point, royal status was, at least by some observers of Pippin II's rule, split from being a Carolingian dynast who held *dominatus* within a territory that had once been a *regnum*. This split retrospectively throws light on Pippin I's ongoing status as a *rex*: there was no point at which the elder Pippin was referred to as anything but a king of Aquitaine. Moreover, it underlines the importance of life cycle and seniority in shaping ideas of royal office. Royal titles, just like familial relationships, could shift over time, and each could influence the other; that is to say, familial relationships modified the more abstract and fixed ideas of royal office.

Conclusion

Pippin I's rulership was reliant on both his fulfilment of elite expectations of rulership and his position in the dynasty. As Kasten argues, there was no legalistic difference between Carolingian kings.[161] From this, she posits that royal sons struggled to define their own places in the hierarchy of the Carolingian world.[162] Airlie underscores that their status was primarily established through their dynastic 'charisma', with the attendant problems this caused when members of the dynasty came to blows.[163] However, through a study of Pippin's kingship, the crucial role of royal office in negotiating Pippin's position in both Aquitaine and the wider Carolingian realm has come to the fore. In many ways, Pippin's rulership was typical of a royal son's. His position as *rex Aquitanorum* helped to unify the realm, as his father had done when he held the title. Aquitaine consisted of a diverse range of identities and was, in part, defined by the Pyrenean border, making Pippin's role as war leader all the more important. Meanwhile, the royal responsibility to rule justly and piously, ultimately for the purpose of Christian salvation, helped to emphasize a shared Christianity that could draw

[160] Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*, p. 194; Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, p. 162, on the power of *consanguinitas*.
[161] Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 565–7.
[162] Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 569–71.
[163] Airlie, *Making and Unmaking*.

together plural elite identities within the realm.[164] Pippin ascended to the throne early, but took several years to gain full sociopolitical maturity; this maturity then supported his presentation as a Carolingian man and formed a standard to which he was then held. This implies that, while a king was a king, a new ruler could gradually accumulate royal responsibilities and the associated authority they provided. Once a king's independence was advertised, though, it was extremely difficult to retract it, even for his father.

Pippin's rule therefore casts light on the dynamic between notions of royal office and the role of the Carolingian dynasty in constructing this office. The diversity in Aquitaine required Pippin to reinforce the community through his presence, as its *rex*, throughout the realm, although its geography practically hindered royal attempts to be ever-present. Moreover, unlike his other rebellious siblings, Pippin appears to have reconciled more definitively with his father after 834. Sometimes this was presented as filial obedience, but it was also a matter of his royal duty, whether to ensure just treatment of church property or to acknowledge his own past wrongs before God. The events that shaped Pippin's kingship collided with these more, in theory, universally applicable ideas of office.

Pippin's kingship, then, is an excellent case study for how multiple kingships worked in practice. Both ministerial and patrimonial elements underpinned Pippin's kingship, as they did for all Carolingian rulers, and the interrelation between these elements changed based on Pippin's life cycle and political events. Rulers such as Pippin were members of the family, but they were also kings in their own right.

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[164]   See Kramer, 'Franks, Romans, Countrymen', pp. 280–2.