"Gender and Moral Authority in the Carolingian Age"

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History

by
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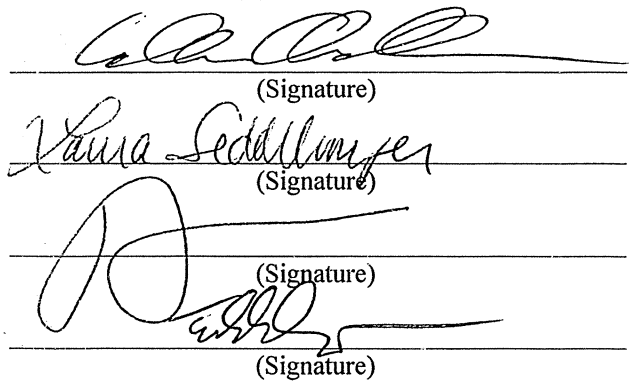

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# INTRODUCTION

*The common people call the place, both the spring and the village,*
*Fontenoy,*
*Where that massacre and bloody downfall of the Franks [took place]:*
*The fields tremble, the woods tremble, the very swamp trembles…*
*Let not that accursed day be counted in the calendar of the year,*
*Rather let it be erased from all memory,*
*May the sun's rays never fall there, may no dawn ever come to [end its endless] twilight.*

*-Englebert, 841*[1]

The Battle of Fontenoy in 841 left the Carolingian Empire devastated. It was the only battle of a three-year civil war that left too many dead and the survivors, shattered. During this period of unrest, from 840-843, an aristocratic woman, Dhuoda, endured the most difficult years of her life. The loyalty of her absentee husband, Bernard of Septimania, was being questioned by one of the three kings fighting for an upper-hand in this bloody civil war. To ensure his loyalty, his and Dhuoda's 14-year old son, William, was to be sent to King Charles the Bald as a hostage. During the same year Dhuoda's infant son, who had not yet been named at the time, was also taken as a hostage. Amid the chaos of these three years Dhuoda remained isolated in Uzés, separated from her children and unaware of their fates. She channeled her anxiety into a small book instructing William on how to live virtuously, known as *The Handbook for William*. This book is the only surviving text known to have been written by a woman during the Carolingian Age, and subsequently is the only moral text that uses its author's status as a parent to convey moral authority.

[1] Engelbert, "Engelbert at the Battle of Fontenoy," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), 332-33.

By virtue of this interesting connection one may begin to question what relationship there was during the Carolingian Age between gender and moral authority, or rather the authority one holds as a result of perceived principles, character, or knowledge. The period from the beginning of Charlemagne's reign over Western Europe in 768 to the civil wars following the death of his son, Louis the Pious, produced a number of episodes that can be used to analyze this relationship. Gender as a category of analysis has only recently become an important part of Carolingian studies, and scholars have only begun to recognize the significance of moral authority to Carolingian society within the past few years. As of yet, very little research has been done on the relationship between the two, and there are currently no books in print regarding their relationship. An understanding of this elusive relationship brings understanding to the way in which these vital aspects of Carolingian society relate. The aspect of Carolingian society that ties gender and moral authority together was the position one held in society. One could not have moral authority without a respected position, and in Carolingian society position was determined by gender.

However, it is important to note that there are a limited number of texts remaining from the Carolingian Age. Therefore, examples of this relationship are confined to people and events of enough significance to have been recorded in a text at the time. To attain a firm grasp of the complexities of any connections that may have existed, it is vital that a variety of people, and the events surrounding them, are thoroughly considered. There are six people who lived during this period that meet those criteria. Alcuin and Dhuoda were both instructors. Nonetheless, because of their gender they earned moral authority by different avenues but with the same purpose. The experiences of Alcuin and Dhuoda serve as an excellent base from which the relationship between gender and moral authority can be analyzed. The lives of Charlemagne and Louis the

Pious embodied two very different experiences with morality and the influence they needed to have over it in order to maintain their rule as emperors. As it was critical to analyze the moral authority of both a male and female instructor, it is necessary to research both male and female rulers. There is significantly less information available on the queens and empresses of the Carolingian Age than on their husbands. However, a great deal of controversy surrounded the reign of Queen Fastrada, third wife of Charlemagne, and Empress Judith, second wife of Louis the Pious. As a result of these controversies there is more information on these royal women than on others. Furthermore, the controversies have a considerable amount to do with moral authority.

Gender is a volatile term that has changed constantly over the centuries, depending on the needs and agendas of a peoples' governing body. Today, some studies confuse gender as a word synonymous with "women" or "femininity." Others consider it tantamount to a person's sex or sexuality. In reality, the word gender illustrates the differences between men and women physically, mentally, morally, and emotionally.[2] The Latin root of the word 'gender' is *genus*, meaning category, sort, or race.[3] This definition emerged based on biology but grew to include aspects of behaviors and roles in society; namely by defining men and women as opposites in all ways, resulting in the historically positive view of men and negative view of women.[4]

However, gender is a very fluid term with a diverse range of meanings depending on time, place, and class.[5] What gender meant to the people of the Middle Ages is not consistent with what it means to the various societies of today. During the eighth and ninth centuries

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[2] Susan Kingsley Kent, *Gender and History* (London: Palgrave Macmilan, 2012), 5.
[3] Julia M. H. Smith, "Introduction: Gendering the Early Medieval World," in *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900*, ed. Leslie Brubaker and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4.
[4] Kent, *Gender and History*, 3.
[5] Ibid., 3.

women were defined solely by their relationship to men;[6] women were daughters, sisters, wives, mothers or widows. Dhuoda was not "Dhuoda of Uzés," (an estate of her husband's that she cared for while he was away). She was "Dhuoda, the wife of Bernard of Septimania and the mother of William." Gender determined what the people of the Middle Ages could and could not do.[7] A man could not act as a mother or become a nun any more than a woman could act as a father or become a scholar. There were fewer acceptable career options for a woman to pursue. The majority of women either married and cared for their husband's estates or became a nun in a monastery. Scholars such as Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras have determined that much of our view of gender in the Middle Ages as a whole can be traced back to the Renaissance. In order to improve the way their own culture was viewed, people of the Renaissance may have exacerbated the gender customs of the middle ages.[8] Some, like Suzanne Wemple and Janet Nelson, would argue that aristocratic women of the Carolingian Age in particular actually enjoyed more freedoms than the stereotypes invented during the Renaissance would lead us to believe.[9]

There is some debate in modern historical scholarship in regard to gender roles in Carolingian Society. However, most concede that men and women married to strengthen family networks and improve financial stability.[10] Women were to be provided for by men and could not own their own property, though they were often responsible for the affairs of their family's

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[6] Ibid., 14.
[7] Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras, "Women, Gender, and Medieval Historians," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.
[8] Ibid., 2.
[9] Ibid., 4.
[10] Valerie L. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 120-121.

estates and treasuries.[11] It was vital that a woman be able to produce children; some of the greatest scandals in Carolingian history occurred after a woman failed to produce children, an example of which is Lothar II' marriage to Theutaberga in 855.[12] As parents, women and men alike were expected to counsel and raise their children. Jonas (760-843), bishop of Órleans, outlined these parental duties in his *De Institutione laicali*.[13] Men and women could also both serve in the clergy. Women could act as nuns and Abbesses, and men could fill any number of roles. Men who held a high clerical office possessed the training that gave them the option to be scholars. Outside the clergy, men were responsible for providing for their families by any means necessary. If they were an aristocrat they were expected to participate at court. Men of influence, both in the clergy and aristocracy, are most frequently associated with moral authority.

Moral authority is the influence one possesses based on principles, character, or knowledge. What one can do with this influence over morality is more complicated. Does one possess moral authority? Or does one exert it, wield it, or use it? Perhaps it is not something a person has but something they earned, but then who does one earn it from? During the Carolingian Age, the Frankish people had to decide whether or not a person was worthy of moral authority. People gave others moral authority based on the virtues they perceived them to have, and in the event that person's morality waned, so did their influence over the morality of others.

In the Carolingian Age, a group of people would only give moral authority to those of certain positions in society. In order to have a large enough audience to bestow widespread moral

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[11] Janet L. Nelson and Alice Rio, "Women and Laws in Early Medieval Europe," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 110.
[12] Adventius of Metz, "Adventius of Metz's Defense," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), 387.
[13] Janet L. Nelson, "Women and the word in the earlier Middle Ages," in *The Frankish World, 750-900* (London: Hambledon, 1996), 213.

authority, one had to be either a scholar, whose written work could be distributed or read by many, a member of the royalty or a high-ranking aristocrat, or, in some cases, a parent. These roles in society were very gender specific. Women could not be scholars as they were only given enough education, if any at all, to be able to participate in Christian observance and duties. Such a person would be referred to as a "lay intellectual."[14] They were not trained in rhetoric or writing formats that would have made them respectable scholars who could earn the right to influence the morals of those around them. A king or emperor had to have moral authority, or they would lose the respect of their subjects. In regard to parents, their children acted as a captive audience.[15] However, others respected the concern of a parent for their child, and moral authority could be earned in that respect as well. There is only one person known to be exhibit widespread moral authority through their position as a parent, and that person was Dhuoda.[16] However, if their position in society was not one that could grant them any audience, they would not have been able to communicate their morals or principles and thus could not wield authority. Of particular note is the way in which gender and moral authority interacted.

Gender and moral authority are very new topics only recently brought into the scope of Carolingian studies. Gender studies is still new to scholarship on the Carolingians. Interest in morality and moral authority regarding the Carolingians has bloomed even more recently. Therefore, little research has been done to date focusing on either role in Carolingian society. No research has been done relating the two. However, research conducted by scholars like Suzanne

[14] Janet L. Nelson, "In Place of an Introduction," in *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World*, ed. Patrick Wormald and Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5.
[15] Janet L. Nelson, "Dhuoda," in *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World*, ed. Patrick Wormald and Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109.
[16] Ibid., 109.

Wemple, Rachel Stone, and Mayke de Jong has paved the way for a project relating the two to commence.

Wemple published her book, *Women in Frankish Society*, in 1981. In it, she demonstrates that the women of the Middle Ages exercised power and applied their talents beyond the domestic sphere more than the women of antiquity, who rarely transcended sex roles.[17] She concludes that the women of the Carolingian Age became more confined to the home than the women who lived under their predecessors, the Merovingians.[18] Her primary evidence for this is Charlemagne's *Admonitio generalis* of 789 and his royal capitularies.[19] Wemple highlights the increase in restrictions recorded in both of these sources on women's marital rights and on female learning. According to Wemple, these restrictions increasingly confined women to the home and rendered them less active in the Frankish church.[20] As a result, the only known literature written by a woman during the Carolingian Age was Dhuoda's.[21]

De Jong published *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious* in 2009. She focuses primarily on the moral authority exhibited during the reign of Louis the Pious (r. 814-840). Her primary argument is that Louis the Pious' penances were the outcome of the central role the accountability of the Frankish ruler to God played in the political sphere.[22] She utilizes the accounts of Louis the Pious' life written by the Astronomer, Thegan, and Ermoldus, as well as histories and letters by Nithard and Agobard. These sources provide the most accurate depiction of what led up to the rebellions in 830 and 833 and the royal penances

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[17] Suzanne Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 1.
[18] Ibid., 123.
[19] Ibid., 75-78.
[20] Ibid., 127-128.
[21] Ibid., 188.
[22] Jong, Mayke de, abstract to *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), i.

that followed them. Through these sources she is also able to provide the image of a court in which the ruler, the bishops, and the lay advisors all constantly competed for 'moral high ground' at court.[23] By 'moral high ground' de Jong refers to one's reputation for being particularly principled. Someone with that reputation could set standards of justice at court; a highly sought after right during Louis' reign as Louis' own morals were brought into question under historically significant circumstances. While de Jong mostly concentrates on how moral authority affected Louis the Pious and his court, she also gives some insight on how Judith, Louis' second wife and mother to Charles the Bald, was affected by those competing for moral high ground. According to de Jong, Judith was treated as a moral scapegoat for Louis the Pious' tumultuous reign as described in a letter from Agobard. Agobard claimed that Judith's immorality was the reason for Louis' fall from grace.[24] De Jong concludes that it was the Carolingian ideal that the ruler be responsible for both their religious and military lives that made public penances so essential to Louis' reinstatement as emperor.[25]

Stone's *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire*, published in 2012, analyzes the relationship between morality and masculinity. In other words, Stone endeavors to show that the way the Franks envisioned themselves in terms of their masculinity and their nobility did not compare to how they actually behaved in terms of making moral decisions. To do this she examines three aspects of Carolingian society in regard to morality: warfare, the use of power, and sexual behavior.[26] She chiefly utilizes texts known as 'lay mirrors,' texts aimed at instructing audiences unversed in the clerical doctrine by depicting moral ideals, such as in Alcuin's *On the*

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[23] Jong, Mayke de, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.
[24] Ibid., 194-95.
[25] Ibid., 268.
[26] Rachel Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7.

*Virtues and Vices*. Moral ideals, according to Alcuin, encompassed virtues like wisdom, faith in God, and committing charitable acts.[27] Stone compares lay mirrors to events that occurred during the Carolingian period. For instance, she claims that "Carolingian texts are indeed consistent, not to say repetitive, on the moral norms of the administrative and judicial system."[28] However, these accepted moral norms were not often the reality. According to Stone, these consistent ideals came with an acknowledged understanding of people abusing the system. Her book provides a comprehensive understanding of idealism versus reality in regard to moral actions.

Wemple, Nelson, de Jong, and Stone have opened the doors for further research to bring together the topics of gender and moral authority in the Carolingian Age. Wemple elucidates that women were only glorified as mothers and wives. Stone effectively describes how morality affected the way men saw themselves, while de Jong identifies the effect Carolingian moral ideals had on the political fortunes of Louis the Pious. However, they leave unanswered the question of the relationship between gender and moral authority. It is clear, though, that gender and moral authority were inextricably linked through their mutual connection with position in society.

However, the way in which these two aspects of Carolingian society were linked varied. One can clearly see the different ways in which moral authority was earned and then utilized by analyzing a number of case studies on figures within these highly regarded positions in society. Charlemagne and Louis the Pious were both Carolinian kings and emperors who had very different experiences with moral authority. As emperors though, they shared the same responsibilities to their people and were expected and trusted to exhibit stellar moral authority.

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[27] Alcuin, "On the Virtues and Vices," *The Heroic Age: A Journal of Early Medieval Northwestern Europe*, no. 16 (2015): 7-9, accessed on September 9, 2015, http://www.heroicage.org/issues/16/stone.php.
[28] Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire*, 170.

There were different expectations for queens and empresses in regard to moral behavior. In many ways, they were expected to have moral authority just as their husbands were, but it was far more difficult for them to earn and keep it. Queen Fastrada and Empress Judith are good examples of this. The morality of both Fastrada and Judith was attacked by those conspiring against their husbands. A queen's morality was easier to attack and had less severe repercussions for the antagonists than if they directly attacked the king. In order to be a respectable and successful scholar one also needed to be able to earn moral authority from their audience. Alcuin is likely the most famous scholar of his time due to his role in the Carolingian Renaissance. He became so well-known and highly-respected that members of the Carolingian aristocracy wrote to him for moral guidance. Dhuoda gained widespread moral authority through the book she wrote to her son. As a woman, she did not receive enough education to be considered a scholar, but she is considered by modern historians to be an intellectual.[29] Essentially, she was as close to a scholar as a woman could be in the ninth century. These six individuals of the Carolingian Age illustrate the ways in which gender and moral authority interacted with position in society.

[29] Janet Nelson, "Dhuoda," 108.

# CHAPTER ONE: ALCUIN AND DHUODA

A significant factor for earning moral authority during the Carolingian Age was education. Education was so important, because there were only a handful of social elite who had been educated in the eighth and ninth century, although the number of educated individuals began to grow after the Carolingian Renaissance. When Charlemagne's reign began he became aware of the many inconsistencies of clerical education within his empire.[30] To rectify the poor state of the Frankish education system Charlemagne welcomed an influx of scholars to his court, catalyzing the Carolingian Renaissance. At first he recruited them from foreign lands. It was not until the second generation of the renaissance that there were scholars from within the Frankish empire, and those were taught by the scholars who had previously come from outside the empire. Theodulf of Órleans (750-821), Peter of Pisa (744-799), and Paulinus of Aquileia (726-804) are examples of this first generation of scholars brought into the empire by Charlemagne.[31]

Once the educational standards of the clergy rose, the education of the laity they were responsible for teaching also improved. The result was as increased number of scholars and the introduction of a class of lay intellectuals.[32] It is important to note the difference between a scholar and a lay intellectual. To become a scholar a boy, usually of noble birth, would have been sent to a monastery for schooling before accepting a clerical office or entering a monastic vocation. Church officials were expected to have a firm understanding of rhetoric and the

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[30] John J. Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance: Education and Literary Culture," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 2*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 710.
[31] Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes, and Simon MacLean, *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 146.
[32] Janet L. Nelson, "In Place of an Introduction," in *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World*, ed. Patrick Wormald and Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 6.

organization of thought into writing; someone with only a typical Carolingian education did not go that far. Scholars went through rigorous education and training so they could accurately teach their pupils. Carolingian scholarship encompassed a wide range of subjects, varying from Scripture to the study of the liberal arts. The masters at the Palace School at Charlemagne's court in Aachen were known to write poetry and books on a variety of subjects.[33] A lay intellectual did not receive such an all-encompassing education as a scholar. Both men and women could be considered lay intellectuals, since a lay person is simply defined as someone who did not hold a clerical or monastic position. Lay intellectuals received varying levels of education. At the very lease a lay intellectual was someone who knew enough Latin to follow Christian observance and understand Christian duties.[34]

A successful scholar was in an excellent position to earn moral authority, depending on how reputable he was. A position of scholarship was also regulated to men. Alcuin of York (732-804) is an example of a scholar who grew to influence the morals of those around him. Anyone among the nobility with the ability to get an education after the Carolingian Renaissance began could be a lay intellectual. They were expected to understand and respond to moral lessons but not to teach them.[35] Therefore, the education of a lay intellectual was not typically enough to earn moral authority. A laywoman called Dhuoda proved to be the exception. The combination of her tenacity to fulfill her duties as a mother and her status as a lay intellectual brought her into a position of moral authority.

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[33] John J. Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance: Education and Literary Culture," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 2*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 713.
[34] Janet L. Nelson, "In Place of an Introduction," in *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World*, ed. Patrick Wormald and Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5.
[35] Ibid., 5.

Alcuin of York is by far the most well-known of the scholars born outside the Frankish Kingdom. He was one of many who served as a catalyst for the Carolingian Renaissance. In the past, there have been many misconceptions surrounding the life of Alcuin that were misleading to those unfamiliar with his role in history. Eleanor Shipley Duckett's goal in writing her 1951 book *Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne* was to rectify the incorrect information surrounding his life. Duckett provides a detailed description of every stage in Alcuin's life. She put particular emphasis on the vital role Alcuin played at the Frankish court for the fifteen years he was there from 781 to 796. According to Duckett, Alcuin helped to make education a more prominent priority in Frankish society, stressing that Europe had never lost its 'light of learning" but needed to throw some more wood on the fire. In her words, Alcuin brought "to Frankland the light of English learning in things sacred and secular; yet, as he knew well, not to kindle, but to fan a livelier flame a fire that had never been extinguished on the continent of Europe."[36] The significance of Alcuin's reputation and position at the court of Charlemagne that Duckett outlines in her book underscores the way in which Alcuin was able to earn moral authority from the large and diverse group of people exposed to his guidance.

Alcuin was born in Northumbia in 732 to a noble family, and was sent to a monastic school in York when he was very young. Growing up in York, Alcuin was rigorously trained in the art of prayer, in the Holy Scripture, and on Christian doctrine.[37] . As he grew older he transitioned from student to teacher; the start of a life-long passion. Eventually, he became the assistant of and then successor to his teacher, Albert. In his thirties, Alcuin was ordained as deacon, though he never became a priest, and by 767 Alcuin was greatly responsible for running

[36] Eleanor Shipley Duckett, *Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne: His World and his Work* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), 83.
[37] Duckett, *Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne*, 15-16.

the school. As a result he took up a prominent role in advising the ruling class and clergy in England.[38]

In 780 Alcuin was sent by King Elwald to Rome to meet with the pope. Elwald wanted Alcuin to request a pallium for York so it could be named an official archbishopric. After a successful meeting with the pope he ran into Charlemagne on his way back. He had met Charlemagne years before when Albert had sent him on an errand to assist the Frankish king. Alcuin's reputation as a brilliant scholar had since circulated back to the king, and he wished for Alcuin to return with him to his palace in Aachen. Charlemagne was committed to improving the literacy of his kingdom, which was not comparable to England's. [39] It required a great of persuading on the part of Charlemagne, but he eventually convinced the very loyal Alcuin that the Frankish Kingdom needed his teaching more than England. By 781, Alcuin had moved to the Frankish Kingdom where he established and taught at the Palace School. There, Alcuin taught Charlemagne's children, grandchildren,[40] and, according to Einhard, Charlemagne himself. Alcuin is described by Einhard as "the most learned man anywhere," [41] and recalled that "[Charlemagne] put in a great deal of time and work with [Alcuin] in learning rhetoric and dialectic and especially astronomy." [42] Under the patient teaching of Alcuin Charlemagne learned to do calculations, think critically, and map the stars.[43] Einhard's account of Charlemagne's education attests to the quality of Alcuin's own education and scholarship.

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[38] Duckett, *Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne*, 24-27.
[39] Alcuin, *Alcuin of York, c. A.D. 732 to 804: His Life and Letters*, ed. Stephen Allot (York: William Sessions Ltd, 1974), 1-2.
[40] Duckett, *Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne*, 33.
[41] Einhard, "The Life of Charles the Emperor," in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: The Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer,* trans. Thomas F. X. Noble (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 42.
[42] Ibid., 42.
[43] Ibid., 42.

He remained in his position as school master until 796 when Charlemagne appointed him abbot of St. Martin's in Tours.[44] A great number of letters to and from Alcuin survive today. Through them he advised highly influential members of the Carolingian court including Charlemagne himself and members of his royal family. Though no longer at court, Alcuin continued to influence the court through his letters. Alcuin's prominence at the Frankish court is clearly illustrated through these letters. In one he might remind an old pupil of their duty to God and the importance of prayer[45] and in another he might ask the Frankish queen to send money to a friend for prayers.[46] While at Tours, Alcuin also composed a book, *On the Virtues and Vices*, at the request of a count named Wido. Wido was the Count of the Breton March, and in 799 he conquered Brittany in the Charlemagne's name.[47] Per Count Wido's request, the book details the way in which a man should live in order to remain morally uncorrupt and to reach salvation.[48] It is evident both from his letters and this treatise that Alcuin's main concern was with the morality of his intended audience and that audience respected him enough to grant him the authority to do so.

At the heart of Count Wido's request was the need for a set of guidelines on the best way to successfully perform the duties of his occupation while still achieving salvation. Wido's was a moral request. He was asking Alcuin to advise him on how he should act so that he could both please God and perform his duties; in other words he wanted to know how to act morally. According to Alcuin, Count Wido acted as, " 'an uncorrupt judge and a faithful emissary of

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[44] Costambeys, Innes, and MacLean, *The Carolingian World*, 147.
[45] Alcuin, *Alcuin of York, c. A.D. 732 to 804: His Life and Letters*, trans. Stephen Allot (York: William Sessions Ltd, 1974), 101-102.
[46] Ibid., 152-153.
[47] "The Royal Frankish Annals," in *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, trans. Bernhard Walter Scholz with Barbara Rogers (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1970), 78.
[48] Alcuin, *On the Virtues and Vices*, 2.

[Charlemagne's]' ".[49] After Wido conquered Brittany in 799, the Franks subjugated the surviving Saxons in the whole province of Brittany. The *Royal Frankish Annals* recorded that the Franks had never before subjugated the people they had conquered.[50] It is not unrealistic to suggest that Count Wido needed counsel in regard to the handling of the Saxons. *On the Virtues and Vices* answered Wido's request for guidance with an introduction and thirty-two chapters. The first twenty-six chapters are organized into instructions on how to live by a specified principal or how to avoid a certain iniquity. Each of these first chapters is titled with one of these principles, like charity, or iniquities, like greed. Alcuin explains what they are, why they are important, and how one should live by them or avoid them.

The first chapter is on wisdom because "the first thing of all that should be sought by a person is what true knowledge and true wisdom may be."[51] As is consistent with this format he goes on to explain why wisdom is important to God because no one can truly understand God without wisdom. He then gives an example of how wisdom should be used to please God by explaining that "it does not suffice someone not to do bad things, unless he also does good things, nor to do good things unless he also does not commit bad things." He supported this claim with a reference to Psalms 33:15 which states "Turn from bad and do good ." [52] Alcuin frequently quoted the Bible showcasing how well versed he was in Scripture. The active and precise use of Scripture helps to further solidify his position as a scholar. Throughout *On the Virtues and Vices* he continues with the same basic format.

[49] Duckett, *Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne*, 271.
[50] Ibid., 78.
[51] Alcuin, *On the Virtues and Vices*, 7.
[52] Alcuin, *On the Virtues and Vices*, 7.

However, chapter twenty, "About Judges," focuses specifically on judges in particular and how they could live a moral life. This chapter is directed specifically at judging, which Alcuin had indicated was an aspect of Count Wido's occupation. As a count, Wido would have been responsible for presiding over the legal affairs in his region. Alcuin devoted this chapter to advising Wido against succumbing to bribery and to invoke mercy when he could. He told Wido to "let the judge fear God the judge, lest perhaps he be damned by God judging."[53] Here Alcuin was advising Wido to always keep God in mind when passing his judgements. It was also a warning to all judges that, while they held the power of life and death over the people in their court, at the end of their lives they would still have to answer to God. In a way, Alcuin used his moral authority in an attempt to prevent judges from abusing their power by reminding them to fear God, which he could do through his reputation as a scholar as well his overall knowledge and understanding. *On the Virtues and Vices* may have been written at the request of Count Wido, but he was certainly not the only one who read it. According to Stone, there are, in existence, over 140 whole or partial manuscripts of Alcuin's treatise.[54]

The last chapters of the work are separated into the eight vices: pride, greed, fornication, avarice, anger, weariness, sorrow, and vain glory. After the vices Alcuin discusses the four virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.[55] He follows the same format as in the previous chapters to describe the vices and virtues. Each vice has its own chapter describing the vice and ways to evade succumbing to it. The virtues, though, are all lumped into one chapter, where he defines each before articulating the importance they are to salvation.[56] Throughout the

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[53] Ibid., 26.
[54] Rachel Stone, Introduction to *On the Virtues and Vices*, by Alcuin, *The Heroic Age: A Journal of Early Medieval Northwestern Europe*, no. 16 (2015): 1, accessed on September 9, 2015, http://www.heroicage.org/issues/16/stone.php.
[55] Alcuin, *On the Vices and Virtues*, 21-22.
[56] Ibid., 25.

treatise Alcuin maintains the authoritative voice of a man who is very confident in what he is writing. His organization is clear and consistent and follows a predetermined format. Alcuin was clearly a very skilled scholar, and that Wido asked for his guidance in the first place indicates that he was well-known as one. Over the course of his Alcuin had developed a renowned reputation as a scholar. His positions in York and then Aachen as a teacher and an abbot in Tours allowed him to cultivate that reputation, and led people like Wido to him for moral guidance. However, those positions were inexplicitly tied to his gender. As a man he could become a member of the clergy, and as a member of the clergy with immense and well-respected knowledge of the scripture, he could earn moral authority from his audience.

The Carolingian Empire changed in the time following Alcuin's death. The cohesion of the empire under Charlemagne proved unable to last. While the transition of power to his son, Louis the Pious, was fairly smooth, fragmentation followed in the next generation. Louis was forced to address two major rebellions led by his three oldest sons as they fought to maintain their inheritance after the birth of their much younger half-brother, Charles the Bald. These sons even succeeded in deposing him after a rebellion in 833 and placed him, their stepmother, Judith, and young Charles the Bald in monasteries.[57] However, one of Louis the Pious' sons, Louis the German, soon helped to reinstate him. After Louis the Pious' death in 840, the empire Charlemagne built dissolved into chaos. Louis' three remaining sons plunged the empire into the bloodiest civil war it had ever known. This war is referred to as *Der Brüderkrieg*, or the Brothers' War. As the three brothers fought relentlessly to gain the upper hand, members of their

[57] Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe*, trans. Michael Idomir Allen (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 154.

aristocracy perished.[58] The death and destruction that resulted horrified those that remained and drove some to step outside social boundaries to protect their own.

Dhuoda's handbook, written during *der Brüderkrieg* had similar intentions to Alcuin's *On the Virtues and Vices*. She wanted to advise him to live morally so he would reach salvation. Dhuoda was born to a noble family and married a wealthy aristocrat, Bernard of Septimania, in 824. After their wedding, Dhuoda did not see very much of her illustrious husband. By late 826 Dhuoda had given birth to her first child, William.[59] It was for William that Dhuoda wrote her handbook, though just before she started writing she gave birth to a second son, later named Bernard, in 841. At first glance, Bernard of Septimania had all the trappings of a respected Carolingian aristocrat. He was the renowned commander of the Spanish March, which earned him enough respect to be appointed Louis the Pious' chamberlain in 829.[60] However, after this time the chroniclers and historians of the time ceased to speak kindly of him. Stone describes Bernard as "the nightmare reverse" of everything Dhuoda wanted to teach William.[61] Bernard exemplified Stone's argument that moral ideals did not always represent reality. According to histories like those written by Nithard[62] and the *Annals of St. Bertin*,[63] Bernard did not exhibit any of the virtues described by Alcuin.

Nithard was a layman who was related to the Carolingians through his mother, Bertha, who was one of Charlemagne's daughters. He served as a soldier under Charles the Bald, and

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[58] Ibid., 161.
[59] Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*, trans. Carol Neel (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 6.
[60] "Royal Frankish Annals," 124.
[61] Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire*, 141.
[62] Nithard, "Nithard's Histories," in *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories,* trans. Bernhard Walter Scholz with Barbara Rogers (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1970), 131.
[63] *The Annals of St. Bertin*, trans. Janet L. Nelson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 57.

wrote three books recording the events that transpired between 814 and 843. Nithard was openly critical of Bernard and believed he exploited the authority of his position. According to him "Bernard recklessly abused his imperial power [as chamberlain] which he was supposed to strengthen and undermined it entirely."[64] Oddly enough Nithard does not mention the wild rumors of adultery that existed between Bernard and Judith, though they were highly publicized by their opposition. One of Louis' biographers, Thegan, recorded that in 830 Pippin II of Aquitaine, Louis' second son, and many other prominent noblemen approached Louis at Compiègne with these accusations.[65] Both Nithard and the *Annals of St. Bertin* claimed that Bernard fled to Barcelona when Louis the Pious went to meet his sons in battle during their rebellion of 830 following the accusations of adultery by Pippin. They also both recall that Bernard's brother, Herbert, was blinded by Louis's sons after the same battle.[66] Bernard's disloyalty continued into *der Brüderkrieg*. Nithard elaborated on the games Bernard played. He appears to have switched sides a number of times over the course of the war. In 841, in particular, he is recorded as having sworn oaths to both Charles the Bald and Pippin. Charles, frustrated by Bernard's actions, reportedly attacked him and his men. [67]

Later, though, Bernard was able to return to Charles' good side, at least for a short time. Charles agreed to allow Bernard to regain his favor under the condition that he relinquish his son, William, as a hostage. According to Nithard, Bernard sent William to Charles in 841 to pay him homage and to claim some benefices in Burgundy, but only after Charles' victory at the

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[64] Nithard, "Nithard's Histories," 131.
[65] Thegan, "Life of Louis," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2oo9), 168-69.
[66] *The Annals of St. Bertin*, trans. Janet L. Nelson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 21: Nithard, "Nithard's Histories," 131.
[67] Ibid., 145-146.

Battle of Fontenoy.[68] However, Dhuoda began her handbook with a prologue addressing the absence of not only William, but also her infant son, Bernard.[69] At the completion of the handbook Dhuoda still did not know the name of her younger son; he had not yet been named when he was taken from her. Dhuoda was "well aware that most women rejoice that they are with their children in this world, but I, Dhuoda, am far away from you, my son, William. For this reason I am anxious and filled with longing to do something for you."[70] After her sons had been taken, Dhuoda was left semi-abandoned to manage her husband's estates in Uzés located in southern France. There, she was left plenty of time to worry about her sons.[71] To channel her distress, from November 841 until February 843 she devoted time to writing William the handbook to guide him toward a morally successful life by the standards of both God and the Carolingian court.[72]

In her article, "Dhuoda," published in 2007, Janet Nelson argues that Dhuoda was an intellectual of the Carolingian Age and wrote for an audience greater than her son.[73] In particular, Nelson concentrates on analyzing Dhuoda's *Handbook for William*. She demonstrates Dhuoda's intellect by comparing the Bible with Dhuoda's interpretations and quotes to showcase Dhuoda's familiarity with Scripture. Another way she illustrates Dhuoda's right to be placed among the intellectuals of the Carolingian Age is by relating her handbook to other moral works written by established scholars of the time, like Alcuin's *On the Virtues and Vices*.[74] Nelson

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[68] Ibid., 156.
[69] Dhuoda, "Handbook For William," 4.
[70] Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*, 2.
[71] James Marchand, "Dhuoda," in *Medieval Women* Writers, ed. Kathrine M. Wilson (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 9.
[72] Ibid., 1.
[73] Janet L. Nelson, "Dhuoda," in *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World,* ed. Patrick Wormald and Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 108-109.
[74] Nelson, "Dhuoda," 112-113.

argues that Dhuoda was able to justify writing a book through her maternity, nobility, and experience.[75] She goes on to suggest that Dhuoda was the only moral writer of the Carolingian period to base her authority on her role as a parent.[76] In regard to whether or not Dhuoda intended for her handbook to be read by more than just her son, Nelson points out that three manuscripts currently exist, indicating that there was more than one reader.[77] Therefore, Dhuoda, as a woman, not only expressed moral authority but also established an audience for herself through her son.

To earn moral authority, Dhuoda could not follow the same avenue as Alcuin. The platforms on which Alcuin spoke was built on his knowledge of Scripture gained through scholarly training. While Dhuoda had had enough education to be considered a lay intellectual she did not have scholarly training, and as a laywoman she bore no responsibility for the salvation of others aside from that of her children.[78] Dhuoda was a woman, and as a result she was restricted to only a few societal roles. She could not be a member of the clergy, she could not be a scholar, she could not hold an office outside of nun or abbess, and at any rate neither nuns nor abbesses left any evidence of exhibiting moral authority. Dhuoda had to use the only respectable role in society for a woman to gain moral authority; as a mother to her son, and only because there was a great need. Therefore, people of the Carolingian Age earned moral authority from their position in that society, and that position was dictated by gender.

Einhard asserts that Charlemagne "thought that his children ought to be educated, both his sons and his daughters, and that in the first place they should be trained in the liberal arts."[79]

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[75] Ibid., 120.
[76] Ibid., 109.
[77] Ibid.,119.
[78] Nelson, "Dhuoda," 119-120.
[79] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 38.

However, the Carolingian Renaissance was not enough to bring about complete gender equality in education. Therefore, Dhuoda did not have the same rigorous education Alcuin had benefitted from, but her desire to advise her son outweighed any fear of upsetting social precedent and her own perceived inadequacies. Nonetheless, to have written or at least dictated a book, Dhuoda must have been educated. Janet Nelson argues adamantly that she should be considered an intellectual.[80] A combination of her education and her desperate need to advise her son in the hope of saving his life was enough to draw an audience and earn moral authority.

In the Carolingian period, it was the parents' duty to advise their children. Jonas, bishop of Órleans, outlined the role of parents in *De Institutione laicali*. He declared in this text that "Married couples must know that in their own households they exercise a pastoral office."[81] If it was the duty of a parent to act as a cleric within their own home then it was their duty to teach members of their household how to live morally so they might achieve salvation. William had been removed from Dhuoda's household, and his absence prevented her from fulfilling this duty. Her solution was the handbook. Therefore, it was a natural responsibility of Carolingian parents to counsel their children. Dhuoda was the only parent known to have written her words of advice down.[82] She wrote that "I, Dhuoda, am always with you to encourage you. In the future, should I fail you by my absence, you have this little moral work as a reminder, so that… You may be able to look upon me as if in a mirror."[83] The worry that she would fail her sons and God by not properly teaching them how to worship and act within society must have been a constant fear for Dhuoda as she turned to the only option left to her, writing. The distance between her and her

[80] Nelson, "Dhuoda," 120.
[81] Janet Nelson, "Women and the Word in the Earlier Middle Ages," in *The Frankish World, 750-900,* ed. Janet L. Nelson (London: Hambledon Press, 1996), 213.
[82] Nelson, "Dhuoda," 109.
[83] Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*, 13.

children left writing her teachings down and sending them the only way to fulfil her responsibilities as a mother.[84]

However, Dhuoda was very aware as she wrote that what she was doing was not common. In fact, she emphasized how unusual her role as a woman author was within her book regularly. She frequently emphasized her own ineptitude as she wrote. The prologue begins with the self-depreciating statement that, "Things that are obvious to many people often escape me. Those who are like me lack understanding and have dim insight."[85] Throughout the book she refers to herself as "unworthy" and "weak" as if she had to address her perceived inferiority within the intellectual world in order to be accepted into it. She explained in Book One that despite being "as weak as a shadow, I must bring to your awareness, my son William, what you can understand of God above," though she went on to call her efforts to do so only a "partial attempt at such a task."[86] Dhuoda tried to make it very clear that she was aware of her own downfalls and that as a woman she was considered ill-equipped to convey moral advice. However, Dhuoda did not give herself nearly enough credit. In her handbook she illustrated an impressive knowledge of both the current and historic texts of the time.[87] She frequently quoted the Bible, paying particular attention to the stories of the Patriarchs. In her words, "The knowledge in this little book is partly derived from several other books, but my loving intent here has been to refashion their content in a manner appropriate to your age."[88] That Dhuoda had read widely cannot be disputed, though she did misquote or confuse the Old and New Testaments on occasion. For example, Carol Neel points out that when Dhuoda recalled an

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[84] Nelson, "Dhuoda," 109.
[85] Ibid., 5.
[86] Ibid., 9.
[87] Nelson, "Dhuoda," 117.
[88] Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*, 91.

account "of the twelve Patriarchs' names written on our foreheads," [89] she combined imagery from Exod. 28:29 in the Old Testament with Apoc. 14:1 in the New Testament.[90] Dhuoda was well-educated but her writing lacked the quality of an experienced scholar like Alcuin.

It is clear that Dhuoda wrote because of a great need to fulfill her duties as a parent. However, it is also clear that she wished to address an audience greater even than her son. She hoped that William would share the book with others to "whom [he] may offer this little book for perusal."[91] Three copies of Dhuoda's handbook have been discovered,[92] pointing to multiple readers. Dhuoda wrote her book to guide her son to salvation, but she also wanted to teach him to have a successful career. Navigating the court of a Carolingian king during *der Brüderkrieg* was likely not without danger, particularly for a youth being held hostage to keep his father loyal. She advised William to be respectful and encouraged him "to act so peacefully that you may be found worthy to share the lot of blessedness with those of whom it is written, *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*"[93] To reinforce her point she employed a passage from Matthew 5:9. Dhuoda influenced William to act peacefully despite living through the bloodiest war the Carolingians had ever known. Yet, the topic of warfare does not come up once in her handbook. Instead of contributing to what must have been an aggressive atmosphere, Dhuoda urged William "…To pray too for those who oppose you and make difficulty for you and insult you, so that the *peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds* [Philippians 4:7] make them peaceful in word and

[89] Ibid., 44.
[90] Ibid., 44 n. 15.
[91] Ibid., 7.
[92] Carol Neel, Introduction to *Handbook for William*, by Dhuoda (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), xiii.
[93] Dhuoda, *Handbook for William*, 55.

deed."[94] Here is a woman who witnessed more than enough consequences of the Carolingian warrior ethos and was ready for it to stop. She devoted an entire section of her book not on how to live the life of a warrior but on how to live a moral life. Dhuoda's hope for her son was not that he would participate in the turbulent politics that undoubtedly raged around him as a hostage of Charles the Bald, but as a truly noble and virtuous man, one who sought books over a sword. Within this section she conveyed advice not on the importance of carrying weapons or a shield but "on arming yourself with the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit."[95] This was undoubtedly a message that she hoped William would spread to others. Her position as a mother trying to advise her son, a duty that was not only accepted but also expected, is likely what enabled her little handbook to earn moral authority.

Dhuoda utilized the only avenue available to her to spread her message. She was not a scholar, like Alcuin, who could spread a message through the respected reputation of someone with great knowledge of Scripture. There is also no clear organization as there was in Alcuin's *On the Virtues and Vices*. She did organize the handbook into eleven books, but she repeated herself frequently. It is particularly odd that Book Ten is a summary of the handbook, what one would assume to be the conclusion, but the book then continues with new information in Book Eleven in regard to the Psalms. Like Alcuin she based her claims on the Bible and she sent a clear message. She did not, however, write with a voice of confidence as Alcuin had. There are even some theories that Dhuoda did not write the handbook herself at all but rather dictated while a man wrote down her words.[96] This should not be taken to mean that Dhuoda was uneducated; even if she dictated it she was still familiar with all the Bible verses and other

[94] Ibid., 84.
[95] Ibid., 47.
[96] Neel, Introduction to *Handbook for William*, xvii.

materials she quoted. Either way, Dhuoda was not a scholar trained to write and study, but rather an educated laywoman, who knew how to read and think critically but who possessed no expertise in rhetoric or organization. As a woman she could not be a scholar. As women they could not claim that position in society.

On the other hand, women could claim a position of authority based on motherhood. Dhuoda was able to use her position as a mother as a platform from which she could earn and then express her moral authority. Scholars would not have been able to utilize the same platform, because to be a scholar one typically had to be a male church official. As of the general capitularies of 802, sent out by Charlemagne, members of the clergy were expected to live chastely and without "Any women [in his house] except those whom the canonical license permits."[97] To some extent, this must have been true, because, as Nelson points out, no other moral authors of the Carolingian Age were parents, leaving them only with their status as scholars to base their moral teachings on. [98] The moral authority that these men and Dhuoda had was earned through their positions in society, and those positions were dictated by their gender.

[97] "The General Capitularies for the *Missi* from 802," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2oo9), 75.
[98] Nelson, "Dhuoda," 109.

# CHAPTER TWO: CHARLEMAGNE AND LOUIS THE PIOUS

There is a noticeable distinction between Charlemagne's rule and Louis the Pious'. In fact it is not uncommon to hear Louis the Pious referred to as "the greater father's lesser son."[99] Needless to say many of today's historians are critical of Louis' rule and so were many influential members of the Frankish aristocracy and clergy. Charlemagne, on the other hand, did not suffer criticism lightly and was quick to remove any opposition; as was the case in 785 and 792 when two rebellions rose against him, which he put down.[100] The two emperors also had very different experiences with moral authority. Charlemagne was responsible for educating the clergy who were responsible for educating the rest of the realm. Therefore, there were few to contend with Charlemagne's moral authority when he came into power, not many were educated enough. Since Charlemagne was responsible for their education the clergy who had to earn moral authority from him. This put Charlemagne in a unique position to shape his empire and rule as he pleased with few to question his moral decisions; especially after the pope himself crowned him emperor in 800. That is not to say that Charlemagne led a morally impeccable life. It is more likely that there was no one with enough authority to question him. This moral immunity did not carry over to his wives, but that will be discussed in a later chapter.

By Charlemagne's death in 814 there had been considerable reform amongst the clergy. Charlemagne influenced the development of huge networks of communication throughout his kingdom between monasteries, bishoprics, counties and himself. These networks helped institute

[99] Nikolaus Staubach, "Des großen Kaisers kleiner Sohn," in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 701.
[100] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 39-40.

an atmosphere of communication that made the reforms possible. During the second year of his reign in 769 Charlemagne had already introduced the Aquitainian Capitulary, which was a piece of legislation focused on church buildings and properties. Charlemagne's reforms escalated from there, and in 779 he enacted the Capitulary for Herstal, which was concerned with the consecration of bishops, monastic rule, and episcopal powers.[101] Under Charlemagne the clergy became better educated on Scripture and more prepared to communicate what they knew. As a result the aristocracy was also better educated.[102] In many ways Louis the Pious bore the consequences of the education reformation his father had been so passionate about. Despite his role as emperor Louis did not have the highest moral authority in the empire. He now had to earn it from his bishops and officials and was held more accountable by them. De Jong describes Louis' court as one where everyone was constantly competing for moral authority.[103] Even then, Louis was called 'the Pious,"[104] but that was not enough to grant him immunity to moral criticism. Every misstep during his time as emperor was a weakness for his aristocracy to attack. The blinding and subsequent, albeit accidental, death of his nephew, the supposed transgressions of his wife, a vision by a poor woman of Louis' fall from God's grace, and more were all used to justify rebellions led by his own sons and aristocracy. Because of his position in society there was a rebellion every time his morality was called into question. Even after he defeated the rebellions he had to perform public penances to earn it and his imperial crown back, because as emperor he had to exhibit irreproachable moral behavior. One could not expect to remain

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[101] Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 305-306.
[102] Walter Ullman, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (New York City, NY: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1969), 2-3.
[103] Jong, Mayke de, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.
[104] Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe*, trans. Michael Idomir Allen (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 145.

emperor without moral authority, and the rebellions that were justified with accusations of immorality illustrate this well.

As emperors of the Frankish people, Charlemagne and Louis the Pious needed not only to be perceived as moral leaders but also strong royal authority, which was bequeathed to them upon their coronation as long as they retained the respect of their nobles. Possessing royal authority did influence the way in which they could earn moral authority. Those with royal authority did not need to be scholars or parents to be model figures of morality. In order to earn widespread moral authority most people needed to have expert knowledge of Scripture, write moral treatises, and teach others the word of God. More often than not royalty had people within their circle of advisors who had already devoted their lives to such studies. Parents also had a certain amount of moral influence but typically only over the lives of their children. Parenthood was not enough to earn widespread authority predicated on moral behavior excepting of course the case of Dhuoda. Often figures of royalty were also parents, but they were responsible for more than the lives and salvation of their children; they were responsible for the lives and salvation of their entire realm as well.

The idea that the ruler of a kingdom should be held accountable for the salvation of his subjects led Charlemagne to start the Carolingian Renaissance. According to Walter Ullman, Charlemagne believed that he needed to educate his people as a function of his role as king.[105] In a letter known as the *Epistola de litteris colendis* from Charlemagne to Abbot Baugulf and his congregation written sometime between 780 and 800 Charlemagne articulated the importance of a clergy who were "devout in mind, learned in discourse, chaste in conduct and eloquent in

[105] Walter Ullman, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (New York City, NY: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1969), 4.

speech, so that whoever shall seek to see you out of reverence for God… may also be instructed by your wisdom, which he has learned from your reading or singing."[106] He urged the abbot to "avoid neglecting the study of literature, but also with most humble mind, pleasing to God, to study earnestly in order that you may be able more easily and more correctly to penetrate the mysteries of the divine Scriptures,"[107] because without a firm understanding of literature clergymen could not express properly what they knew to their congregation. In his words, "What pious devotion dictated faithfully to the mind, the tongue, uneducated on account of the neglect of study, was not able to express in the letter without error."[108] This illustrates Charlemagne's fear that his subjects would be misinformed by uneducated clergy and then fail to attain salvation. As a Christian king, Charlemagne believed that he would be held accountable by God if he failed to care for the salvation of his subjects.[109] At the end of the letter Charlemagne warned the abbot that should he fail to send copies of the letter to every monastery he would fall out of favor with him. This threat makes evident the extent of Charlemagne's moral authority within the empire. He was instructing the clergy on what they should be learning and what and how they should be teaching their congregation instead of the other way around, as it would be in the future.

The capitularies, legislation enacted by the Frankish court, of Charlemagne further demonstrate Charlemagne's efforts to educate his people. A group of men known as *missi dominici*, essentially envoys, would ensure the Frankish people understood the capitularies and were obeying them. In the "Capitulary for the *Missi*" in 803 he ordered that no priest be ordained

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[106] Charlemagne, "A Letter of Charles on the Cultivation of Learning, 780-800," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), 89.
[107]Ibid., 89.
[108]Ibid., 89.
[109] Ullman, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*, 4.

without an examination, and in capitularies dated to between 802 and 813 he demanded that laymen have a firm understand of the Christian faith and know the Lord's Prayer.[110] Failing to adhere to capitularies warranted punishment by the *missi.* If a member of the nobility or clergy disobeyed a capitulary they were typically only "deprived of both [their] office and inheritance" until they could be brought before the Frankish court where they would be treated in accordance with the law.[111] Earlier, in the *Admonitio generalis* of 789, Charlemagne ordered that schools be established where boys could learn to read and where "faulty books" could be corrected grammatically, so the reader might pray properly to God.[112] Even in his household Charlemagne established a school. The palace school at Aachen, led by Alcuin, was where the children of the palace were educated in the liberal arts which included grammar, basic arithmetic, music, and more. Charlemagne's own children and grandchildren, boys and girls, were taught there by Alcuin.[113]

Charlemagne strove to spread the true word of God by educating his people. In doing so he achieved the highest moral authority in the empire; he needed them to be educated so they would act morally and be able to achieve salvation. Charlemagne believed that if he failed he would be denied salvation along with his people. Charlemagne's concern with morality can be seen in ways other than educational reform as well. For example he decreed in the capitularies of 802 that people of powerful office were not to take advantage of the poor, that people should not

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[110] "Capitulary for the *missi*," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2oo9), 92.
[111] "The General Capitulary for the *Missi* from 802," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), 75.
[112] "Admonitio Generalis," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), 92.
[113] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," in *Charlemagne's Courtier: the Complete Einhard*, ed. Paul Dutton (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 1998), 28.

commit murder or incest, and that shelter should not be denied to the poor or to pilgrims.[114] The capitularies gave Charlemagne's influence over moral behavior the ability to reach more people with more efficiency and effectiveness. Unlike Alcuin or Dhuoda, Charlemagne's moral authority was supported by his royal authority. He was a very well-respected ruler who did not have to contend with many serious rebellions and his royal authority went almost entirely unquestioned. Charlemagne did experience two conspiracies against him, according to Einhard. One in 785, was led by a group of aristocrats that felt Queen Fastrada, Charlemagne's wife, was acting cruelly and driving Charlemagne to cruelty. The conspiracy was quickly routed and its leaders exiled or killed. Another conspiracy in 792, was led by Pippin the Hunchback, Charlemagne's oldest son. Einhard wrote that Pippin's mother was a concubine, and that he was hunchbacked, likely to delegitimize him. Pippin conspired against Charlemagne with a group of Frankish elite, who had promised him a kingdom if they were successful. Charlemagne discovered the plot, tonsured his son, and sent him to the monastery of Prüm.[115] The Franks flourished under his rule between the opportunities for glory and the incredible amounts of wealth gained from long and successful conquests. For the most part, the nobles of Charlemagne's court were too satisfied to rebel. In this way his well-established royal authority gave Charlemagne the stability to bring his moral authority to its fullest potential.

Despite his strong moral influence there is some evidence of immorality within Charlemagne's own household. Einhard wrote that Charlemagne refused to allow any of his daughters to marry. There is a great deal of speculation in regard to why Charlemagne chose to forbid the marriages of his daughters. According to Einhard, Charlemagne "could not stand to be

[114] "The General Capitulary for the *Missi* from 802," 73-75.
[115] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 39-40.

parted from their company."[116] There is no uniform explanation for Charlemagne's refusal to allow his daughters to marry, however it is important to note that as unmarried women their children were illegitimate. As illegitimate children, none of his daughters' sons could make a claim for the throne, and despite their unmarried state, Charlemagne's daughters did have sons. The most well-known of these illegitimate sons was the historian, Nithard. Nithard was the son of Charlemagne's second daughter, Bertha, and Angilbert who was a poet at Charlemagne's court. He was born sometime in the 790s and served his cousin, Charles the Bald, during *der Brüderkrieg* by recording and participating in its events as a soldier and a holder of high public office. Ultimately, he produced four books that give the most comprehensive, albeit extremely biased in favor of Charles the Bald, record of the events of the war.[117] It is impossible to say what might have become of Nithard during the war had he been a legitimate grandson of Charlemagne.

It is clear that the unmarried state of Charlemagne's daughters did not go unnoticed by the rest of the realm. Einhard wrote that the affairs of Charlemagne's daughter's "caused him no end of trouble. But he always acted as if there was not suspicion of any sexual scandal on their part or that any such rumor had already spread far and wide." [118] From this it can be inferred that the immorality of Charlemagne's daughters was no secret. Yet, it did not have any effect on the value and use of his influence over morality. The reason for this is that Charlemagne's position as king and emperor was too well-established to be effected by the immorality of his daughters. It should also be noted that the clergy was still in the process of being educated during

[116] Ibid., 39.
[117] Bernhard Walter Scholz, Introduction to "Nithard's Histories," in *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, by Nithard (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1970), 22.
[118] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 39.

Charlemagne's rule, and they had been educated on his orders. As a result, Charlemagne's moral authority remained unquestioned despite the supposed transgressions of his daughters.

Louis the Pious' experiences with moral authority were very different from his father's. Louis was one of three legitimate sons of Charlemagne and was never intended to be emperor. According to "Charlemagne's Division of his Kingdoms," Charlemagne's empire was meant to be broken into three kingdoms, one for each of his sons, with the largest going to his oldest son, Charles.[119] However after the deaths of Louis' two older brothers the responsibility of the entire empire fell to him. By the time Louis came to power after his father's death in 814, there was very little room left for the empire to expand. Charlemagne had conquered most of Western Europe, so Louis could not base his royal authority on conquest as his father had done. Warfare was paramount to the Frankish culture. "Annals were structured around annual campaigns, and warfare was key aspect to a king's role,"[120] but the empire Louis inherited had reached its limits. The inability to conquer surrounding lands may have contributed to the internal tension prevalent during Louis' rule. When Louis entered Aachen, he likely understood that he would not be able to establish his power on warfare as his father had done. Instead, he immediately began establishing his rule as one rooted in peace and morality. He could not succeed in this endeavor without leading a moral house. Therefore, he set out to cleanse his court of immorality, starting with his sisters. In his biography of Louis, the Astronomer recorded that Louis "had nevertheless long since made up his mind about the behavior of his sisters in his father's household, by which

[119] "Charlemagne's Division of his Kingdom," in *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, by Nithard (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1970), 147-148.
[120] Rachel Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 69.

stain alone his father's house was blemished."[121] Upon his arrival Louis quickly doled out his sisters' inheritance and sent them from Aachen "to the properties they had received from their father."[122] The apparent moral disgust Louis felt for his sisters is the only reason the Astronomer gave for their removal.

However, there are a significant number of theories on why Louis forced his sisters from Aachen. Over the course of their lives these women had established a great deal of influence at the court of Aachen. Nelson refers to Charlemagne's daughters as a "regiment of women" that likely held a lot of influence at court, namely because they were always there. Charlemagne's daughters achieved the ultimate level of *konigsnähe*, power accumulated because of proximity to the king, in that they were almost always at court in Aachen or elsewhere with their father. Many were even present at his coronation as emperor in the year 800. [123] Because Charlemagne would not allow them to marry, one of the only ways Charlemagne's daughters could make connections was by being present at the Carolingian court. By many accounts, including Einhard's[124] and Alcuin's, they were very beautiful, but Charlemagne never followed through with any marriage proposals. [125] Rotrude and Bertha, Charlemagne's oldest daughters, both still had fairly permanent lovers by whom they had sons. These sons grew to hold prominent positions in Frankish society, but their illegitimacy made it impossible for them to make a play for the throne. Though, it is possible that Louis still saw them as a threat. Furthermore, Alcuin, according to Nelson, insinuated in one of his letters that the daughters of Charlemagne took sides on matters

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[121] Astronomer, "The Life of Emperor Louis," in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: The Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer,* trans. Thomas F. X. Noble (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 247.
[122] Astronomer, "The Life of Emperor Louis," 248.
[123] Janet Nelson, "Women at the Court of Charlemagne: A Case of Monstrous Regiment," in *The Frankish World, 750-900* (London: Hambledon, 1996), 237.
[124] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 39.
[125] Duckett, "Alcuin," 93-94.

as important as their brothers' inheritance.[126] It is not difficult to imagine that this regiment of young women could influence the advisors of their father, if not their father himself, to see things their way. A close acquaintance and advisor of the king's, Angilbert, even became Bertha's lover.[127] Louis may have seen the networks these women had orchestrated as constant residents in Aachen as a threat and another reason to have them removed from court, but he used them to make a moral statement. His sisters and their sons may have been threats, but he turned their removal into a political statement that immoral behavior would no longer be tolerated under his reign. In doing so he made morality into the foundation of his rule.

According to Wemple, Louis had any women living at court under suspicion of immoral conduct tried and flogged, while barring any men with concubines or bastards from testifying at court.[128] Thegan's account of Louis further labeled him as a very serious and devout individual and claimed that "The people laughed a great deal in [Louis'] presence, but he never showed his white teeth in a smile."[129] The individual described by Thegan was aggressively strict in enforcing the moral behavior of his court. Louis was in a precarious situation, and he needed something to build his authority as emperor on. Charlemagne's rule was based on warfare and conquest so the behavior of his daughters and others at court was less of a concern. However, if the sheer number of copied Christian and Classical texts coupled with new books that covered a wide range of topics are any indication,[130] then the Carolingian Renaissance started by Charlemagne had taken effect by the beginning of Louis' reign. As a result the clergy was

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[126] Nelson, "Women at the Court of Charlemagne," 239.
[127] Nithard, "Nithard's Histories," in *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories*, trans. Bernhard Walter Scholz with Barbara Rogers (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1970), 172.
[128] Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, 81.
[129] Thegan, "Life of Louis," 165.
[130] John J. Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance: Education and Literary Culture," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. 2*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 711.

considerably better educated. Therefore, he had to hold his court to higher moral standards as he was being held to a higher standard by the clergy.[131] This became a problem for Louis because instead of being in a position to criticize the clergy, the clergy was in a position to criticize him.

Despite his father's good intentions, and Louis' own efforts at maintaining morality, the reformation of the clergy caused a great deal of trouble for Louis. In 822, less than ten years into his reign, Louis had to perform his first public penance. This was in part due to the outrage at the death of Louis' nephew, Bernard, King of Italy. Bernard had succeeded Louis' brother, Pippin, as king of Italy, but when Louis wrote the *Ordinatio Imperii of 817*, which outlined his sons' inheritance, he gave Italy to Lothar.[132] In 818 Louis heard that Bernard was gathering support in Italy and intended to depose him, however "This report was partly true and partly false."[133] Bernard's true intentions are unknown, as Thegan recorded that Bernard was entirely treacherous and intent on deposing his uncle. Louis captured Bernard and ordered him to be blinded, but Bernard later died of the wounds inflicted on him. [134] The death of a member of the emperor's family by his own hand was fuel for Louis' opposition and an opening for them to attack his morality. To counteract this animosity Louis performed his first penance. The *Royal Frankish Annals* report that Louis decided to carry out the public penance after a discussion with his bishops and magnates[135] so one might question whether or not Louis performed the penance willfully.

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[131] Mayke De Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.
[132] "The *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), 202.
[133] "Royal Frankish Annals," 103.
[134] Thegan, "The Deeds of Emperor Louis," 205-206.
[135] "Royal Frankish Annals," 111.

*The Vision of the Poor Woman of Laon* outlined the ways in which Louis' morality was being questioned. *The Vision* was recorded by an anonymous author shortly before Louis performed his penance in 822, indicating that it may have influenced the decision to do the penance. It tells of a poor woman who had a vision of the afterlife. She saw Charlemagne suffering in torment while Empress Ermengard, Louis's deceased wife, "had three boulders like giant teeth grasping her… and they were dragging her down into the depths."[136] According to the woman, their only hope for peace was dependent on Louis' actions. Specifically, *The Vision* revealed that Louis had to perform seven memorial services to free Charlemagne but did not specify the way in which he might help Ermengard. [137] However, that Louis was expected to take action to save his deceased family from torment does further emphasize the emperor's moral obligation to the salvation of the Frankish people, even the deceased ones. In her vision the poor woman also saw Louis' nephew, Bernard. Bernard's name was shining brightly on a wall of the names of those who had reached salvation while Louis' could scarcely be read. When the woman asked why Louis' name was so faint the one guiding her replied, " 'Before he carried out the murder of Bernard, no name had been clearer on the wall. The killing of Bernard led to the obliteration of that name.' "[138] The composition of *The Vision* may have influenced the decision for Louis to perform a penance as it illuminated how displeased his people were with the death of Bernard. According to the *Royal Frankish Annals*, his treatment of Bernard was one of the primary actions for which Louis sought forgiveness.[139]

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[136] "The Vision of the Poor Woman of Laon," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), 204.
[137] Ibid., 203-204.
[138] Ibid., 203-204.
[139] "Royal Frankish Annals," 111.

The penance of 822 was followed by a second in 833. The factors that led to this second public penance began in the spring of 830. According to the Astronomer, a group of nobles approached Louis' second son, Pippin I of Aquitaine (797-838), and filled his head with rumors. They told him that his father's chamberlain, Bernard of Septimania, Dhuoda's husband, "had invaded [Louis the Pious'] bed"[140] and that because his father could not control his own household he must be unfit to act as emperor. Therefore, Pippin was honor-bound to restore his father's dignity. Oddly enough, the Astronomer wrote that Pippin chose to procure an army and march on his father as a way to "restore his father's mind and dignity." Pippin's oldest brother, Lothar (795-855), joined him but they were unable to defeat Louis at that time.[141] The royal wife was a critical aspect to the stability of the realm[142] and attacking her had severe repercussions. The nobles who enticed Pippin into rebelling were not just accusing Judith and Bernard of adultery, but also attacking Louis the Pious' ability to rule. In his book written around 855, *On Christian Rulers*, Sedulius Scottus wrote that, "If a ruler and his queen are to rule the people justly/ Let them first rule their own family."[143] Consequently, Louis' sons were not only accusing Judith of adultery, they were accusing their father of being incapable of keeping morality in his own house, let alone guiding the entire kingdom with moral authority.

There was already tension between Louis and his three older sons stemming from the amendments Louis had made to the *Ordinatio Imperii* following the birth of his and Judith's son, Charles the Bald, in 823. Charles was born six years after Louis the Pious issued the *Ordinatio*

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[140] Astronomer, "The Life of Emperor Louis," 275-76.
[141] Ibid., 275-77.
[142] Elizabeth Ward, "Caesar's Wife: The Career of the Empress Judith, 819-829," in *Charlemagne's heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Claredon, 1990), 206.
[143] Sedulius Scottus, "On Christian Rulers," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), *386.*

*Imperii*. Louis modified the *Ordinatio Imperii* in 829 so that Charles the Bald would inherit Alemannia, where Judith's family was based. By giving Charles Alemannia, Louis diminished his oldest son, Lothar's, share of land, enraging him. Louis' sons knew he would not restore their inheritance so they tried to overthrow him, in part, by attacking Judith's reputation. In doing so they attacked his morality, leading others of the aristocracy to doubt that Louis was worthy of moral authority at all, without which an emperor cannot fulfill his role in society to ensure the salvation of his people.

In 833, Louis received word that his sons, Lothar, Pippin I of Aquitaine, and Louis the German, had formed an alliance and intended to rebel against him. They gathered their armies in Alemannia, as that was the area Louis intended to give to Charles.[144] Louis the Pious brought his own army to meet them there. No battle ever took place, however, because Louis' sons "deceived the people who had come with the Lord Emperor, by evil persuasions and false promises, with the result that everyone deserted him."[145] This event has come to be called the "Field of Lies" under the presumption that Louis' sons lied to his men to convince them to switch sides. Without an army to fight for him, Louis the Pious had no choice but to relinquish power to Lothar. Once in power, Lothar sent Judith to a monastery in Tortona, and Charles the Bald, who was only ten years old at the time, to the monastery of Prüm. Lothar brought his father to Compiègne before an assembly of bishops, abbots, and counts, who pledged their loyalty to Lothar there. This assembly "harassed [Louis the Pious] for so long that they forced him to lay aside his weapons and change his garb to that of a penitent, driving him into the gates of the Holy Church."[146] In other words, they drove him to a monastery, deposing him from office, after

[144] Thegan, "The Deeds of Emperor Louis," 208.
[145] *The Annals of St. Bertin*, trans. Janet L. Nelson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), *27.*
[146] *Ibid.,* 27-28.

forcing him to perform a public penance. Their extreme actions highlight that with all of Louis' transgressions he could not earn back his moral authority, and therefore could not in back his imperial title, without the penance. As an emperor who had based his rule on morality, he could not expect to maintain power without appearing morally flawless before his subjects.

Louis the Pious was fully restored to power in 834. Louis the German (806-876), according to the *Annals of St. Bertin*, was unhappy with the way Lothar was treating their father. "Louis begged his brother Lothar most earnestly to act more gently towards to their father," but when Lothar refused "[Louis the German] kept thinking over with his men how he might rescue his father from imprisonment."[147] Louis the German enlisted the help of Pippin, and the two brothers marched on Lothar in Aachen. No battle took place though, because Lothar fled as soon as he heard both of his brothers were on their way. With Lothar defeated, and his penance completed before his subject; Louis regained his throne. The remaining six years of his reign, and of his life, passed without any more major rebellions. His moral authority had been restored in the eyes of the people. For the empire the last years of Louis' reign were like the calm before the storm that would unleash its wrath upon his death.

Charlemagne and Louis the Pious were both Carolingian emperors during a time when moral authority was vitally intertwined with royal authority. When Charlemagne's reign as king began the clergy had not been properly educated and much of what they taught was inconsistent with one another. The Carolingians believed that they were responsible for the salvation of their people. Charlemagne took that responsibility very seriously by inciting widespread educational and clerical reform. Since Charlemagne was the one responsible for these reforms, there was no

[147] Ibid., 28.

one, clerical or otherwise, who had earned enough moral authority to question his. He was the top authority, despite the immorality in his own household, because of his role in these reforms. By the time Louis the Pious became emperor, these reforms had already started to take hold. The clergy and educated aristocracy were now at liberty to criticize their emperor's morality. Unhappy members of the aristocracy used rumors of Judith's transgressions to incite Pippin I of Aquitaine to rebel against his father. They accidental death of Bernard King of Italy also stained Louis' moral image. These immoral acts that mainly occurred from 817-833 were enough to strip Louis of his throne, and he was only able to regain his imperial title after performing public penances. He had to earn back his moral authority in order to earn back his crown.

Moral authority was so imperative to Charlemagne and Louis the Pious because of their roles as emperors. Without moral authority they could not effectively retain their position in society. They needed to be able to earn moral authority or their right to rule would be brought into question. Charlemagne's moral authority was not questioned as often, because he did not establish his rule on morality. The clergy and aristocracy were also not in as strong of a position to question Charlemagne's moral behavior as his reforms were still being implemented, so there were fewer people able to question him. The empresses and queens that ruled beside them also had to earn moral authority. However, the wives of these great rulers of the Carolingian Age did not earn moral authority for themselves but for their husbands.

# CHAPTER THREE: FASTRADA AND JUDITH

A position of royalty did not bequeath the right to earn moral authority only to men. Royal women could also earn moral authority, but in a different way. The queens and empresses of the Carolingian dynasty were expected to earn moral authority just as their husbands were. Like Dhuoda, they had influence over and a responsibility to their children's morality,[148] and like their husbands they had a greater responsibility to the rest of the realm. However, the moral authority they did earn was not independent from their husbands. If the wife of the Carolingian ruler proved to be immoral, then the morality of her husband would also be brought into question. There are two women whose careers illustrate this phenomenon. Queen Fastrada, third wife of Charlemagne, and Empress Judith, second wife of Louis the Pious, were both accused of immoral actions that not only they but also their husbands suffered from. The only time Charlemagne had to put down internal rebellions was when Fastrada was queen, because she was perceived as cruel,[149] and Judith was accused of adultery during her marriage to Louis the Pious.[150] The accusation made Louis the Pious appear incapable of rule; if he could not keep morality in his own household how could he be expected to hold moral authority over the entire empire?

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[148] Elizabeth Ward, "Caesar's Wife: The Career of the Empress Judith, 819-829," in *Charlemagne's heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Claredon, 1990), 224.
[149] Einhard, "The Life of Charlemagne," in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: The Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer,* trans. Thomas F. X. Noble (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 40.
[150] Astronomer, "The Life of Emperor Louis," in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: The Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer,* trans. Thomas F. X. Noble (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 257.

First and foremost, being a Carolingian queen also meant being a mother and wife. In *De Institutione laicali* Jonas of Órleans described the " 'four reasons why men desire women: family, prudence, wealth, and beauty.' "[151] In her book, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World*, Valerie L. Garver gives an in-depth analysis of what exactly these four qualities meant in Carolinian culture. Garver discusses how the choices in vocabulary made to describe a beautiful woman are directly related to wealth. As evidence she provides a poem describing Gisela, Charlemagne's sister, as golden, shining, and radiant. These are all terms that can also be used to describe riches and are often associated with virtue. Therefore, the ways in which men described a woman's beauty were also tied to the qualities they wished to see in them.[152] It was also expected that an aristocratic wife came from a wealthy, aristocratic family, but more than that she also had control over the household's wealth and management. Women held supervisory positions over household staff and also had control over the household's finances. The ability to command staff and appropriately manage finances were vital qualities sought in women, but it also gave them power over the household.[153] According to Garver, the importance of family meant more than bearing children, though that was a necessity and failure to have children could result in divorce, but also meant retaining the family history. Women were responsible for remembering all family ties to those living and dead, and for performing acts of remembrance such as prayer.[154] Finally, prudence referred to acting morally and instructing their children to do the same. Here Garver uses Dhuoda and her handbook as an

[151] Valerie L. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 1.
[152] Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World*, 21-23.
[153] Ibid., 172-173.
[154] Ibid., 69.

example.[155] It was as instructors to their children that women were able to earn moral authority, though that authority did not typically extend beyond their children.

Garver makes the argument that as wives women had considerable power within the household. In this case, she disagrees with Suzanne Wemple, who makes the case that early medieval women had more freedom than the women of antiquity. [156] However, Wemple also suggests Carolingian women had greater restrictions than their predecessors under the Merovingian dynasty. Garver focuses on the influence Carolingian women had over the household, while Wemple is more concerned with how little they could do outside the household.

Carolingian kings and emperors sought the same qualities in their wives as were outlined by Jonas of Órleans. However, as queens and empresses these women had to be capable of managing much more than their household. For one, they were not responsible for just any household but for the royal household, which meant ensuring everything ran smoothly at the royal court. For the court to run smoothly there needed to be an appropriate amount of furnishings and provisions. Queens also helped maintain the loyalty of vassals to the king by making sure gifts were sent to vassals when appropriate. Vassalage was vital to the networks that held the Carolingian empire together. Furthermore, just as any aristocratic wife, the queens or empresses supervised the household staff. For the wives of Carolingian rulers this staff included the *camerarius*, who was the highest administrator of income and provisions. By supervising the *camerarius* these women held a great deal of power over the treasury.[157] According to the letters

[155] Ibid., 122-123.
[156] Suzanne Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 1.
[157] Amalie Foßel, "The Political Tradition of Female Rulership in Medieval Europe," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 72.

of Alcuin, Liutgard, Charlemagne's third wife from 794-800, was charged with distributing the wealth taken from the Avars, who had been defeated by Charlemagne's son, Pippin I King of Italy, in 796. The responsibility of distributing such the incredible amount of wealth won from the Avars affected the entire empire. Some of the wealth Liutgard distributed even went to the new pope.[158] Therefore, in this case, the influence of a Carolingian queen extended beyond the boundaries of the Frankish Kingdom.

Carolingian queens certainly held moral authority over their children. It was vital that they educate their children on the ways to live moral lives just as much as any other mother during the Carolingian Age. In her article, "Caesar's Wife: The Empress Judith," Elizabeth Ward recounts an incident where Freculf, bishop of Lisieux, encouraged Judith to teach her son wisdom and prudence both through the use of history and by example.[159] Outside of their children the queens earned their moral authority through their husbands. For example, there is evidence that Queen Fastrada presided over at least one court case in Charlemagne's absence. Technically, her verdict was Charlemagne's word but those words came out of Fastrada's mouth. Therefore, she had the moral authority to determine guilt and sentence criminals, even if that moral authority came from the court's respect for Charlemagne instead of respect for her. This trial occurred in 793 on the basis of a murder that was reportedly carried out directly in front of Fastrada.[160] This event illustrates the influence a queen could hold at court through the use of her husband's influence. Both kings and queens were rulers and held similar positions in society, but kings could earn moral authority through their actions as rulers while queens needed to earn

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[158] Matthias Becher, *Charlemagne*, trans. David S. Bachrach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 74.
[159] Elizabeth Ward, "Caesar's Wife: The Career of the Empress Judith, 819-829," in *Charlemagne's heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Claredon, 1990), 224.
[160] Janet Nelson, "Women at the Court of Charlemagne," 235.

moral authority through their husbands. Therefore, if a queen acted immorally her husband's image suffered just as much as hers.

One might say that Fastrada had a highly impactful career as queen, from her marriage to Charlemagne in 783 until her death in 794. Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* asserted that Fastrada "came of East Frankish, that is to say, German, stock."[161] However, he did not record the reason behind the marriage, though one can assume that she was of a wealthy, aristocratic family and provided a politically beneficial match.[162] In that eleven-year span she had two daughters, Theodrada (785-844) and Hiltrude (787~800); Charlemagne's twelfth and thirteenth children.[163] Hiltrude died young, but Theodrada lived to become the Abbess of Argenteuil.[164] Fastrada died when her daughters were still young, and there is little source material on Fastrada. It is difficult to say what type of moral impact Fastrada had on her children. She did fulfill some of the critical duties she was responsible for as queen; at the very least she bore children and acted in Charlemagne's stead when he could not be present, as is apparent from the court case she presided over in 793. That was not enough to maintain any moral authority she had earned.

Fastrada was not successful at keeping the court running smoothly, and this is reflected both in Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* and in the *Royal Frankish Annals.* The only time during his reign that Charlemagne experienced internal revolts was while Fastrada was queen. The first occurred in 785 and the other in 792. The *Royal Frankish Annals* did not record anything about the rebellion in 785, but Einhard described it as "a powerful conspiracy against [Charlemagne] in

[161] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 37.
[162] Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe*, trans. Michael Idomir Allen (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 135.
[163] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 37.
[164] Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes, and Simon Maclean, *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), xx.

Germany."[165] Einhard did not shed any light on the details of the rebellion other than that the leaders were either exiled, blinded, or killed depending on how much they resisted capture.[166] The rebellion in 792 was led by Charlemagne's oldest son, Pippin the Hunchback, whose mother Einhard described as a concubine in an attempt to disassociate her with Charlemagne and to make Pippin the Hunchback appear illegitimate.[167] Due to the nature of his parents' relationship, Pippin the Hunchback was not recognized as Charlemagne's legitimate son. According to Einhard, Pippin waited until Charlemagne had left to winter in Bavaria, and feigned sickness to avoid travelling with him. Then he conspired against his father with some "leading Franks," who had promised him a kingdom if he supported them.[168] Neither Einhard nor the *Royal Frankish Annals* give any reason for either revolt except that the rebels were "unable to bear the cruelty of Queen Fastrada."[169] Both sources accuse Fastrada as being "cruel," and Einhard went on to say that:

> In both cases, the conspiracies against the king arose because it seemed that, in giving in to the cruelty of his wife, he had departed sharply from the kindness of his nature and his customary gentleness. Throughout the entire rest of his life he was held in the highest affection and favor by everyone, both at home and abroad, and not the slightest hint of unjust cruelty was alleged against him by anyone.[170]

Here, Einhard suggested that Fastrada's cruelty as queen influenced Charlemagne to act cruelly. This feat must have astounded Einhard, who usually spoke very highly of Charlemagne. He proceeded by assuring the reader that no one had ever spoken badly of Charlemagne except

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[165] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 39.
[166] Ibid., 39-40.
[167] Ibid., 39.
[168] Ibid., 39.
[169] "Royal Frankish Annals," 71.
[170] Einhard, "The Life of Charlemagne," 40.

during the two rebellions and no one ever would again.[171] Neither the *Royal Frankish Annals* nor Einhard divulged any details of Fastrada's cruelty, or Charlemagne's for that matter. However, that Fastrada's supposed cruelty was blamed for these rebellions against her husband illustrates that her actions were tied to his.

Furthermore, these rebellions and Einhard's words demonstrate how closely tied Charlemagne's and Fastrada's moral authority was. The only time Charlemagne was recorded having suffered internal rebellions was when his queen was perceived as cruel by a wide range of subjects: one son, an unspecified number of prominent Frankish aristocrats, Einhard,[172] and the author(s) of the *Royal Frankish Annals*.[173] If acts of cruelty can be defined as immoral then one can presume that because of Fastrada's actions she lost moral authority from the Frankish people. In eighth and ninth century Western Europe it was understood that a king should rule his kingdom as he ruled his own family. Sedulius Scottus described this sentiment in *On Christian Rulers* when he wrote that, "If a ruler and his queen are to rule the people justly/ Let them first rule their own family."[174] Accusing Fastrada of cruelty was equal to accusing Charlemagne of being too weak to influence the behavior of his own wife. This accusation led to doubt on whether or not Charlemagne had the moral authority to rule an entire kingdom. Those doubts stood to justify and explain the rebellions against Charlemagne.

Einhard and the *Royal Frankish Annals* both used the word "cruelty" to describe Fastrada's actions and they cite it as the reason for both conspiracies. The lack of additional details and the similarity between the two accounts begs the question of whether or not

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[171] Ibid., 40.
[172] Ibid., 40.
[173] "Royal Frankish Annals," 71.
[174] Sedulius Scottus, "On Christian Rulers," 386.

Fastrada's actions truly were cruel or if the accusations were imagined to cast doubt on her intentions. It is possible that blaming Fastrada is an example of gendered criticism. In cases of gendered criticism a person is blamed for a problem not because it was their fault but because of their gender. If Einhard and the the *Royal Frankish Annals* attributed the rebellions and Charlemagne's cruelty as a result of gendered criticism, they may have been covering up a larger issue. For example, the conspiracies may have been inspired by immoral acts committed by Charlemagne. Einhard did record that Fastrada had driven Charlemagne to cruelty.[175] However, Charlemagne was supposed to be the pinnacle of moral behavior, and Einhard especially had great admiration for Charlemagne.[176] Hesitant to record negative details of Charlemagne's reign they may have superimposed his flaws onto Fastrada. Another explanation could be that the conspirators cited Fastrada as the reason for their discontent in the hope of avoiding the full wrath of the king. They may have been successful since "Only three of the conspirators were killed… because there was no other way of restraining them."[177] The others escaped only blinded and were exiled.[178] Therefore, it is possible that Fastrada's morality was sacrificed for the sake of her husband's. Her sacrifice exemplifies how intertwined the moral authority of kings and queens were at this time but also how different they were. Charlemagne's and Fastrada's moral authority was different in how they earned it, how they could use it, and how they could lose it. Fastrada could not earn moral authority over more than her children without Charlemagne's support, and Charlemagne stood to lose moral authority based on Fastrada's

[175] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 40.
[176] Thomas F. X. Noble, Introduction to "Life of Charlemagne," by Einhard in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: The Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer*, trans. Thomas F. X. Noble (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 11.
[177] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne, 39-40.
[178] Ibid., 39.

actions, whether they were real or not. Losing moral authority in the Carolingian Age as a monarch inevitably led to rebellions.

Just as Fastrada's actions were shrouded in mystery, there is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the actions of Empress Judith. However, there is more information available on Judith's background than there is on Fastrada's. Bishop Thegan of Trier, one of Louis the Pious' biographers who wrote *The Deeds of Emperor Louis* in 836,[179] described Judith as a member of one of the noblest of families. Her father was the Duke Welf of Bavaria, and her mother was called Heilwig and came from a noble family among the Saxons. According to Thegan, Louis and Judith were married in 819.[180] Ermengard, Judith's predecessor and the mother of Louis' three oldest sons, Lothar, Pippin I of Aquitaine, and Louis the German, had become ill in 818 and died shortly after.[181] By the time Judith became empress, Louis had three legitimate heirs who were already well into adulthood. In fact, prior to Judith and Louis' wedding, Louis had issued each of his sons a portion of the empire in the *ordination imperii*, written in 817. In this document Louis bequeathed the title of emperor to Lothar, as well as a central portion of the empire that stretched from Italy into Northern Europe and included Aachen. Louis the German was given Bavaria to the east of Lothar, and Pippin was to inherit Aquitaine and the land west of Lothar's.[182]

However, Louis the Pious had to amend the *ordinatio imperii* when Judith gave birth to Charles the Bald in 823. As the first son of the emperor's second wife Charles had to be given

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[179] Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes, and Simon Maclean, *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 23.
[180] Thegan, "The Deeds of Emperor Louis," 207.
[181] Ibid., 206-207.
[182] "The Ordinatio Imperii of 817," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), 200.

some inheritance. Louis chose to give Charles the Bald Alemannia, where Judith's family had property.[183] According to Thegan, the emperor made this amendment in the presence of Lothar and Louis the German, and "Henceforth, they were outraged, along with their brother Pippin."[184] Their father had diminished the shares of land promised to them in 817, and their bitterness at losing this piece of land brought years of turmoil to the empire.[185] Other members of the aristocracy, such as the Count Hugh of Tours and Count Matfrid of Órleans, used this bitterness to incite rebellions in Louis' sons against their father, in part, by attacking Judith's reputation.[186] That attacking Judith's morality was a strategy for provoking rebellion illustrates how intertwined the moral authority of the emperor and empress truly was.

There is no firm evidence that Judith committed the adultery attributed to her, but the accusations that she "had been ravished by a certain Duke Bernard [of Septimania]"[187] were more than enough to have severe repercussions for Louis the Pious' reign. The accusations were enough to convince Pippin I of Aquitaine to lead an army against his father, because his father's chief magnates had led him to believe that his father's judgement had been comprised since he could not see the wickedness of Judith. There are no accounts from Judith's perspective, but Thegan, who was a loyal biographer of Louis the Pious and biased in his favor, was certain that "[Pippin and the chief magnates] were lying in all respects."[188] During the rebellion of 830, Judith was seized, veiled, and sent to a monastery until Louis the German could restore his father to his position as emperor.[189]

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[183] Ward, "Caesar's Wife," 208.
[184] Thegan, "The Deeds of Emperor Louis," 208.
[185] Costambeys, Innes, and Maclean, *The Carolingian World*, 214.
[186] Thegan, "The Deeds of Emperor Louis," 208-209.
[187] Ibid., 209.
[188] Ibid., 209.
[189] Ibid., 209.

An underlying issue certainly was Lothar, Pippin, and Louis the German's discontent with their reworked inheritance. However, that discontent was incited by nobles unhappy with Louis' rule, Hugh and Matfrid among them. Early in his reign, Louis held Hugh and Matfrid in high esteem,[190] and in 822, Louis' son, Lothar, married Hugh's daughter, Irmingard, joining their families.[191] However, just five short years later, the relationship between Louis and Hugh and Matfrid began to fray. In 827, rebels from what is today known as Spain attacked the "frontier regions" near the border of the empire. Bernard of Septimania was in charge of the border's defense, but he needed reinforcements. According to the Astronomer, ordered Hugh and Matfrid to assemble armies to aid Bernard, but "They advanced more slowly and haltingly than was fitting, and the Moors profited from the delay as long as possible, such that they devastated the region of Barcelona and Gerona and then returned unharmed to Saragossa."[192] Louis heard of Hugh and Matfrid's failure to act with urgency, and in 828, Louis stripped them of their offices at a public assembly in Aachen.[193] Hugh and Matfrid had been prominent Frankish aristocrats. There is a reference to Hugh performing duties for Charlemagne as count as far back as 811.[194] These two spurned aristocrats are the likely antagonists for the rebellions in 830 and 833. Hugh and Matfrid were also among the aristocrats that spread accusations of Judith's adultery to Louis' son, Pippin.[195] Furthermore, *The Annals of St. Bertin* documented that Matfrid perpetuated the Rebellion of 833, "The man urging this most strongly with his treacherous plots and schemes

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[190] Ermoldus, "In Honor of Louis, the Most Christian Caesar Augustus," in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: The Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer*, trans. Thomas F. X. Noble (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 172.
[191] Thegan, "The Deeds of Emperor Louis, 207.
[192] Astronomer, "The Life of Emperor Louis," in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: The Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer,* trans. Thomas F. X. Noble (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 271.
[193] "The Royal Frankish Annals," 122.
[194] "The Royal Frankish Annals," 93.
[195] Thegan, "The Deeds of Emperor Louis," 209.

was Matfrid, to whom [Louis the Pious] had granted life and limb and possession of his inheritance, after he had previously been condemned to death."[196] Hugh and Matfrid were clearly using the dissatisfaction of Louis' sons over the loss of their inheritance and the rumors of Judith and Bernard's adultery to get revenge on Louis the Pious and regain their offices, if not more.

Instead of directly attacking Louis, Hugh and Matfrid attacked Judith. As a strong proponent of the *ordinatio imperii* amendment and as the wife of the emperor she was a prime target. She was also an easier target. It was much easier for Hugh and Matfrid to spread rumors and gain allies against the emperor's wife than against the emperor himself. The term used to describe this phenomenon is gendered criticism. If it is too difficult to directly attack an opponent, attack his wife. Attacking Judith's morality damaged Louis' reputation enough to gain supporters without implying the most powerful man in the empire was himself immoral. In attacking Judith's morality the unhappy aristocrats were able to undermine the moral authority of both Judith and Louis the Pious using the idea that a ruler could not adequately rule anything if he could not rule his own family.[197] By depriving Louis of moral authority they robbed him of his right to rule and temporarily deposed him. Louis was only able to return to his imperial title with the support of Louis the German, and only after he and Judith had earned back their moral authority by performing a public penance.[198] As an empress, Judith was able to earn moral authority through her responsibilities at court and her responsibilities for the education and protection of her son.[199] By calling Judith's morality authority Hugh and Matfrid struck a hard blow to Louis the Pious as well, because Judith's position in society came from him.

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[196] *The Annals of St. Bertin*, trans. Janet L. Nelson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 25.
[197] Sedulius Scottus, "On Christian Rulers," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Canada: University of Toronto Press Inc., 2009), *386.*
[198] Thegan, "The Deeds of Emperor Louis," 209.
[199] Ward, "Caesar's Wife," 212-213.

Interestingly, the supposed adultery of Judith, which was only rumored and never proven, caused considerably more unrest than the clear acts of immorality by Charlemagne's daughters. Their extramarital affairs should have been apt reason to attack Charlemagne's moral authority,. Charlemagne did not control the morality of his daughters, so why was he able to earn and keep moral authority over his empire? One answer is that Charlemagne's daughters held no official positions of authority. They could certainly influence the court using the massive networks they had constructed during their lives at court but they had no true position of authority like Fastrada and Judith. Also, Charlemagne had such a strong hold on his royal authority as king and emperor that no one dared oppose him except in the case of Fastrada's cruelty. Louis the Pious, on the other hand, had deeply angered his sons and their allies, and accusing Judith of adultery gave them a defendable reason for trying to overthrow him.

Carolingian queens and empresses earned moral authority through their positions in society. However, as women, they attained those positions through the kings and emperors they married. Likewise, the moral authority they earned over people other than their children was rooted in the moral authority of their husbands. A position of queenship entailed bearing children, providing their moral education and protecting them and their inheritance, ensuring the court was running smoothly, supervising staff, and providing gifts for vassals.[200] Failure in any of these areas could make them unfit as queens. Though details of Fastrada's cruelty are unknown, their moral depravity was enough to incite a rebellion among the Frankish nobles and a son of Charlemagne. The rebellion occurred against Charlemagne because not only was he unable to stop Fastrada's cruelty but he began to give into cruelty himself.[201] As a result his

[200] Foßel, "The Political Tradition of Female Rulership in Medieval Europe," 72.
[201] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 40.

moral authority waned, and the unhappy nobles took advantage. Judith may have been guilty only of protecting her son's inheritance but she was accused of adultery with her husband's chamberlain.[202] Again, people, like Hugh and Matfrid, who instigated these accusations saw it as a weakness in the emperor's moral authority and used it as an opportunity to attack. Judith's supposed act of immorality was not as evident and the immorality of Charlemagne's daughters. As mothers the Carolingian queens and empresses could earn moral authority from their children. However, to attain widespread moral authority, they had to earn it through their husbands. If they proved unworthy of that moral authority it reflected poorly on their husbands and resulted in internal conflict. The queens and empresses were Carolingian royalty but unlike male rulers they could not earn moral authority through their actions alone.

[202] Thegan, "The Deeds of Emperor Louis," 209.

# CONCLUSION

During the Carolingian Age there was a distinct relationship between gender and moral authority. To reiterate, moral authority is the influence one had because of knowledge, principles, and character. This relationship is particularly evident in the years between Charlemagne's coronation as king and the end of *der Brüderkrieg*. Examples from this period illustrate the way in which these two aspects of Carolingian society interacted. Gender determined which positions in society people were eligible to acquire. The connection between gender and moral authority was undeniably one's position in society. Today's historians have addressed both gender and moral authority. Scholars have studied and researched gender in regard to the Carolingians for close to thirty-five years, but moral authority has only recently been studied in great detail. However, there is currently no published research on the relationship shared by these two aspects of Carolingian society. By exploring this relationship scholars will be able to more firmly grasp the complexity of Carolingian culture.

Alcuin was one of the first great scholars to enter the Frankish Kingdom at the request of Charlemagne to educate the Frankish people. Before he reached Charlemagne's court in Aachen he had already established a reputation as a scholar during his time in York. [203] As a scholar, he had been trained beyond basic reading and writing and was well-versed in rhetoric and organization in writing. Alcuin reached a position of moral authority through the knowledge he had gained as a scholar. Count Wido's request for moral guidance exemplifies the strength of Alcuin's reputation as knowledgeable man, especially in regard to morality. The laywoman,

[203] Duckett, *Alcuin, Friend of Charlemagne*, 15-16.

Dhuoda, also wrote a moral treatise, but she did not earn her moral authority as a scholar. Dhuoda demonstrated her status as a member of the moral elite by writing her *Handbook for William.* Within the pages of her handbook Dhuoda exhibits moral guidance through the knowledge she had as a lay intellectual and by fulfilling her moral obligation as a parent to advise her son. [204] It is unlikely that Dhuoda received the rigorous education to become a scholar that Alcuin had. The full depth of her education is unclear, but as a lay intellectual she had enough knowledge of religious and secular texts to cite it many times in her *Handbook for William*.[205] Dhuoda urged her son to share the handbook with others so that they would receive her lessons on morality, as many seemed to her to have forgotten those lessons in the midst of war. Both Alcuin and Dhuoda wrote literature with the intent of teaching others to live morally. Dhuoda achieved this through her role as a parent and Alcuin did as well through his role as a scholar.

Charlemagne earned nearly unshakeable moral authority when he incited widespread ecclesiastical and educational reform during the Carolingian Renaissance. As an emperor Charlemagne had to maintain moral authority to remain on the throne. When Charlemagne took the throne in 768 the clergy had not received high-quality education, which resulted in inconsistent teaching of the Christian faith. Charlemagne believed that as ruler he was responsible for the salvation of his subjects.[206] This strong, principled belief stood as one of the pillars of his moral authority. Despite, the strength of his morality, two rebellions occurred during his reign but failed to depose him.[207] Charlemagne earned his moral authority by fulfilling

[204] Nelson, "Dhuoda," 111.
[205] Nelson, "Dhuoda," 117.
[206] Ullman, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*, 4.
[207] Einhard, "Life of Charlemagne," 39-40.

what he believed was his primary duty as king and emperor, ensuring the salvation of his people. Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious, inherited the imperial title after many of his father's reforms had already taken effect. From the moment he entered Aachen Louis predicated his rule on moral principles by immediately removed anyone from court he deemed immoral, even his sisters.[208] Since the clergy was better educated, it was much more difficult for Louis to earn moral authority and many more who could take it away. Louis' own actions were under a great deal more scrutiny than his father's, and any act of immorality within his family served as a weakness for his adversaries to exploit. Both Charlemagne and Louis were emperors; they needed to be able to earn moral authority or their subjects would rebel. While internal rebellions under Charlemagne were not as severe as those under Louis, it is important to note that the main reasons for the rebellions were immoral acts not committed by them.

Queens and empresses did not have the same influence that their husbands had, but they could earn moral authority. However, the source of their moral authority was dependent on their husbands. At the most basic level these women earned their moral authority through their position as mothers, but they earned widespread moral authority through their husbands. The moral authority they could earn outside of their immediate family was an extension of their husbands' and could be used against him. By all accounts Queen Fastrada acted cruelly during her marriage to Charlemagne, though the details of her cruelty remain unclear. Einhard wrote that Fastrada's cruelty had driven Charlemagne to cruelty.[209] From this, it is clear that her ability or inability to earn moral authority could have a severe effect on her husband. Those who rebelled against Louis the Pious also largely blamed Empress Judith for their discontent. They

[208] Astronomer, "The Life of Emperor Louis," 247.
[209] Ibid., 39-40.

had accused her of adultery with Louis' chamberlain, and one of the primary duties of the emperor was to the salvation of his people; if Louis could not even keep morality in his own house then he could not be capable of keeping morality over the entire empire. [210] However, rebels were able to gain more support by accusing Judith of adultery than by complaining about the slights Louis had done them, like stripping Hugh and Matfrid of their offices.[211] The same was true for Fastrada's cruelty; there are no details of her actions. Fastrada and Judith could both be victims of gendered criticism. They may have been used as scapegoats for animosity toward their husbands so their accusers could avoid directly attacking the emperor. These examples illustrate how vital it was that the wife of the Carolingian ruler could earn moral authority, but it also shows that as women their moral authority were reflections of their husbands'.

Gender and moral authority were thoroughly intertwined aspects of Carolingian society. This is made evident by how ingrained both were in all aspects of Carolingian culture. Moral authority could be held by both men and women of different classes. Dhuoda was a laywoman and Alcuin was a clerical scholar, but as instructors both had the authority to influence morals with their words. It was position in society that truly dictated who could earn widespread moral authority. However, gender had an undeniable influence over which positions in society one qualified for. Even amongst those in a position of royalty, gender dictated the ways in which they could earn moral authority. A king or emperor needed to earn moral authority to maintain his position or he would be overthrown. Likewise, if a queen or empress proved incapable of earning and maintaining moral authority rebellions would ensue against them and their husbands. People of different genders had to earn moral authority in different ways. Men could earn it as scholars

[210] Sedulius Scottus, "On Christian Rulers," 387.
[211] "The Royal Frankish Annals," 122.

or as kings. Women only earned moral authority as parents or through marriage. Position in society may have determined whether or not someone would be able to earn moral authority, but gender dictated what that position could be.

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